SPECIAL ISSUE

A WORLD OF REPORTS?

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT REPORTS
WITH AN ANGLE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

[Free on website: www.norrag.org from late February 2010]

Editor

KENNETH KING

Editorial Address

Kenneth King, Saltoun Hall, Pencaitland, East Lothian, EH34 5DS, Scotland, UK
Telephone: +44 1875 340 418
Emails: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk or Pravina.King@gmail.com

Co-ordination Address

Michel Carton, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID),
Post Box 136, Rue Rothschild 24, 1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland.
Telephone: +41 22) 908 43 24/23
Email: michel.carton@graduateinstitute.ch
A WORLD OF REPORTS?

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT REPORTS
WITH AN ANGLE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Global Reports have become a critical ingredient in the public face of international development cooperation, whether they are one-off World Summit/Conference/Commission Reports such as the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in March 1990, the Dakar World Forum on Education for All in April 2000, The Delors Commission (Paris, 1996) or the Millennium Project Report five years after the Millennium Summit (New York, 2005), or Serial Reports such as the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR), the World Bank’s GMR, the Human Development Report (HDR) with separate regional editions, or the World Development Report (WDR). There are other one-off reports that emerge primarily from single countries but they have a much wider reach than one country. Examples would be the Commission for Africa (London, 2005), the Africa Commission (Copenhagen, 2009), Partnership with Africa (Stockholm, 1997), or China’s African Policy (Beijing, 2006). Most have an angle on education. Despite the Paris Declaration’s encouragement to harmonise and pool donor activities, this activity of developing major one-country reports and white papers, as well as sectoral reports e.g for the Education Sector seems to continue unabated. Thus the UK has had no less than four White Papers on International Development in the last 12 years, as well as a whole range of Target Strategy Papers, including on Education. Many readers of NORRAG NEWS will recall the interest with which international educators used to acquire the latest World Bank Education Sector Policy Papers – whether on education in general (e.g. 1978, 1995); or on primary (1990); vocational and technical education and training (1991); or on higher education (1994, 2002). Not to mention the regional reports, e.g. on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (1988), or Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (2004). This global regional and global reporting is not restricted to bilateral and multilateral agencies, but is also commonplace with international NGOs, see for instance The Oxfam Education Report (Oxfam, 2000). Covering the OECD countries and some middle income countries, there is another set of major reports such as the IEA’s Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) [MA, 2008], or the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) [Paris, 2009], which rank countries by dimensions of educational achievement, and there is the Education Development Index (EDI) currently ranking 129 countries by four basic education indicators in the EFA Global Monitoring Report. Also OECD’s Education at a Glance.

Who are the real targets for this battery of reports? How do these reports impact on academic thinking and policy? Can they influence country priorities? Do they alter national targets or goals? Or is their role sometimes to change the discourse or introduce a new term such as ‘Education for All’, ‘Knowledge Societies’, ‘Learning to Know’, ‘Basic Education’, ‘Knowledge for Development’, ‘Education for the Informal Sector’, ‘Skills Development’, or ‘Life-long Learning’?? Policy makers are of course interested
in those particular reports which have global rankings such as TIMSS, PISA, HDR or EDI.

In this special issue of NORRAG NEWS, we are interested to explore how our different constituencies of NN readers (such as policy makers, development partners, academics, and NGOs) actually use these reports for their work – if they have time to read them! Often these Reports are very substantial volumes of some 450 pages, and frequently they have a wealth of commissioned and supporting papers behind them. Of course there are often executive summaries and even regional summaries, but there is still a challenge of translating the essence of these reports at the point when they are most needed. Given the very different kinds of time pressures that academics, policy makers, agency and NGO staff are under, how do they mine this massive resource of potentially valuable report data?
NORRAG NEWS 43

CONTENTS

PREFACE 8 - 10
Kenneth King, NORRAG, and University of Edinburgh

EDITORIAL 11 - 17
Reporting on Reports - NORRAG’s role
Kenneth King, NORRAG, and University of Edinburgh

OBITUARY 18 - 19
Peter Grootings, formerly European Training Foundation
Sören Nielsen, European Training Foundation, Turin

REPORTS AS ‘SACRED TEXT’, THE HISTORICAL LEGACY 20 - 40
Problems of Comparability, Political Interest, and Perspective in ‘a World of Reports’ on Educational Progress and Development
Mark Mason, HKIED, Hong Kong

The discourse of the first Commissions on Education for Sub-Saharan Africa. Does history repeat itself?
Shoko Yamada, Nagoya University

Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: policies for adjustment, revitalisation and expansion
Birger Fredriksen, formerly World Bank, Washington

Education and knowledge: basic pillars of changing production patterns with social equity
Noel McGinn, formerly Harvard University; and NORRAG president

Development reports – are they useful?
Lennart Wohlgemuth, Gothenburg University

The Delors Commission and Report
Alexandra Draxler, formerly Secretary, the Delors Commission, and editor Prospects Paris

To use or not to use. The politics of the report!
Crain Soudien, University of Cape Town

Which text is more sacred for education targets – Jomtien, Dakar, or MDGs?
Ingemar Gustafsson, University of Stockholm

Education and the global financial crisis. What to do?
Claudio de Moura Castro, Positivo, Belo Horizonte

Organise a global conference!
THE GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT (GMR) AS THE WORLD’S EDUCATION REPORT? 41 - 65
Reflections on UNESCO’s World Education Reports, and on the EFA Global Monitoring Reports
John Daniel, Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver.
A couple of quick reflections on the Education for All GMR
Kevin Watkins, Global Monitoring Report team, UNESCO, formerly HDR, and Oxfam
Ranking the world on education? The Education for All Development Index of the GMR
Roy Carr-Hill, University of York and Institute of Education, London
Picking the low hanging fruits and preparing to reach those a little higher up. Looking ahead to 2012 – what EFA GMR indicators of skill?
Kenneth King, NORRAG, Scotland and Robert Palmer, NORRAG, Amman
Ranking the world on education? The Education for All Development Index of the GMR
Roy Carr-Hill, University of York and Institute of Education, London
Picking the low hanging fruits and preparing to reach those a little higher up. Looking ahead to 2012 – what EFA GMR indicators of skill?
Kenneth King, NORRAG, Scotland and Robert Palmer, NORRAG, Amman
Reflections on global development reports with an emphasis on reports containing information about early childhood care and development
Robert Myers, Hacia una Cultura Democratica, Mexico City
Good quality education in and through the GMR
Yusuf Sayed, University of Sussex
On reports, globalisation and marginalisation
Beatrice Avalos, University of Chile, Santiago
Global monitoring reports: reflections on real potential and realpolitik
Michele Schweisfurth, University of Birmingham
What do and might the EFA GMRs achieve?
Rosemary Preston, University of Warwick
Education for All (EFA) – and the value of the EFA GMR Report
Lene Buchert, University of Oslo, formerly UNESCO, Paris

EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN OTHER GLOBAL SINGLE AND SERIAL REPORTS 66 - 99
Transforming tertiary education in developing countries
Jamil Salmi, World Bank, Washington
The TICAD process and the discourse among stakeholders
Shoko Yamada, Nagoya University.
Japan’s commitment to African development through the TICAD process
Michiko Miyamoto, JICA, Tokyo
The state of the world’s children 1980-2010
Sheldon Shaeffer, development analyst (formerly UNESCO), Bangkok
The impact of the Human Development Index (HDI) 1990-2009
Santosh Mehrotra, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi
The contribution of technical and vocational education and training to education for sustainable development: fact or fiction
Rupert Maclean, HKIED, Hong Kong
Are China’s Africa Summits different?
Liu Haifang, Institute of West Asian and African Studies, CASS, Beijing
Education strategy papers
Steve Packer, consultant (formerly DFID), London
Every child in school and learning: the new DFID Education Strategy  
Gemma Wilson-Clark, DFID, London  
The treatment of education and training in the South Asia human development reports  
Shehryar Janjua, Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, Islamabad  
India ranked at 105 in the Education for All Development Index  
Jandhyala Tilak, National University of Educational Planning & Admin, Delhi  
A civil society perspective on CONFINTEA VI, Belem, Brazil  
David Archer, ActionAid, London  
‘Our common interest’ five years on: the Commission for Africa report and education  
Myles Wickstead, Open University, UK (formerly Commission for Africa)  
Realising the potential of Africa’s youth: the report of the (Danish) Africa Commission  
Holger Hansen, University of Copenhagen

REPORTING ON REPORTS FROM “THE FIELD”  
The key dimension of local ‘policy learning’ in the role of global reports  
Søren Nielsen, European Training Foundation, Turin  
How does the mass of policy recommendations reach policy people in the field?  
Mary-Luce Fiaux Niada, Swiss Development Cooperation, Bern  
Localising international ‘best practices’ in education: the case of PETS in Tanzania  
Chambi Chachage, independent researcher, Dar Es Salaam  
What messages reach the policy community in Chile?  
Ernesto and Paulina Schiefelbein, Universidad Autónoma de Chile, Santiago  
Global reports: issues and impact in Sub-Saharan Africa  
Djénéba Traoré, ERNWACA, Bamako, Mali  
World reports and needs-driven non-formal training programmes –Nigeria  
Ben Ogwo, State University of New York, Oswego  
EFA by 2015 in Sub-Saharan Africa? A long way to go, but what’s next?  
Joachim Boko, University of Pittsburgh and consultant, Benin  
Making friendly world reports  
Elinice Monteiro Leite, consultant, Brazil  
Translating policy related knowledge into policy and action at the country level a practitioner perspective  
Roger Munns, education development practitioner, London

NORRAG-RELATED MATTERS  
NORRAG: an update on future plans with a backward glance  
Kenneth King, NORRAG, Edinburgh
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORRAG cluster meeting in Bamako, December 2009</td>
<td>125 - 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michel Carton and Frédérique Weyer, IHEID, Geneva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORRAG members and Partner Networks</td>
<td>127 - 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth King, NORRAG, Edinburgh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Educational Research in Africa (JERA), Vol 1. No.2</td>
<td>130 - 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>---</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NORRAG NEWS has always been interested in the critical analysis of major world conferences, global summits, and international policy papers. Some NORRAG members have been present at many of these major events, such as the World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien in 1990; indeed, several of those present in Jomtien or at the World Forum on Education at Dakar in 2000 are actually contributing to this present special issue! NORRAG dedicated the whole of NN7 to the analysis of how the Jomtien Declaration and Plan of Action were actually created, and what was the role of regional meetings in the lead up to Jomtien. Equally, NN8 was entirely preoccupied with the critical analysis of What happened in Jomtien? Six years later there was a special issue which looked very critically at UNESCO’s handling of the mid-term review of Education for All in Amman (NN19). Then for the Dakar World Forum there was an entire special issue (NN26) given over to the Forum. What was unusual about these special issues was that they were not written months after the event; the special issues were actually available as hard copies in Jomtien, Amman and Dakar.

The same was true of our treatment of the World Conference on Adult Education (NN21), or when the World Bank brought out its first Higher Education Policy paper. We organised comments from around the world on the Bank’s higher education paper (NN16), and even organised a review meeting and later an entire book on the topic. Again, as with Jomtien, some of those who were involved in that review in 1994 have also contributed to this present special issue.

When the Bank’s Skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa came out, we organised a review meeting of scholars and policy makers in Nairobi (NN32);¹ and a year later in Bamako we reviewed the EFA Global Monitoring Report on gender (NN35). On both these occasions, NORRAG’s purpose was to encourage the critical reading of these major reports within Africa itself, and to get one or two of those responsible for the reports to be present. Similarly, 2005 was the year of the report of the Millennium Project, the publication of the Commission for Africa, and the G8 in Scotland; so a whole issue (NN36) was dedicated to this ‘Development Year’. Now, five years later, in 2010, and with only five years to go to the MDG Target Year of 2015, it is an appropriate year to look critically at the world of global reports, global targets, and global summits.

What does NORRAG NEWS do with all these global reports and global summits? Ideally we try and communicate a diverse set of views about them. We don't do scholarly reviews. Rather, we give a whole series of short, sharp angles or perspectives. Here is a

¹ See also paper 7 of the Working Group for International Cooperation on Skills Development which reviewed an early draft in Edinburgh of the Bank’s Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (www.norrag/wg)
perfect example of a NORRAG NEWS article, just eight lines long, from NN18 in 1995, by Claudio de Moura Castro. He was commenting on the then latest World Bank Education Sector policy paper:

The latest World Bank paper says that vocational and technical education is best imparted in the work place (World Bank, 1995). This may be true but the paper should have mentioned that no industrialised countries - without a single exception - actually follow this World Bank prescription. All industrialised countries offer massive quantities of training away from the work place. This includes US, Germany and Japan. It is distinctly misleading for the Bank to tell developing countries to do something that no developed country has ever done.

In this present issue, we point to the mass of global material that gets generated by the international development constituency, and we wonder how that vast amount of data and analysis actually gets filtered into national ministries, national policy, and national universities. We suspect that the translation from global to local is very weak. This is partly because the global reports themselves don't and can’t represent the situation at the local level in any detailed way; so national policy makers need to deduce from global reports what are the implications for themselves. This may not be easy since the global reports may not focus on the whole sector, but rather on the dimensions of basic education, or of the MDGs, but not on education or development as a whole. The debate about whether the global gets lost in translation when transferred to the local will continue. We encourage NORRAG readers to contribute to this debate.

***********************************************
*************
A NEW VERSION OF THE NORRAG WEBSITE IS NOW ONLINE!

Please update your profile to get full access to the new site

We have made some changes to the NORRAG website which we hope will make it more user-friendly - www.norrag.org/

The only action that needs to be taken by you is to update your profile. On the homepage, there is a box headed: ‘You’re a member already’. Please enter your email in this box and you’ll be taken to a screen to update your profile, including setting a password of your choice. You can now enter up to three areas of expertise and three countries of expertise.

You will need to update your profile and set a password in order to:
* Access the latest issue of NORRAG NEWS
* Access the NORRAG Networking Tool

The NORRAG Networking Tool offers you a way to connect with potentially like-minded people. You can find and contact members with similar interests to yours, or with the interests you are looking for; including those who have an expertise in a particular country or on a particular topic.
In the next issue of NORRAG NEWS we are going to be looking at what are sometimes called new and emerging donors. We are particularly interested in what they are doing in support of human resource development. Get in touch if you have ideas.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the loss of Peter Grootings for whom Sören Nielsen has written an obituary. We shall all miss his sharp contributions to NORRAG NEWS.

Edinburgh, February 2010
EDITORIAL

Reporting on Reports - NORRAG’s role

Kenneth King
NORRAG, Edinburgh
Email: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk

Just over 90 years ago the first of two hugely influential reports on Education in Africa was published (Phelps-Stokes Commission [PSC], 1919). Like today’s global reports such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR), there is data in the PSC on education that can be compared across countries. But unlike the figures and tables today which are generally drawn from national statistics in ministries of education and supplied to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) for the GMR, the Commissioners actually visited and reported on particular government and mission schools, from Liberia to Sierra Leone, Nigeria to Ghana, Angola to South Africa. Hundreds and hundreds of them. So the assessment of quality was not a proxy as so often today, but the result of grounded, field exposure. The composition of a Commission is always crucial, and especially whether there are working commissioners as well as nominal, political appointments. The PSC was unusual in having a native of Ghana as a full commissioner, in bridging UK and US interests, but also in visiting all of Sub-Saharan Africa, not just the then British colonies. But the crucial role of site visits to schools in all countries was very different from the occasional illustrative box in many contemporary reports. Of course like many or probably most commissions and reports today, the Phelps-Stokes Commission did not approach its subject with a clean slate; it had an agenda, and a particular perspective on the education of Africans, derived from reflections about ‘appropriate’ education for African-Americans in the USA at the time.

This very early report illustrated very well the key questions we can ask of most global reports – How did they use evidence? How were their messages constructed? Whose agenda did they represent? How were they disseminated and how were their messages implemented?²

Impact and new information technology

At one level, clearly, many of these questions have been altered dramatically by the internet and the new information technology. Unlike the 416 pages of the Phelps-Stokes Commission which had to make their way for instance to Kenya by sea from New York and London to Mombasa, and then by railway to Nairobi, one of the latest global reports, the 510 pages of the 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report, could be launched on the 19th January 2010 in New York but could be instantaneously available round the world. The Phelps-Stokes Commission Report, like other traditional reports, had no executive summary. Just a hard copy. By contrast, modern global reports appear in multiple versions. Again the GMR 2010 is exemplary. Apart from summaries and the full version

² The author dedicated his entire doctorate to the analysis of these questions for the second Phelps-Stokes Commission, Education in East Africa, examining the Pan-African politics of the Commission in just one country, Kenya. See Pan-Africanism and Education (1971)
of the report in the six UNESCO languages, there are long and short press releases, six regional overviews, with their corresponding fact sheets, videos, power-point presentations, posters, postcards, and of course the crucially important background papers (no less than 42 of these which are also immediately accessible). Google results for 1-10 are of approximately 1,550,000 for EFA GMR 2010! But the key question for the GMR team must be: what is the impact at the national level?

The global scale and the national picture

One of the tensions in global monitoring and reporting is the sheer complexity of maintaining a balance between the global situation – whether of HIV AIDS, literacy, skills development, or school quality – and the situation in particular countries. Here is an example of the importance of the global headline numbers: In Jomtien, at the World Conference on Education for All, in 1990, it was said that 100 million children were out of school. Now, according to the GMR 2010, 20 years later that figure is said to be 72 million, with another 72 million adolescents also out of school. In 1990, there were said to be 960 million illiterate adults worldwide; now according to the GMR 2010, there are said to be 759 million (The CONFINTSEA global conference on adult education in December 2009 used the figure of 774 million). Finally, the Jomtien had the figure of 100 million for children and young adults who fail to complete basic education. The GMR 2010 doesn't have a global figure but merely talks of millions of children leaving school without basic skills.

Such figures are crucially important for giving some sense of progress or challenge at the world level. But what do these global numbers mean for the policy community at the national level, in say Kenya, India or Nigeria? Arguably, very little. So how does a global monitoring report such as the GMR 2010, or the Human Development Report 2009, or the State of the World’s Children (SOWC) translate global data to the country level?

In the Phelps-Stokes Commission, which only covered half of a continent, this was straightforward. Each African country that was visited had a single chapter, e.g. Kenya had no less than 40 pages. By contrast in the GMR 2010, Kenya gets 41 references in the index, and no less than 4 illustrative boxes, but no extended Kenya-specific text. India too gets 35 index references and 4 illustrative boxes. But the Kenya or India story has to be pieced together across the entire GMR volume. Of course, the rankings of 126 countries are available in the EFA Development Index (which captures four indicators of achievement). Kenya is classed in the Medium EDI category at No. 90, while India is classed as Low EDI at 105 (indeed all South Asia is in Low EDI except Sri Lanka). [See Tilak in this special issue for “India at 105”]

Should policy makers want an alternative ranking they can of course turn to the Human Development Report (which completes 20 years of publication in 2010). It covers 182 countries, and not just 126, and in its Human Development Index (HDI) it includes adult literacy and the combined gross enrolment ratio in education. On this HDI ranking, India ranks as medium HDI at No 134 out of 182, along with Pakistan at 141 and Kenya at 147.

---

3 The figure applies to 2007.
China comes in at 92 on the HDI ranking but doesn't present data for the EFA EDI, apart from Macao.

Global headlines and sound-bites versus qualification and complexity
The greatest challenge of the global report is the sound-bite – what can be said very tersely for the world as a whole? [See Shaeffer in NN43] This is of course hugely ambitious, but it has been done, often to great effect, by the World Bank. Even before the World Bank had built up its vast evidence base, it was prepared to declare what its priorities were. Famously, and provocatively, in the 1974 Education Sector Working Paper it claimed the following:

> Education systems have been irrelevant to the needs of developing countries because education policies were often keeping company with overall development strategies that were themselves irrelevant to the societies and conditions of developing countries (WB, 1974: 3).

This statement led directly to the World Bank’s support of basic and/or nonformal education for all young people before providing more resources to the small elites in the modern sector.

There have been other very sharply expressed World Bank judgements, and they have often been excised from their wider context and claimed to be a global or continental assessment. But they have still been highly influential. Here are some examples:

In the Bank’s *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1988: 105), it was crucially important that it drew attention to the fact that only 3% of bilateral aid was then going to primary education, while 42% of bilateral aid was going to tertiary education. This was just two years before the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien which would begin a major shift in external funding towards basic and especially primary education.

Often a single sentence is taken from a report and is used to represent the general message. Again, famously, this happened with the World Bank’s *Vocational and technical education and training* policy paper (1991: 7): ‘Training in the private sector - by private employers and in private training institutions – can be the most effective and efficient way to develop the skills of the work force.’ The use of the word private three times in one sentence, on the first page of the executive summary, was sufficient to suggest the tone of the approach, even though there were many qualifications about the role of the public sector later in the policy paper.

This year’s EFA GMR 2010 (p.5) has an exceedingly powerful single sentence which could be used to generalise on an extremely well-balanced report: ‘Thirty years later, as we have noted, the attainment of universal primary education was far from secure, and especially in parts of Africa. In addition the gross enrolment ratio for secondary education was just 34% and tertiary was just an average of 6% across the sub-Saharan region. And poor quality remained a very major concern.

---

4 There will be a review meeting in the UK 50 years after the famous Addis Ababa May 1961 Conference; it will organised by the UK Forum on International Education and Training.
Targets have become an integral part of global reports, and there is very strong tendency, having set a target, to organise large-scale review meetings, every five years, en route to the proposed target.\(^5\) Global targets such as the International Development Targets suggested by the OECD-DAC in 1996, or the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which the UN elaborated from these in September 2000 are valuable for global advocacy, and arguably they have become over the past ten years a central part of the global aid architecture. The key question, however, is whether these global targets have actually become an essential component of national planning and advocacy. This is very far from clear, even in those nations such as China, whose dramatic progress has made it possible to claim so much progress on the MDGs.

It may be salutary to recall that in the World Conference on Education for All in March 1990 which many NORRAG readers may believe set 6 global targets which were then reinforced by the World Forum on Education at Dakar in 2000, this was not the case at all. The World Conference, under the strong leadership of its Executive Secretary, Wadi Haddad, proposed the following: ‘Countries may wish to set their own targets for the 1990s in terms of the following proposed dimensions’; there then followed the six dimensions [WCEFA, 1990: Framework: p. 3, emphasis added]. In other words, the World Conference proposed NATIONAL not GLOBAL targets.\(^6\)

It was the Dakar Forum that elevated these proposed dimensions for national targets into a set of 6 global EFA Goals. It was a good example of the danger of a global target especially if it was poorly framed. Here was the proposed dimension of a national skills target at Jomtien:

Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity.

And here was what it turned into in Dakar, as the EFA Global Goal 3, ten years later:

3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

The term ‘life-skills’ produced huge problems for the education and training constituency worldwide once it had been made part of a Global EFA Goal (See King and Palmer, NN43). The GMR 2010 has acknowledged that ‘governments signed up to a third EFA goal that amounts to a vague aspiration’ and this ‘has been conspicuous by its absence ..from the agendas of high-level development summits’ (GMR 2010: 76).

---

\(^5\) The next is the UN MDG Review Summit of 20-22 September 2010.

\(^6\) I am glad that someone is finally setting the record straight. The emphasis on national targets came as a result of the regional consultations prior to Jomtien. Countries made it clear then that they are at different levels of development and have different paths to follow to achieve EFA. As such, global targets did not mean much to them. We, in the Secretariat, had a difficult time convincing some sponsors to accept this result, but we ultimately prevailed with the support of the rapporteurs of the regional consultations (Wadi Haddad, 8.2.10).
World rankings on governance and competitiveness and the role of education
It is possibly not widely known that the role and status of education plays a key role in some of the global world and regional rankings. This is of course the case for the Human Development Index (see further Mehrotra in NN43). But it is also the case in the increasingly influential ranking of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation covering all the 53 countries of Africa; this is by no means only concerned with some narrow concept of governance. It looks at no less than 84 different criteria in the areas of Safety and the Rule of Law; Participation and Human Rights; Sustainable Economic Opportunity; and Human Development. The last category contains poverty, health and education; and it is interesting to note that in education it doesn't just cover a single item such as access to primary education. Rather it covers education provision and quality; ratio of pupils to teachers in primary school; primary school completion rate; progression to secondary school; and tertiary enrolment rates. Amongst the top ten in the latest Ibrahim Index are Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Ghana, Tunisia and Lesotho.

In the latest World Competitiveness Report, the regional report on Africa picks out a very similar set of ‘top ten’ as in the Ibrahim Report. These would include Tunisia, South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, Ghana, and Namibia. What is intriguing is that two countries that are frequently cited as two of Africa’s most fast-growing ‘developmental states’, Ethiopia and Rwanda, are as low as 37 and 32 respectively out of 53 on the Ibrahim index. On the World Competitiveness Report (WCR), Ethiopia is at 118 on the world ranking, and Rwanda is not included. But one of the most interesting things said about competitiveness in the World Report is actually also about education and health:

What can be deduced at the national level from global reports and rankings?
Through this wide range of world reports and rankings, countries can judge where they are located selectively on the global scene. For example, India is quite high at 49th on the Global Competitiveness Report, but 105th on the EFA Development Index, and 134th on the Human Development Index, and it is the 49th worst out of 189 on UNICEF’s under-five mortality ranking. This is a gloomy set of rankings overall with the exception of business start ups. But how much do policy makers know about these world rankings? Arguably, one ministry might know about the education ranking, another about the under-five mortality, and another about human development more generally. But if there would be any attempt to look more generally across the achievement on global targets, it would be noted from the World Bank’s Global Monitoring Report (2009) that ‘South Asia lags on most human development MDGs... At the country level, a majority of countries will fall short of most MDGs.’ (World Bank, GMR 2009: 4).

In other words, the business of sorting out the national implications from a series of global scales will usually go far afar the purview of any single ministry. It will be possible to derive from the Global Reports the following: the Human Development Index, the EFA Development Index, scales from the State of the World’s Children, the World Competitiveness Report, and for all African countries the Mo Ibrahim Index. It

---

7 Rwanda and Ethiopia were the two most frequently mentioned ‘developmental states’ in a key policy conference at Wilton Park in the UK during 3-6 February 2010.
will also be possible to check the Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa or for Asia from the IMF, and from these, check the real GDP growth projections as well as the GDP growth for 2008. Here it will be possible to record that Ethiopia and Rwanda both registered GDP growth of 11% in 2008, and India registered 7%. For many policymakers, worldwide, a single figure of high GDP growth may well be regarded as politically much more influential than some of the other indices we have referred to.

Concluding paradoxes
We end with a powerful paradox. The international, multilateral agencies, as well as the bilateral agencies and foundations, are responsible for an absolutely massive amount of global information. We have only touched the tip of the iceberg, for there are other global reports on Global Employment Trends, the State of Food and Agriculture, and on a whole series of health indicators, to mention just three other sectors. But even in the education sector, we have just scratched the surface, for there are world university rankings, as well as the whole range of international achievement assessments (see Mason in NN43).

For many of the agencies that produce these global reports, these are perceived to play a critical role in trend-setting, shifting international priorities, assessing achievements, and monitoring global targets. But arguably the sheer quantity of the information that needs to get processed, and the development of the main global messages get in the way of any qualitative reporting of the situation in any particular country. To an extent, the latest EFA GMR 2010 does offer some very detailed breakdowns within individual countries of educational deprivation and marginalisation through their Deprivation and Marginalisation in Education (DME) data set. But for many reports, the focus is on quantitative rankings and analysis, with the addition of some illustrative boxes of ‘best’ or ‘worst’ practice.

One of our proposals, therefore, from this special issue on the World of Reports would be to take the main 25 or so global reports of 2010, and seek to construct from them a picture of the situation in, say, Kenya, India, Pakistan or wherever. What are the messages that can be distilled for the individual country from this mass of global data? On the basis of such distillation can there be a debate through national research centres and the ministry of national planning and economic development about this particular country viewed through the prism of global reports? One is tempted to conclude, however, that the search for the global undermines the qualitative understanding of the local or the national. It is indeed difficult for the contemporary global reports to compete with the 40 pages of detailed analysis of Kenya’s education through the Phelps-Stokes Fund’s report on Education in East Africa 86 years ago.

Selected references
The state of the world’s children, UNICEF
The World Development Report, UNDP
The EFA Global Monitoring Report, at UNESCO
The Global Monitoring Report, World Bank
The World Competitiveness Report, World Economic Forum
The World Economic Outlook, IMF
The Mo Ibrahim Index
World Employment Trends, ILO
The state of food and agriculture, FAO
Vocational and technical education and training, World Bank, 1991
Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank, 1988
World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990
World Forum on Education for All, Dakar, 2000
EFA GMR 2010 Reaching the marginalised, UNESCO

0-0-0-0-0
Peter Grootings in Memoriam

Sören Nielsen
European Training Foundation (ETF)
Email: Sören.Nielsen@etf.europa.eu

On Friday 3 July 2009, ETF lead expert Peter Grootings died at the age of 58 after a long and courageous battle against a fatal disease.

Peter was a key asset for the ETF with a unique ability to combine the roles of concept developer, expert, coach and team player, and he will be greatly missed by all who were lucky enough to have known him. He was responsible for shaping the ETF’s development and establishing the Foundation’s reputation as an international centre of expertise.

Peter led the development of ETF expertise publications, and in 2003 he initiated the first Editorial Board and introduced the ETF Yearbook as an instrument for international debate on policy learning and developments in the field of education, training and active labour market initiatives. With the Yearbook, Peter opened an opportunity for talented, young staff to write expert contributions on an equal footing with senior writers.

His own writings encompassed all dimensions in his field of expertise, from the early days in CEDEFOP in the early 80s over the years as a consultant mainly in Eastern Europe, to his work in ETF.

Peter’s last years in ETF were particularly productive, and increasingly with an interest in development and aid issues and an emphasis on education for poverty alleviation.

I worked closely together with Peter in ETF since 2002. He was one of the most original thinkers of his generation with a strong capacity for using his sociological imagination to analyze and combine concepts in new ways, develop an argument, and with a unique ability to create a direct correspondence between his thoughts and his writing.

Peter was not only an outstanding expert; his heart was always with our colleagues out there in the periphery in partner countries under the pressure of international donor agencies; this was the rationale behind his thinking on policy learning. He will be remembered as a very compassionate expert with high ethical standards. From Ljubljana to Bishkek, from Gdansk to Cairo the reaction to Peter’s death has been the same: “I have lost a close personal friend”. He gave so much of himself in his efforts to help people help themselves by always fighting to create not ‘human resources’ but resourceful human beings that he will have a final resting place in the hearts and minds of our colleagues as long as they live.
In ETF we will always remember our charming and irresistible Peter, the shine in his brown eyes, his eager voice and the movements of his hands when new, creative ideas were being born.
REPORTS AS ‘SACRED TEXTS’,
THE HISTORICAL LEGACY
Problems of Comparability, Political Interest, and Perspective in ‘a World of Reports’ on Educational Progress and Development

Mark Mason
Hong Kong Institute of Education
Email: mmason@ied.edu.hk

Keywords: comparability; policy transfer; political interests; ‘ways of seeing’; EFA GMR; IEA; PISA

Summary: This article considers problems of comparability among countries and territories participating in the various reports discussed in this issue of NORRAG News, and related questions of policy transfer across contexts, of whose interests these reports serve, and of the ‘ways of seeing’ implicitly contained within particular reports.

Most education policy makers would probably agree with the claim that, in the best of all worlds, the plethora of reports under consideration in this issue of NORRAG News makes better policy development possible through more informed comparison among alternatives. An understanding of what Ghana is doing to improve literacy rates among adults, and how it is doing it, might, after all, help Niger’s education policy makers in their efforts to do likewise, whether this would mean wholesale copying, selective adaptation or complete avoidance of Ghanaian policy. Such policy ‘borrowing’, or transfer across contexts, is of course not without risk. Robin Alexander (2000 p. 30) warns against it implicitly in his claim that “Culture, in comparative analysis and understanding, and certainly in national systems of education, is all”. Crossley and Watson (2003 p. 6) remind us that “context matters” in their caution to education policy makers that “major problems lie in any simplistic transfer of educational policy and practice from one socio-cultural context to another”. Such policy transfer tends sometimes to the absurd: if I might be forgiven the anecdote, I was once approached, working in Hong Kong, by an ‘education policy consultant’ from a small Caribbean island state for assistance in transferring “Asian education policy” (which, in his view, was evidently most successful) to his country. Never mind trying to transplant it – even attempting to compare education policy in China (what China – Shanghai, Gansu Province, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region?) with that of the Turks and Caicos Islands (not the state I alluded to, I should add) beggars belief. And yet this seemingly endless ‘world of reports’ appears to encourage just that. That, of course, is the problem I’m driving at here.

In many cases, admittedly, countries and territories considered in particular reports are indeed comparable in key dimensions. The annual EFA Global Monitoring Report is a case in point, given that the countries highlighted in the GMR generally share some core, if very broad, characteristics: they are developing countries, they face substantial challenges related to poverty, and the like. But even then, how to draw meaningful comparative inferences from a report on progress in the achievement of UPE in Brazil and in Burkina Faso?
Possible policy comparisons can be even more strained in reports on countries participating in studies conducted under the auspices of the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) or the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which rank countries by dimensions of educational achievement. Finland’s educational achievements have famously topped the PISA rankings recently, which has sent policy makers from across the globe rushing to Scandinavia to find out how they do it. (Interestingly, Finnish educationalists tend to respond to questions about excellence with answers that have more to do with equity, but that is not our purpose here.) PISA describes itself as “an internationally standardised assessment jointly developed by participating economies and administered to 15-year-olds in schools”. It is conducted under the auspices of the OECD, whose countries may be comparable in some core respects (the OECD describes itself as “bringing together the governments of countries committed to democracy and the market economy from around the world, … helping governments tackle the economic, social and governance challenges of a globalised economy”), but can countries like Indonesia and the Kyrgyz Republic, both participants in PISA 2009, really draw much of specific, directed and practical value (beyond, in other words, inferences of a highly general or abstract nature) from the experience and policies of the likes of Finland and countries and territories characterized by Confucian Heritage cultures (such as Japan, Singapore, Korea and Hong Kong, which also tend to sweep the boards in PISA)? It would take a skilled comparative education policy researcher indeed to do so.

Current IEA studies include, among others, TIMSS 2011 (the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), PIRLS 2011 (which assesses “trends in children’s reading literacy achievement and policy and practices related to literacy”), ICILS 2013 (the International Computer and Information Literacy Study, which will examine “the outcomes of student computer and information literacy education across countries”), and ICCS 2009 (the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, which “investigates the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens”). All well and good, but can the Palestinian National Authority, conducting education under conditions of, or at least akin to, occupation, really compare its trends in Mathematics and Science education (TIMSS 2007) to those of Sweden?

This has got to raise the question of whose interests these reports serve? Whose values and purposes do they reflect? Why would education policy makers in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza seek to participate, at some cost, in studies such as these? Perhaps to show the rest of the world some of the consequences of occupation for the education of young Palestinians. So participation could be for reasons as much political as anything else. Or, countries might take part in these assessments for reasons as much aspirational as empirical. The answers are not simple, and too complex to be considered in the space allowed here. But any consideration of this plethora of reports would need to start with questions such as these.

A related and equally important question has to do with whether the categories within which these reports assess and describe the world become the categories within which we
see the world. What is then pushed to the margins, or even lost? Does each really measure what it claims to measure? Have designers and researchers been sufficiently skilled to identify where some variables are perhaps proxies for something else? What is not in these reports? How long, for example, did it take before it was agreed to publish a skills-based GMR? It is only in 2012 that we will see a GMR conducted through the lens of skills. Had nobody thought until now about the importance of looking at and evaluating EFA in those terms? Is it because we don’t have much consensus on a definition of skills, on what skills we might want to assess (fitting and turning, entrepreneurship, or life skills?); or is it because we just had higher priorities (the quality imperative [2005], for example)? Again, the answers are not simple, and too complex for a piece of this nature, but any meaningful engagement with these reports, comparative or otherwise, would need to ask sophisticated questions about the ways in which any report leads us to see. These need not be insidious, of course – it’s just that they’re pretty much always implicit and not, well, easily seen. This report on the reports, in asking such questions, might thus help to better inform our reading of them.

References


Follow-up resources / references

EFA GMR: www.efareport.unesco.org

IEA: www.iea.nl

PISA: www.pisa.oecd.org

For the difficulties of comparing and drawing inferences across cultural contexts, see:

The Discourse of the First Commissions on Education for Sub-Saharan Africa
Does History Repeat Itself?

Shoko Yamada
Nagoya University
Email: syamada@gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp

Keywords: Sub-Saharan Africa; Phelps-Stokes Commission

Summary: This piece revisits the Phelps-Stokes Commission of the 1920s, and uses it as a historical case to reflect on the present-day discourse and practice in this field.

Some readers may think that history is interesting but has nothing to do with the real world – educational practices and policy-making in developing countries and the aid for them. However, the analysis of the Phelps-Stokes Commissions and British education policies in colonial Africa sheds light on the origins of the national education systems in these African countries and the political drives which were behind the decision of selecting some forms of education over the others. Since the colonial period, the international community kept organizing conferences, agreeing on common agendas, monitoring the progress against the target indicators, and publishing reports. But who set these targets and whose benefit are we pursuing based on which value systems? The revisiting of this historical case will provide us with an opportunity of reflecting on the present-day discourse and practice in this field.

In 1919, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, based in New York, sent a commission to investigate educational conditions in West, South and Equatorial Africa. It has been widely said that reports of this and the second (1924) Phelps-Stokes Commissions to Africa provided the foundation of interwar British colonial education policy in Africa. Indeed, the Memorandum on Education Policy in British Tropical Africa, the educational policy guideline issued by the British Colonial Office in 1923, echoed many recommendations made in the Phelps-Stokes reports. It was, in fact, the British Colonial Office, which invited the Phelps-Stokes Fund and its president, Thomas Jesse Jones, to dispatch a commission. Jones was widely known as the promoter of vocationally-oriented education for American blacks, which was then considered as a form of education suited for the blacks’ socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In the U.K., reference to American educational ideas was often made in the context of racial politics between blacks and whites, an issue which was also becoming serious in southern and eastern Africa. Whether Americans were, in fact, good at handling race issues was not the issue – the fact is that people wanted to believe so. The image of the ‘American specialist’ thus carried strong symbolic meaning and often counted for more than the actual substantial value of any American model.

The Commission’s report, published in 1922, consisted of two parts: general policy recommendations along thematic lines, and reports and recommendations for each colony visited. The thematic recommendations can be summarised into three areas: adaptation of
the form and content of education to the socio-economic and cultural background of students; cooperation of the colonial government with missions, Africans, and the commercial sector at various levels; and development of an administrative system and organisation. The adaptation of various aspects of school life to the social background of students was at the centre of the theory of black education promoted by Thomas Jesse Jones. The latter half of the report presented recommendations for the seven countries Jones visited, which were Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria, British South Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, and Liberia. While the description of social and educational situations differed from colony to colony, the recommendations were pretty much identical. Some people criticized Jones for visiting Africa with fore-gone conclusions, even though he stressed the importance of adapting education to fit to the needs and backgrounds of learners in particular contexts. In fact, a letter he wrote to J.H. Oldham, Secretary of the International Missionary Council in London, in October 1920, indicates that he started to write the final recommendations for a colony on the next day after his arrival.

The ideas of ‘adaptation,’ government-mission cooperation, and character training through religious instruction, which the Commission report repeatedly preached, were not new to colonial officials and missionaries working in Africa. American models did not supersede what had been practised already, but rather were used as a nice wrapping paper to give fresh appearance to on-going practices. The political statements and documents often reflect dynamics separate from practices on the ground and circulate without substance. ‘American models’ were brought to convince British, French and Belgian parties and colonial subjects that these were perhaps better and more neutral than those linked too closely to France, Belgium and the UK.

In today’s educational aid discourse, we witness various philosophies and ideologies which are brought in, such as human rights approach, human capital theory, skills for poverty reduction, etc. They are often used to justify educational agendas and priorities of the time, which shift the focus from academic to vocational, or primary to tertiary like a pendulum. Contemporary educational priorities may look fresh, but we should not lose sight of the history which reminds us what we have done already, and how the pendulum of international priorities keeps swinging back and forth.
Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion

Birger Fredriksen
Consultant, formerly with World Bank, Washington DC
Email: Bfredriksen@worldbank.org

Key words: Education in Sub-Saharan Africa; Political economy of education reforms

Summary: The need for Africa to “adjust, revitalize and expand” their education systems as called for in the 1988 Report is even more urgent today than in 1988. The reforms called for were broadly sound, but were largely not implemented because of the complex political economy of education reforms in stagnant economies, led by weak governments with little credibility and legitimacy. Therefore, despite Sub-Saharan Africa’s education and economic progress over the last decade, the Region continues to fall behind other developing regions on most education, social and economic indicators.

Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion was published in 1988 at a time when Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) faced serious education decline after the remarkable progress achieved since independence. The Report identified “stagnation of enrollment and erosion of quality” as the “main educational issues” at that time, and concluded that “addressing these issues will require additional resources” and “…profound changes in educational policies for many countries. Indeed, for many African countries, the first will not be obtainable without the second” (p.2). As stated in the Preface, the objective was to synthesize common education problems and data, provide these to country officials and suggest specific policy directions for the “…considerations by national education authorities and by donors”. The Report would “…meet its objective if it helps initiate serious reflection and debate in Africa on the future directions in the sector”. To break the cycle of education decline was considered crucial to Africa’s future.

The report was a “first” in many ways: The first World Bank Policy Study on education in SSA and the first such report on which there was extensive consultations with African education leaders and donors. It was also a report on which there were many follow-up actions, including leading to the creation of the “Association for the Development of Education in Africa” (ADEA), originally designed to better coordinate education aid to SSA as indicated by its initial name “Donors to African Education” (DAE). And while perhaps not the first to do so, the Report did state that “education is a basic right” (p.7). But the Report was also criticized by some for applying the “adjustment theology” to the education sector, a critique that I think largely failed to understand the seriousness of the education crisis SSA countries faced. But then I am hardly unbiased because I was part of the team preparing the Report!

More than twenty years after its publication, most of the Report’s recommendations are still relevant. In one way, this is disturbing; it could suggest no impact. From another
point of view, this could suggest that the report’s analyses and recommendations were solid and have stood the test of time. I think the recommendations were solid, but that they are still relevant today because, until the last 5-10 years, African education systems have been very slow to reform. Why is this so?

Many of the macro-economic adjustment programs designed in the 1980s failed because they under-estimated the seriousness of the economic crisis and, especially, the quality of the political leadership required to handle the very difficult political economy of the reforms needed. In education, both the seriousness of the crisis and the broad lines of the reforms needed were almost as clear 20-30 years ago as they are today. However, similar to many macro-economic adjustment programs, the Report under-estimated the complex political economy of education reform in countries with stagnant economies, led by weak governments with low credibility and little legitimacy.

When the Report was written, the cold war was still on, South Africa was still under Apartheid, and the number of elected governments in SSA could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Furthermore, the Report somewhat optimistically states that “…most African governments have initiated the necessary economic reforms – with some good results. In 1986, real income per capita rose in low income Africa for the first time in the 1980s” (p. xi). With the benefits of hindsight we know that it would take another decade for sound macro-economic reforms to start to take root, and for average per capita income to stop declining. As a result, in 2000, SSA’s GDP per capita was about one-third lower than in 1970 and the good growth seen this decade has only been able to bring it back to where it was in 1980. As a result of the dismal economy, education budgets in SSA increased by only about 1% annually over the period 1980–1999 as compared to more than 3% annual growth in the school age population.

One important lesson from successful countries is that strong political commitment is a pre-requisite for successful implementation, especially of politically difficult reforms. It is easier to mobilize this type of commitment in fast-growing economies that generate the extra resources needed to finance the reforms than in slow-growing economies where the resources needed must be reallocated from other purposes. This type of “political economy” constraint is an important -- and often neglected -- factor explaining why education reforms often have lagged behind in SSA compared to other regions. Good reforms require buy-in and support from key stakeholders and, especially the teachers. That support was difficult to mobilize in the 1980s and 1990s when teacher salaries and working conditions eroded massively.

We live in a time where we increasingly “treasure what we can measure”, and to measure the impact of a report such as this is not easy. However, not much measurement is required to conclude that the Report’s impact went well beyond its costs. Indeed, even some small positive changes in the policies of one of the 48 SSA countries covered would out-weigh its preparation costs, which would equal that of constructing a few primary schools. And the Report’s main contribution was exactly what the Report said it wanted it to be, i.e., to help “initiate serious reflection and debate in Africa on the future directions in the sector”. Much of this “reflection and debate” has taken place within the
framework of ADEA, a network that has contributed in a major way to the improved quality of the dialogue on education policy issues that has taken place in Africa over the last two decades.

But despite the SSA’s education and economic progress over the last decade, progress continues to be too slow, and SSA continues to fall behind other regions. SSA’s main achievement over the last decade was to turn from economic decline to growth. Other developing regions were growing when SSA declined and have now accelerated that growth. For example, between 2000 and 2007, GDP per capita increased annually by 3.7% in SSA, a level of growth not seen since the 1970s. However, the growth in Latin America was 4.5%, in South Asia 7.0% and in East Asia 9.6%. In fact, most of the basic economic and social problems that were common “developing country problems” 40-50 years ago are increasingly SSA problems. When “new” challenges such as the impact of HIV/AIDS and climate change are added, the combined effect of these challenges is so overwhelming that, in the absence of especially concerted national efforts on a scale and nature radically different from the past, the risk of SSA continuing to fall further behind is very real.

While education alone cannot help Africa address these challenges, if African countries had managed to implement the type of reforms proposed in this Report, they likely would have been better equipped today to handle these challenges. Therefore, the need for African countries to “adjust, revitalize and expand” their education systems is unfortunately even more urgent today than in 1988.

Follow-up reading


0-0-0-0-0
**Education and Knowledge: Basic Pillars of Changing Production Patterns with Social Equity.** Santiago, Chile: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and UNESCO

Noel McGinn  
Nahant, Massachusetts (formerly Harvard University)  
Email: nmcginn@igc.org

**Keywords:** Education and Knowledge; ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean); Chile

**Summary:** This piece discusses the aforementioned report and classifies it as one that encouraged new lines of research and the use of certain terms, but also as one which has had little impact on public policy.

This book (and related works) was on its publication hailed as a new vision of development. Neostructuralism, an alternative to neoliberalism emphasizes that economic competitiveness requires social justice and equity, which can be achieved only by a radical restructuring of the production system of society. The publisher, ECLAC, is primarily a UN-linked center for macroeconomic research and policy analysis that advises Latin American governments.

The principal author of the book, Fernando Fajnzylber, was at the time director of ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean). Ernesto Ottone and Juan Carlos Tedesco were close collaborators. The book was published in both Spanish and English and is available on Amazon.com. There are 47,900 hits for Fernando Fajnzylber, in Google, but this particular work is among the least frequently cited. The book may be less widely referenced than his other writings because Fajnzylber, the author, died a year after its publication. In 2007 the UN published *Fernando Fajnzylber: A renovating vision of development for Latin America*, in Spanish.

Fajnzylber accepts findings of research that show that a society’s gains in economic productivity come principally through changes in technology, rather than because of higher levels of education in the labor force. He then goes on to show that about half the changes in technology are produced at the level of the firm. These changes, he argues, are the result of innovations introduced by workers in the firm, rather than investments in new equipment. He then analyzes the conditions that favor technological innovation in the firm by workers. He reports that the most innovative firms are those in which workers work in groups, information flows freely through the firm, and benefits flow equitably to all participants. These kinds of firms encourage workers to innovate, to produce knowledge, and to construct a shared view of their collective work. Development is enhanced when a society re-organizes its institutions and organizations to produce knowledge through innovation, that is, to learn. These arguments had been made earlier (for example in the so-called Japanese production model) but they were unfamiliar in
Latin America and a clear alternative to the dominant perspective brought to Chile by economists trained in the United States.

The book had a great impact on my own thinking. Research and field work in educational planning and policy analysis had convinced me that popular proposals for educational reform had little relevance for actual conditions in schools. Ministries of education had no way to observe whether policies were implemented, and if so, whether they had any effect. So I focused on how to re-organize schools and education systems to become learning organizations. As you know, progress in education reform is slow too.

Chile has enjoyed steady economic growth during the past 20 years, and a future president, Ricardo Lagos, publicly espoused Fajnzylber’s ideas. But there has been little or no improvement in income distribution or other measures of social equity in Chile. The “knowledge society” is held up as an ideal, but both education and methods of production are largely unchanged. Other Latin American countries, perhaps with the exception of Brazil, have reformed even less. Had Fajnzylber lived longer (he was only 53 when he died) he no doubt would have developed and promoted his ideas more widely, perhaps onto a world stage. This particular work can be classified, therefore, as one that encouraged new lines of research and the use of certain terms, but which has had little impact on public policy.

Development Reports – Are they Useful?!

Lennart Wohlgemuth
University of Gothenburg
Email: lennart.wohlgemuth@bredband.net

Keywords: World reports

Summary: There are some good that can and does come out of the many new doctrines, international reports and declarations we have seen over the last few decades. Even if some of them reinvent the wheel, they do help to keep issues high on the agenda over time. Moreover, through the declarations, conventions and agreements reached, a normative framework is established and upheld. This fact should in no way be underestimated.

Fads come and go in the sphere of development like in all areas of societal behaviour, something I have confirmed in my own research (Wohlgemuth 1997, Carlsson and Wohlgemuth, 2000). A development pessimist or cynic will stress this fact and see for example the Swedish model of Partnership of 1998 and the Paris Agenda of 2005 as such fads which soon will have left for new brilliant ideas. But a development optimist would, on the other hand, see each trend or fad as an opportunity to grasp more for the
underprivileged. Many countries, particularly in Asia, have in the past benefited from such a proactive policy taking advantage of what is at that particular time possible. I myself am inclined to support the development optimist ideas above. This was what I stated in my article on Partnership revisited in Norrag News of December 2008 and this is still my opinion.

Having been a bureaucrat, activist and researcher in the field of development for more than 40 years I have seen many new doctrines, international reports and declarations coming and going, from the first declaration during the first development decade in the 1960s to the more recent documents on Education for All, the Millennium Goals, the Monterey agreement and the Paris declaration. The lack of patience to see an agreement or declaration rooted and developed into actions, the lack of resources allocated to implement all good intentions, the lack of prioritization between them and the often patriarchal behaviour by the countries in the North towards the countries who are mostly to benefit from the new ideas could make anyone both cynical and a development pessimist. But I persist in believing that there is some good that can and also does come out of these processes.

First of all I think that there is an intrinsic value of keeping issues like the asymmetry in the relation between the rich and the poor nations of this world high on the agenda over time. If this requires the reinvention of the wheel again and again, so be it. Every time a new report is prepared and a new commission is releasing its statements, new people often with considerable influence on world opinions have to face the issues of asymmetry and unequal access to resources and to try to come to grips with the questions which might change this state of affairs. Often new matters are raised and new points are taken into the fore. The increased emphasise in the reports of the last decade on the unfair and antiquated way of organising agriculture policy in the North is well articulated in for example the Africa Commission report of 2005.

Secondly through the declarations, conventions and agreements reached in this way a normative framework is established and upheld. This fact should in no way be underestimated. Without such a normative framework constantly being discussed and worked on, the world would be an even more unjust and predatory place than it already is. And the norms often come in very handy when a new issue is being taken up and ways of implementation are being sought. Thus the Genocide Convention and the Universal declaration of Human Rights, both adopted 61 years ago in December 1948 by the United Nations, are, despite all the limits in their implementation, norm-setting frameworks, which can be instrumental in enhancing human security. With the International Criminal Court the genocide convention more than half a century after its adoption turned into a powerful legal framework and tool. This would not be possible if the convention had not been adopted. The same applies to many other normative frameworks, such as the Rights of the Child, which at the initiative of UNICEF were adopted 20 years ago. Despite the dismal conditions children are still confronted with in large parts of the world, the absence of such a convention would not improve their situation. The land mine convention and the convention for the indigenous minority rights are similar cases in point. They testify to the need to create and institutionalise normative paradigms, against
which culprits can be measured and taken to task. In the worst case, this has no positive effect. But often, it helps to move (if only by tiny steps) into the right direction and to advance.

As I stated in my previous article, an issue such as the Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness and ownership can seem to be a short-term pie in the sky. But seen over a long time perspective it reiterates issues of importance, gives a chance for those countries that can grapple the opportunity created; and it adds to the normative framework which for certain will lead to new Paris Declarations – of course under new names and with new terminology – to come back within a not to distant future. Development towards a more decent world is not a linear process but goes in ups and downs and hopefully - and that is what has kept me hoping and striving all through my life - in a positive direction.

References


The Delors Commission and Report

Alexandra Draxler
Formerly Editor, Prospects
Secretary of the Delors Commission and its follow-up, 1993 – 2000
Email: a.draxler@gmail.com

Keywords: Delors Report

Summary: This paper takes a somewhat philosophical look at the purpose and uses of international reports, using the Delors report as a case example. While international reports are ostensibly formulated to gather evidence to influence policy, their impact is more nuanced unless they are directly linked to funding or they produce league tables that agitate taxpayers, parliamentarians and governments. The Delors report chose to offer a different vision for education than the dominant utilitarian, economic one at the time.

Preamble

International reports are in principle, aimed at gathering authoritative evidence that can improve policy and practice. A secondary tacit purpose is often that of strengthening the position of the institution from which a report is issued. An irony of international reports is that they attempt to be evidence-based, but very rarely turn the lens of evidence-
seeking on their own product to learn what purposes they actually serve. So, hard facts about the impact of such reports are very scant. A second irony is that there is in general not a great deal of evidence about how evidence influences policy and practice in general. As Paul Krugman\(^8\) wrote recently in the New York Times\(^9\) about the resistance to financial regulation: “When I first began writing for The Times, I was naïve about many things. But my biggest misconception was this: I actually believed that influential people could be moved by evidence, that they would change their views if events completely refuted their beliefs. And to be fair, it does happen now and then”.

*Mutatis mutandis*, his view – that I share – can be applied to education policy. Belief systems in general are extremely resistant to facts, and beliefs about what constitute good education and how to produce it are no exception. Added to this is the very real dilemma that the broad aims of education - enhancing both individual and societal well-being – are complex and somewhat contradictory. What enhances individual well-being by liberating individual creativity and self-confidence may not be a direct enough path to, say, economic growth, to be a priority for some governments. Conversely, the type of education that maintains social cohesion in the past by emphasizing adherence to national identity, common values, and self-sacrifice and by a certain amount of coercion - gentle or not, is no longer acceptable in most modern democracies. Education systems, to paraphrase Hannah Arendt\(^10\), need constantly to promote both continuity and change.

**So, what purpose do international reports serve?**

- What is the target audience? The reality is that very few international reports are widely read in detail except by academics and graduate students; so that the executive summary and various factual sections (statistics, tables, graphs) are the only parts that make their way into the press or are absorbed by decision-makers. Those that contain league tables\(^11\) get a great deal of attention by the general public as well.

- How do they impact academics and policy? Reports influence academics quite a bit: graduate students spend time on these issues, and depending on the quality of the report, the academic spin-off can be important. And, in turn, graduates of education schools tend to attach importance to the power of research and analysis for policy; many of these graduates find their way into decision-making roles, giving them the potential to act on the basis of evidence. Reports that develop league tables or that are conceived as forming the basis for funding policy have a very direct impact on policy, reform, and practice. Other pieces in this issue address league tables. The first annual letter by Bill Gates for the Gates Foundation\(^12\) wherein he hinted that the Foundation’s three-year investment in small schools had not worked and that their future investments would focus on charter schools has created a lively discussion and undoubtedly a quiet re-ordering of priorities.

---

8 Recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences 2008.
10 In an essay on «The crisis in education».
11 For example, the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or UNDP’s Human Development Report, both of which are subject of discussion in this issue.
on the part of potential recipients. While Bill Gates’ annual letter is not an international report, statements from what is a major funder of education can be considered in the same category. Similarly, World Bank policies, expressed through reports and policy papers, have had strong influence on policy and on practice. Reports by institutions such as UNESCO, that does not fund development, have a less direct impact.

- Can they influence country priorities? Clearly, in terms of international funding priorities, the World Bank has had the lead among donors to education in setting funding priorities. Truly international reports derive a certain legitimacy that complements more academic research by being collective works, by being widely consultative, and by developing a panorama of a broad set of issues, and in that sense they serve as reference points for trends and future directions to a certain extent.

- Do they change the discourse? Here is both the strongest demonstrable influence on the world of ideas and the weakest link to what actually happens. The discourse is influenced by publication more than anything else. The vocabulary of education development evolves through countless meetings, studies, publications, and international reports. Primary education became basic education, adult education became lifelong learning, and technical education became technical and vocational education and training through an essentially intellectual process of evolving both meaning and application of concepts. This is not a futile process, rather one in which the evolution of the discourse slowly affects policy and then funding priorities.

**The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century**

The Commission was established by the Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, in 1993. Its fifteen members (only about half of whom were directly involved with education matters at the time) and a small secretariat worked for three years, delivering a report in 1996 entitled “Learning: the Treasure Within”. What effect did it have? The best analogy is that of a “White Paper”: it informed but did not dictate legislation and policy at international level. It formed a backdrop for reflection by decision-makers. It was translated into more than 30 languages, was an integral part of policy debate in every country where a language version was available, and generated special initiatives in at least 50 countries. Schools and districts took the four pillars the report proposed as a way of viewing the purpose of education as a basis of reviewing their curricula. While systematic information-gathering was beyond the means of the follow-up secretariat, the evidence is that the report generated a great deal of interest.

The context in which the report was written was one of important changes in thinking about education and in education development policy. The humanistic and optimistic view dominant in the sixties and seventies of a holistic education aimed at both individual and societal progress had ceded predominance to a more utilitarian view based on policymakers’ desires to build human capital. The value of education was widely expressed in “rates of return” on investment (public and private) and helped reinforce a

---

14 “learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together”
strongly capitalistic and productivistic view of the value of education. The Delors commission’s conclusions were more philosophical than directly practical, as such international texts inevitably are. It proclaimed a deeply humanistic vision of education as a holistic process, linking the acquisition of knowledge to practice, and balancing individual with collective competence. It posited the fundamental and idealistic view of education as much broader than economics:

“The Commission has put greater emphasis on one of the four pillars that it proposes and describes as the foundations of education: learning to live together, by developing an understanding of others and their history, traditions and spiritual values and, on this basis, creating a new spirit which, guided by recognition of our growing interdependence and a common analysis of the risks and challenges of the future, would induce people to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way. Utopia, some might think, but it is a necessary Utopia, indeed a vital one if we are to escape from a dangerous cycle sustained by cynicism or by resignation.”

Was this an influential outcome? If we are to judge by the current reality, with global economic crisis, growing inequality, indifference of the rich to the poor, indifference of the current generation to the legacy it is leaving future generations, and growing violence inside nations that is not called war, then the answer has to be a resounding “no”. Was it a useful and necessary outcome? For all those who believe that defence of human dignity, equality, and idealism are worthwhile goals, any reminder such as the Delors report is important. For all those who believe that debate about ideas and principles is necessary even if their direct usefulness cannot be proved, the answer is “yes”. After all, Paul Krugman has not stopped writing his columns in spite of his admission of earlier naïveté about their influence.

For more reading:
To Use or Not to Use: The Politics of the Report!

Crain Soudien
University of Cape Town
Email: Crain.Soudien@uct.ac.za

Keywords: South Africa; UNESCO GMR; Best/Good Practice

Summary: “Big reports” do matter; in a number of countries governments are structuring their budgets and their policies directly around the significance of these reports, and by what these reports take as “best/good practice”. But there is not yet a robust discussion of the politics behind the reports.

The policy arena, almost everywhere in the world, is awash with comparative reports of one kind or another. This is particularly so with respect to fields such as education and health. In education, reports have been generated by a range of international agencies based on what are assumed to be indices that matter! But do they matter? What difference do they make? Do they produce any real improvements in relation to the contexts they purport to describe? Strikingly, as even a cursory engagement with the discussion around the import of reports shows in countries like Taiwan, Hong Kong and Korea, the impact is strong. We are seeing major centralising interventions in a number of countries where governments are structuring their budgets and their policies directly around the significance of these reports.

The responses of people in authority, in administrative departments running large systems, are, however, not uncontroversial. In many parts of the world questions are being posed about the instrumental ways in which reports have spoken to national contexts and the privileging of narrow economistic questions. Interestingly, this rumbling, even disquiet, notwithstanding, there is not yet a robust discussion of the politics behind the reports. This, it needs to be said, is profoundly inadequate, in relation to what the reports are doing and how they have begun to set in motion new forms of conditioning amongst policy-makers. Almost imperceptibly, we have moved into a new governmentality with the way we have used global reports. They have come to discipline the thinking of administrators, policy-makers and bureaucrats in ways that partially open up questions, and also close down others.

How this has played itself out in South Africa - the land of reports, as Kenneth King describes it - is very interesting. The reports have shown, TIMMS, PIRLS, GMEFA, inter alia, very valuably, just how distressed the South African education system is. For the last few years of the last century and much of the early parts of the new century, The Third International Mathematics and Science Study Repeat (TIMMS) placed Grade 8 South African learners last amongst all the participating countries for learner attainment in mathematics and science, significantly below comparable countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Chile. They were scoring 44% below the mean attainment of all participating countries. The reports allowed, again very
valuably, questions to be raised about the government’s commitments to early childhood education, increasing access to adult basic education, achievement rates at the terminal Grade 12 level, about the ability of the education system to retain learners in school beyond the compulsory phase of education, and, significantly about the quality, and indeed value, of the education being provided by the system.

Valuable as the opportunities for raising questions of political accountability have been, and even useful in drawing attention to social justice issues, they have, in the way indicators of comparison work, helped to obscure and inhibit other kinds of questions about the specific nature of South African education. The most important problem to emerge in the hegemony of the ‘global report’, and here the EFA Global Monitoring Report is probably the major example, relate to the easy ways in which the concept of ‘best practice’ has been allowed to settle on the planning imagination. There are many lines of thought that one can pursue here. Most pertinently for this discussion, is that the idea of ‘best practice’ has completely displaced the possibility of asking the question of what kind of education system would be most appropriate for the contemporary South African context. Not a single new policy has posed the question in the light of what is appropriate. Everything has been presented in terms of what is in ‘the country’s best interests.’ The result has been the seduction of a people, with trade unions complicit, into regimes of teaching and learning that have been not simply inadequate but inappropriate. The tragedy for the South African situation is that at the very moment that the country achieved its democracy, it subverted the potential of that democracy with the ‘disciplining’ instruments of the global report. Into all the elaborate forums and structures for consultation it had established, it inserted the discourse of ‘best practice.’ The opportunity of developing a culture of ‘good practice’, was, as a consequence, foregone.

Where does this leave policy practice, throughout the world, in relation to the ‘big’ reports? First of all, the ‘big reports’ do matter. It is important that the world manages itself comparatively. It is important than one has a sense of what the quality of experience of schooling, health and so on is for children across the globe. But the nature of the comparison cannot be naïve. Comparison needs to be aware of the asymmetries that exist when the very act of determining norms is undertaken. One need not be a helpless relativist and deny that comparison has any value whatsoever, but the comparison has to be aware of the very distinct ways into which a young boy or girl is inserted into a learning context in different parts of the world. What this means, and this is an old-lesson, that what is appropriate for Janet in the South Downs of England may not be appropriate for Mpho in the foothills of the Drakensberg in South Africa. The key challenge confronting the policy-maker right now is determining what ‘good’ practice is for a child anywhere in the world. And of course, especially if a country has few historical examples to call on itself, Janet’s experience might be a useful. But then a learning system would want to know what elements of Janet’s experience fit into Mpho’s context. Until and unless it does this, the real value of the global report and its attendant best practices is critically limited.
Which Text is More Sacred for Education Targets: Jomtien, Dakar or MDGs?

Ingemar Gustafsson
University of Stockholm
Email: ingemar.gustafsson@interped.su.se

Keywords: Jomtien; Dakar; EFA; education MDGs

Summary: This piece asks: Which text is more sacred: the Jomtien Declaration (1990), the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), or the education Millennium Development Goals (2000)?

The Jomtien Declaration of 1990, and the process leading up to it, were meant to be the beginning of a new era in which priority would be given to Basic Education for All by national governments, donors and NGOs. But what kind of education for what kind of purpose? The Declaration talks about the need for an “expanded vision.” It would not be sufficient for the partners to recommit themselves to “basic education as it now exists” (The Jomtien Declaration, 1990 p. 4). It would mean a broadening of the means and scope of education, notably early childhood education and education of adults. It was also emphasised that all possible instruments of information, communication and social action would be used i.e. too much focus in the past had been on primary education for young people. The environment for learning should be changed and new partnerships (State/NGO and donor) should be created. In brief it was a holistic or systemic perspective on education and development. Education for All was seen as the most important objective within a broad context of national policy making and planning, including donor support. Ten years later this expanded vision was translated into the six Dakar goals and a programme of action in the Dakar Framework for Action.

This initiative coincided with the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in which only two of the Dakar goals are reflected. These two goals focus on basic education for all children by 2015 and on gender equity. Two years later, a financing mechanism was created to speed up implementation known as the Fast Track Initiative (FTI); this was set up to promote the two MDGs relating to education and it puts more emphasis on “completion” of primary education than on “access.” This is a way to signal urgency and need to speed up the process, but clearly unrealistic. The formation of a new international financing mechanism was a strong signal to the international donor community and to countries which receive aid that what matters in the end is money spent on primary education for children. However commendable this is, it is clearly a strong move away from the “expanded vision” at Jomtien.

So which of these frameworks and underlying perceptions about education and development will prevail?
The Global Monitoring Report (GMR), created as a tool for follow-up of the Dakar Plan of Action, has insisted that reporting should be based on the six Dakar goals. Also, the thematic part as well as the index worked out to measure progress, have taken a systemic approach to education.

Whatever impact it may have on policy and planning, this is likely to be outweighed by another tension in international cooperation of which the creation of the Fast Track Initiative is only a reflection. This is the so called Paris process resulting in the Paris Declaration in 2005 and follow up in Accra, three years later. The whole international system of development cooperation is moving in two different directions. The Paris Declaration says that development results are mainly the result of national and integrated policies and plans for poverty reduction to which donors are expected to provide funds which are not earmarked. The other is the strong tendency among the donors to target funds and to earmark them for a particular purpose (primary education for example). A reflection of this is the mushrooming of so called vertical funds, notably in the health sector.

So, the most likely scenario at the country level is that Ministers of Education will try to take a holistic view on their education system, at least within the mandate of the Ministry of Education. The donors will continue to say that this is right in principle and if they have read the Jomtien Declaration and the GMRs they will refer to them. The GMR has gained international recognition and credibility in a short time as “the” international report in education. At the same time each donor will reserve the right to earmark or target funds according to their priorities. The Fast Track Initiative is not neutral in this process. Its mandate is simply too narrow for the agendas from Jomtien and Dakar. Hence, it is not surprising that the GMR has had a critical tone when it comes to analysing the role of donors and the FTI.

The outcome of the dialogue between governments, donors and NGOs at the national level will look different in each case but the most likely outcome is that donor funds will continue to be targeted or earmarked to just one or other objective within the broader context of the Dakar Framework of Action, rather than encompassing all six goals.

0-0-0-0-0
Education and the Global Financial Crisis. What to Do?
Organise a Global Conference!

Claudio de Moura Castro
Positivo, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
Email: claudiodemouracastro@me.com

In the nineties, poor countries achieved considerable educational progress. However, 72 million children are still out of school and the recent financial crisis threatens their future.

At best, these countries could raise half of the 16 billions required to meet the established goals. But even those inadequate funds would compete poorly with expenditures that have greater political clout – but not the same beneficial impact.

With the financial crisis hitting hard the donor countries, their willingness to spend lavishly to rescue responsible and irresponsible banks contrasts with their reticence in spending for foreign aid. They do not seem willing to foot the bill. As for the multilateral agencies, for lack of better ideas, they convene more international conferences.
THE GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT (GMR) AS THE WORLD’S EDUCATION REPORT
Reflections on UNESCO’s World Education Reports and the Global Monitoring Reports on Education for All

John Daniel
Commonwealth of Learning
Email: jdaniel@col.org

Keywords: UNESCO World Education Report; EFA GMR

Summary: This piece comments on the transition from UNESCO’s World Education Reports of the 1990s to the series of Global Monitoring Reports on Education for All that began in 2001.

The World Education Reports (WER) pre-dated my arrival at UNESCO as Assistant Director-General for Education (ADG-ED) in 2001. There have been a number of scholarly analyses of these reports and their impact (e.g. Spaulding & Chaudhuri, 1999). I simply comment that WER editor-in-chief, John Smyth, was spoken of with reverence in the corridors of UNESCO. It seemed that that WER had been very much his personal project. No doubt he consulted with colleagues, but the choice of topics and the way they were addressed in each report were heavily influenced by his views. I also detected some regret, particularly from UNESCO Education Sector colleagues whose work was not in the area of Education for All (e.g. those in Higher Education), that UNESCO had traded the broad focus of the WER for the narrower focus of the Global Monitoring Reports (GMR).

I take a more positive view for two reasons. First, the GMR are an invaluable series of well-researched documents on progress towards the goals articulated at Dakar in 2000. In writing my own forthcoming book on achieving Education for All (Daniel, 2010) they were a most precious resource. Second, the GMR became the fulcrum that supported UNESCO’s wider work on the Education for All (EFA) agenda. Here some background is necessary.

In the run-up to the Dakar World Forum on Education for All in 2000, the World Bank had assumed that it would take the lead in following up on the recommendations that emerged. In the event, however, UNESCO manoeuvred itself into this role, although later in the year when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed at the UN, the World Bank was rewarded by being charged with managing progress towards them. The MDG subsumed, in abbreviated form, two of the Dakar goals, Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Gender Equality in schools, which led the World Bank to use the term EFA to refer primarily to UPE after the Millennium Summit.

In discharging its role as the lead agency for implementing the Dakar Framework for EFA, UNESCO faced two challenges. First, since it is not a donor agency, it could not back its advocacy for EFA with any substantial funds. Second, it was regarded by most donors as the least credible and functional of the four UN agencies that had come...
together at Dakar (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP & the World Bank). All these agencies, however, relied on the UNESCO Institute of Statistics for data on the development of education, which led DFID and the other donors to decide to beef up UNESCO’s measurement function for EFA by funding the Global Monitoring Reports.

In UNESCO terms the multi-year grant for the EFA-GMR was large and it allowed UNESCO to set up a dedicated, and independent unit for the purpose. Furthermore, and uniquely in my experience as Assistant Director-General for Education, Director-General Matsuura made no attempt to interfere with the management of this unit by appointing people to it for political purposes. This meant that we could appoint a series of outstanding leaders to direct the EFA-GMR: Chris Colclough; Nick Burnett; and Kevin Watkins.

My policy and that of Abhimanyu Singh, who had overall responsibility for EFA coordination, was to let these competent directors get on with the job, helping to remove administrative roadblocks from their paths as necessary. After Nick Burnett moved to become Assistant Director-General for Education in 2007 he remarked that he had far more freedom and autonomy of decision when heading the EFA-GMR than he did as ADG-ED.

The EFA-GMR provided an essential support for UNESCO’s other high-profile EFA activities, the annual meetings of the High-Level Group and the biennial meetings of the E9 (Education Ministers of the 9 largest developing countries). I believe that the role of the EFA-GMR as the informational foundation for these meetings ensured that the reports were widely studied, reinforcing an already efficient dissemination system. Indeed, the EFA-GMR provided much of the spice at these meetings through arguments about the validity of enrolment figures.

Journalists present enjoyed seeing ministers confronted by the differences between their own optimistic news releases and the data their own ministries had supplied to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. In some cases these differences had legitimate grounds in the timing of the data, and one useful impact of the EFA-GMR has been to reduce from three years to two the time lag in reporting education data.

I believe that the EFA-GMR have played a very useful role in guiding countries and development agencies in their pursuit of EFA. By having a special focus each year on one of the six goals that make up the EFA framework they have also helped to counter the World Bank’s tendency to make EFA synonymous with UPE.

The UPE campaign has achieved considerable success in this decade and as the Dakar target date of 2015 approaches no doubt more attention will be paid to the remaining EFA goals and to the expansion of secondary and tertiary education. What sort of information support will there be for these new thrusts? Daniel (2010, p. 104) comments:

‘UNESCO has made an invaluable contribution to the EFA campaign through its impressive series of Global Monitoring Reports – without which it would have been
difficult to write this book. There is an adage that ‘if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it’, and the data and analyses in the GMRs have strongly supported national and international efforts. The GMRs should continue to focus tightly on the Dakar goals until 2015. After that there is a strong case either for giving them a broader focus, like the earlier series of World Education Reports, or focusing on post-basic education. Already countries that have the EFA goals in sight are placing a new emphasis on tertiary education. We suggest that regular monitoring reports that focused on all the inter-related components of the complex world of post-basic education, from senior secondary through skills training to postgraduate, would be more useful than a narrower focus. Just as the GMRs have done, such reports could single out one sector for special treatment each year.’

References


A Couple of Quick Reflections on the Education for All GMR

Kevin Watkins
EFA GMR team, at UNESCO, Paris
Email: k.watkins@unesco.org

Keywords: UNESCO GMR

Summary: A few reflections from the UNESCO EFA Report Director on how widely used the GMRs are at country level.

Even though the GMR is not an official UN report it carries 'official' weight because of the data. This is obviously important for governments and media around the world. One of the indicators for success in my view is a healthy volume of complaints from governments and aid donors - and we appear to be doing quite well on that front!

Governments generally prefer to keep national inequalities in education private. This year we have had sharp political reactions from India, Turkey and the Philippines to name a few. In the latter case, the report is feeding into a national election debate on education.

In terms of national coverage of the GMR, the impacts are uneven in two respects. First, in some countries we struggle to get beyond headline data on out of school populations,
while in others we get detailed analytical pieces. Second, there are big variations in the volume of coverage. Europe and the US are always difficult for example.

Ranking the World on Education? The Education For All Development Index of the GMR

Roy Carr-Hill
University of York and Institute of Education, London
Email: roycarrhill@yahoo.com

Keywords: EFA, EFA EDI (Education Development Index)

Summary: The EFA Development Index is a ‘dead index’ this piece argues; the proxies used to measure it are quite far from the original goals, the aggregation (of 4, not 6 EFA goals) is doubtful, and it is rarely quoted.

Introduction: What is the EDI

The EFA Development Index (known as EDI) has been calculated and included in the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) since 2003/04. In principle, the index is meant to reflect all the EFA goals but this is very difficult because although there usually is national data for goal 1 (early childhood education and care) these are not comparable and the alternative (data available from the Multiple Indicator Cluster - MICS - surveys) only provides coverage for a limited number of countries; and it is not yet obvious how to measure and monitor goal 3 (learning needs of young people and adults). The EFA DI\textsuperscript{15}, as measured, is based only on the four most easily quantifiable EFA goals, and even then the proxies used are often quite far from the original concept:

1. universal primary education (goal 2), proxied by the total primary net enrolment ratio;\textsuperscript{16}
2. adult literacy (goal 4), proxied by the literacy rate for those aged 15 and above;\textsuperscript{17}
3. gender parity and equality (goal 5), proxied by the gender-specific EFA index (GEI), which is an average of the GPIs for primary and secondary gross enrolment ratios and the adult literacy rate;
4. quality of education (goal 6), proxied by the survival rate to grade 5.

\textsuperscript{15} In this note EFA DI is used rather than EDI, in order to distinguish the education-specific index from the HDI.
\textsuperscript{16} The total primary NER includes children of primary school age who are enrolled in either primary or secondary education.
\textsuperscript{17} The literacy data used are based on ‘conventional’ assessment methods – either self- and third-party declarations or educational attainment proxies – and thus should be interpreted with caution; they are not based on any test and may therefore overestimate the level of functional literacy in the society.
The GMR gives equal weight to each of the proxies on the rather doubtful argument that each goal is equally important if EFA is to be achieved as a whole; rather doubtful because the index only includes 4 of the 6 goals. The EFA DI value for a particular country is the arithmetical mean of the four indicators and falls between 0% and 100%, or between 0 and 1, where 1 would represent full EFA achievement as summarized by the EFA DI.\textsuperscript{18}

The calculation is not always obvious; in particular because the GPIs, on which the GEI is based, which are the ratio of females to males in enrolment ratios or the literacy rate, can exceed unity when more girls/women than boys/men are enrolled or literate. Because this might theoretically give an indicator greater than 100% or 1, for the purposes of the index, the F/M formula is inverted to M/F in cases where the GPI is higher than 1. The GMR say that this still maintains “the GEI’s ability to show gender disparity”. But the inversion only happens for specific countries with specific enrolment ratios and so the resulting index for that country is therefore not comparable with other countries; and no matter that the rest of the world interprets the GPI – and the GEI -solely in terms of female disadvantage.

The index is not\textit{ comparable} over time as more countries are included each year rising from 94 since its introduction in the 2003/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report to 129 in the present edition.

**Why (for what purpose and for which stakeholders) is there an EFA DI?**

The GMR says: “While each of the six EFA goals is individually important, it is also useful to have a means of indicating achievement”; and that “as a simple average, the EDI may mask important variations among its components: for example, results for goals on which a country has made less progress can offset its advances on others. Since all the EFA goals are equally important, a synthetic indicator such as the EDI is thus very useful to inform the policy debate on the prominence of all the EFA goals and to highlight the synergy among them of EFA as a whole” (both quotes from GMR, 2008). A synthetic indicator can only ever be useful – and not necessarily so – if there really is synergy between the different phenomena AND the indicators reflect that synergy (through their high inter-correlations).

It seems to be difficult for these reports and their authors to learn the simple notion that indexes need to be developed for a purpose and there is no explicit purpose here (saying that an indicator is ‘very useful to inform the policy debate on the prominence of all the EFA goals’ does not provide a definition of the central ‘synergistic’ theme of EFA). Where this does not happen, there is a strong danger of reification of the index; that is, there is a tendency for the measure to appropriate the meaning of the construct, rather than understanding that the index is an imperfect estimate which may, only under limited circumstances, be convenient (see Carr-Hill and Dixon, 2004, section V).

\textsuperscript{18} For further explanation of the EDI rationale and methodology, see annex, The Education for All Development Index and the detailed values and rankings for 2005.
Is the EFA DI useful?

The EFA DI is competing in a world of indexes. Thus, apart from self-referencing (in subsequent GMRs) a Google search shows that the index has only ever been externally referenced by the Africa Progress Panel as one of 19 (yes, nineteen) unexplained ‘global’ indexes. The obvious ‘competitor’ is the Human Development Index (HDI).19

In order to compare them, we have looked only at those countries which are given a low EFA DI rank (the bottom 29 countries in the 2009 reports). The correlations between the EFA DI ranking, the ranking of its four components and the HDI ranking are given in Table 1. The correlation between the EFA DI ranking and the HDI ranking for these same 29 countries is high (0.8) which suggests that, at least at the bottom end of the ‘scale’, there is not much to choose between the two indexes. What is perhaps most surprising is that the correlation between the EFA DI rank and the ranking of countries by their Survival Rate to Grade 5 (one of the components of the EFA DI) is only 0.173. Where a correlation between an index and one of its components is so low, one would normally conclude that different phenomena were being measured.20 In this case, the difference may be that the Grade 5 Survival Rate is more dependent on the schooling system than the other components. Whatever the explanation, at the bottom end of the EFA DI ‘scale’, the Grade 5 Survival Rate does not reflect development towards EFA; and should not be considered as part of the same index.

Correlation between EDI ranking, its components and the HDI index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total primary rate</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate</th>
<th>Gender specific EFA index (GEI)</th>
<th>Survival Rate to Grade 5</th>
<th>Human Development Index Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDI ranking</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>0.810</td>
<td>0.766</td>
<td>0.173</td>
<td>0.800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The derivation of the EDI is a little weird; it does not seem to be used; and it is not internally coherent. What one might call a ‘dead’ index.

19 The Human Development Index a composite derived from life expectancy at birth, knowledge and education (a combination of the adult literacy rate and secondary/tertiary enrolment rates), and the standard or living (natural logarithm of GDP per capita).

20 A similar calculation of the correlations between the HDI and its own components, for the 29 countries at the bottom end of the EDI scale, gives respectable coefficients of 0.725 and 0.640; and, as expected, the correlations with the EDI rankings – 0.413 and 0.431 - are lower but still of course quite substantial. The GMR 2008 bases its argument on the “clear positive link between such survival rates and educational achievement in sub-Saharan African countries participating in the second Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II) assessment (R2 is around 34%)”. The conclusion here would appear to be that learning outcomes as measured through SACMEQ are also a different dimension.
References


Picking the Low Hanging Fruits, and Preparing to Reach those a Little Higher Up: Looking Ahead to 2012 – What EFA GMR Indicators of Skill?

Kenneth King, NORRAG, Scotland; Robert Palmer, NORRAG, Jordan

Emails: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk; Rob.Palmer@norrag.org

Keywords: Global Monitoring Report; GMR; skills; TVET; TVE; supply-led; demand-led

Summary: This piece assesses briefly how UNESCO’s Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs) have tended to treat the EFA Goal 3, ‘life-skills’, and comments on how a future GMR on skills might start to treat the monitoring of the diverse domain of skills. It acknowledges that GMR 2010 is itself a significant milestone in the recognition of the policy importance of skills.

Introduction

The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs) have so far covered almost all aspects of both the 1990 World Conference Jomtien agenda and the subsequent Dakar World Forum 2000 Goals. The GMR volumes have rapidly become essential reference works of global progress in primary education, gender parity in education, quality, adult literacy and early childhood education. But they have not treated at any length at all the Jomtien and Dakar skills’ or life skills’ goals. At least not till this year, 2010.

• ‘Learning and life-skills’ were included as one of Six Goals in the Dakar World Education Forum.
• ‘Other essential skills’ were an integral part of what the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All called the expanded vision of basic education.

The treatment of skills in the Global Monitoring Reports, 2002-2010

No serious attempt was made in the GMR process, until this year, 2010, to treat the conceptual richness, multiple locations and policy relevance of skills. Equally, no serious attempt was made in the GMRs (2002-2009) to monitor the coverage of skills or technical vocational education and training, apart from
• some reporting since 2003-4 of the total number of young people taking a technical stream during secondary schooling, and the proportion of girls within that;
• some very preliminary analysis of life skills; and,
• some background papers on nonformal education profiles for the GMR 2008.

Like earlier GMRs, the GMR 2009 (UNESCO, 2008) noted that monitoring of ‘life skills’ (EFA goal 3 and the latter part of goal 4) has been ‘stymied by problems of definition and lack of data’ (p.91), but made a commitment to address these issues ‘as part of an overarching theme’ in a future GMR (p.91). Indeed, there has now been agreement to cover Goal 3 in the GMR 2012.21 The GMR 2009 mentions a number of factors which have contributed to the neglect of monitoring skills to date, including the lack of clear quantitative targets and the ambiguity concerning the language of the commitment to the goal. The GMR 2009 also identified several steps towards more effective monitoring or life skills (see UNESCO, 2008). Like earlier GMRs (e.g. GMR 2008 and GMR 2007), the GMR 2009 appeared to assume that the focus of Goal 3 is non-formal education (NFE), especially for out of school youth.

However, the latest GMR (2010), which was released in mid-January 2010 (UNESCO, 2010), examines the issue of reaching and teaching the most marginalised, and makes a dramatic departure from earlier GMRs in its treatment of skills. It looks critically at the governments in Dakar who failed to agree any quantifiable targets for skills, but signed up to a third EFA goal that ‘amounts to a vague aspiration... [that]... has been the subject of quiet neglect’ (p.76); it goes on to note that this situation is ‘unfortunate’ (ibid.). It then proceeds to comment on the central importance that learning and skills play in the global knowledge-based economy, both with regard to economic growth and poverty reduction. Moreover, it claims that the global economic crisis ‘has pushed youth and adult skills and learning – goal 3... to the centre’ of the EFA agenda (p.6). And what type of skills is the GMR now talking about? Rather than the focus on NFE, which was the minimal angle in the earlier reports, the GMR 2010 made the decision to narrow ‘the wide-angle lens of goal 3... [to] focus... on skills and learning opportunities for young people provided through technical and vocational education programmes’ (p.76). The GMR 2010 devotes some 18 pages to discussing this, including providing regional snap shots. However, advocates for a complete treatment of skills in the GMR should not completely relax; the focus of the discussion on skills in the GMR 2010 very much concentrates on two dimensions: a) school-based technical and vocational education (TVE), and lists the usual tables on enrolment in TVE, or percentage of students enrolled in TVE in secondary school; and b) different formal training initiatives beyond the school system. There is significantly less attention given to informal/traditional apprenticeship training. Soft skills, such as literacy skills are of course reported on in the usual way (see table 2 in the GMR 2010 on adult and youth literacy), but other soft skills like problem solving and creative thinking skills, get less of a mention (but see p.82, 92).

21 The GMR 2011 will cover education in conflict affected countries.
Low hanging fruits: towards a better monitoring of school-based TVE

The GMR 2010 focus on TVE and formal vocational training may be an acknowledgement from the GMR team that the GMR 2012 on skills may only be able to focus on getting better information on school- college- and institute-based technical and vocational skills. While this does not of course do justice to the entire domain of skills, the lack of (comparable) data, beyond schools, may make this acceptable in the short term. But the data on school- and college-based TVE as reported in the GMRs could certainly be improved on in the GMR 2012. Below are a number of observations and suggestions in this regard:

• At the moment such data can often be confusing for analysts when the GMR data differs from that reported in country’s own official reports.
• The GMR data on TVE refers to enrolment in TVE at the secondary level, but we can’t tell from this what proportion of TVE is taking place at the lower- and upper-secondary levels.
• It would also be useful to disaggregate other dimensions of school-based TVE, for example providing data on separate TVE school systems compared to TVE streams within a more general curriculum.
• At the tertiary level, the GMRs contain no information on post secondary technical colleges or polytechnics, but only information on students’ field of study (e.g. ‘engineering, manufacturing and construction’ and ‘agriculture’).

Reaching a little higher: preparing for better monitoring outside the Ministries of Education

While the GMR 2012 on skills may focus its reporting on TVE, it should also engage – to the extent possible - with the wider domain of skills including literacy, numeracy and soft skills and technical and vocational skills (outside of Ministries of Education). The GMR 2012 could, first and foremost, seek to better compile and analyse what existing data sources countries have related to skills, from core skills, and life skills to TVET. It may only be possible to provide regional snap shots to illustrate this area – as indeed the GMR 2010 started to do. The GMR 2012 might also compile an inventory of:

• the range of survey instruments used to gather information across the different domains of skill in different countries; and,
• the range of available data on skills in different countries.

With regard to the monitoring of literacy, numeracy and soft skills, the GMR 2012 could examine the usefulness of current and planned approaches to assessing and monitoring skills in countries not currently covered by them (e.g. PISA, ALLS, DeSeCo and the new PIAAC).

When it comes to the monitoring of technical and vocational skills, there might be some merit in the GMR 2012 compiling an inventory of the range of survey instruments that have been used to gather information at the national, programme or project level, and to look at what has worked well or not so well, and why. For example, UNESCO’s Non-Formal Education Management Information System, may be one useful approach to
explore. Labour and household surveys in some countries also provide data on TVET, formal and informal (but in most cases these data collection instruments need to be improved to better capture TVET domains). A key challenge for monitoring technical and vocational skills is the importance of not simply focusing on supply side monitoring (like the supply-side orientation of the Dakar goals suggests). TVET monitoring requires the development of several data sets and associated indicators: those that relate to the demand side of TVET, the supply side of TVET, and those that show how TVET supply matches demand. The GMR 2010 also notes the importance of equity-based monitoring; so this should continue to be addressed for the skills domain also.

Concluding comments

The GMR is a useful monitoring tool to assess national and global progress towards the EFA Goals, but the degree to which it can monitor is obviously limited by the availability of data. Hence, a crucial step towards having better monitoring of the wide skills domain, including literacy, numeracy, soft skills and technical and vocational skills (work-, centre-, school- and institution-based, public and private), is to have better data on these issues at a national level. If donors and national governments are serious about this increased focus on skills – and if skills are really central to the EFA agenda as the GMR 2010 argues, then there needs to be significant attention paid to developing country-level national information systems regarding skills. Without such national level data, comparable data at international levels - and international monitoring will remain out of reach.

References


Further reading

[Relevant to the above discussion and to the future treatment of technical and vocational education statistics is the following announcement. Editor]

**New staff openings at the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)**
The UIS is recruiting mid-level professionals for new and existing positions in the Education Indicators and Data Analysis section. In particular, the UIS seeks a specialist technical and vocational education statistics. For more information check the UIS website: www.uis.unesco.org for further details.

0-0-0-0

**Reflections on the Use of the Global Development Reports with an Emphasis on Reports containing information about Early Childhood Care and Development**

Robert G. Myers  
Hacia una Cultura Democrática, A.C. (ACUDE)  
Email: rmyers@laneta.apc.org

*Keywords:* ECCD/E (early childhood care, development and education); ECCE (early childhood care and education); EFA reports; GMR

*Summary:* The EFA reports (Jomtien, Delhi, Amman, Dakar) and the UNESCO GMRs have put ECCD/E firmly on the agenda of nations and international organizations. They have also drawn attention to the field as related to annual reporting, and to aid advocacy efforts at national and international levels and to help change discourse.

Because my work during the last few years has been research, programme evaluation and advocacy related to early childhood care and development, I have chosen to focus on reports dealing with this topic. I will focus on the Education for All (EFA) reports (Jomtien (1990), New Delhi (1993), Amman (1996), Dakar (2000); and the Global Monitoring Reports.).

Prior to 1990 and Jomtien, early education was given a recognized place on the educational agenda in only a very few countries of the Majority World and even in those cases it was not given much attention. International organizations were not providing funding for education and development during the early years. The Jomtien Declaration and Plan of Action helped to change that.

---

22 About the only international organization that was systematically providing funding for ECCE/D programs in the Majority World was the Bernard van Leer Foundation. UNICEF provided some funding locally but was not significantly involved as yet. The Banks had not discovered ECCE/D.

23 Indeed, the real story here, which cannot be told in the brief space available, is about the organizational effort that led to including early childhood care, development and education (I will use the abbreviation ECCD/E) into the Declaration and Agenda for Action of Jomtien and helped to keep it there.
It would be an exaggeration to say that the stated commitment to ECCD/E that has become part of EFA, set out in the Jomtien and Dakar EFA documents as the first of several lines of action, has itself brought about major changes in thinking by governmental officials and the staff of international organizations. But it did mean that they had to pay more attention to it than in the past. It meant also that there was something written and with international backing to which advocates could point, providing an entry point for those advocates to bring to the attention of those whose job it now was to worry about such matters - new research results supporting investment in the early years and offering policy and programme suggestions. At an international level, for instance, the EFA statements have provided a firm base for advocacy activities of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development (www.ecdgroup.com). It is common to see the EFA documents quoted in national statements about ECCD/E.

Part of the heightened need to pay attention to the field is associated with the monitoring process which pressures countries to provide information for the annual EFA Global Report. It is certainly not correct to say that providing information or reading the statistical tables in these reports produces major to changes in policy and programming at country levels. On the other hand, the effort to produce statistics and indicators (now going well beyond what was available pre-Jomtien) does force continued attention to the field and feeds local advocacy efforts as well as at an international level.

The fact that a special GMR has been devoted to ECCD/E\textsuperscript{24} represents evidence that the topic has, in a sense, arrived. Moreover, the attention to care and development in that report as part of “education” and the inclusion of information about health and nutrition marks an important shift in the educational discourse which is typically much narrower in its focus. In other words, the discussion of early education goes well beyond a discussion of pre-school. How effective these shifts in discourse in the report have been in getting others to think more broadly is not yet clear.

It has been interesting to me to see how the statistical reporting has changed in these reports over the years. In the 2002 report, Table 4, dealing with ECCE provided information about 1) gross enrolments divided by male and female enrolments and, 2) for a very few countries, the % of new primary school entrants with ECCE experience. The report noted the lack of data and the fact that it was hard to compare enrolment figures because they were for different age groupings in each country and the duration of programs varied a great deal. The 2009 GMR includes two tables (3A and B) dealing, respectively with care (indicators of survival, well-being, provision for under 3s and women’s employment and maternal leave) and education (enrolment in pre-primary for 1999 and 2006, % enrolment in private institutions, gross and net enrolment ratios by sex, gross enrolment ratio in “preprimary and other ECCE programs”, and % new entrants to the first grade with ECCE experience).

In brief, I would say that the main effects of the various international reports in the ECCE field have been to put ECCD/E firmly on the agenda of nations and international organizations, to oblige attention to the field as related to annual reporting, to aid

\textsuperscript{24} Global Monitoring Report 2007. “Early Childhood Care and Education.”
advocacy efforts at national and international levels and to help change the discourse. The degree to which these reports help to promote more extensive and effective actions at national and international levels is probably related to the effectiveness of advocacy groups and/or “champions” in different locations and within particular institutions.

Yusuf Sayed
University of Sussex
Email: ymsyd1@gmail.com

Keywords: Quality; UNESCO GMR

Summary: Good quality education is a matter of public concern for all and a vital ingredient in the creation of a just and human society. Access, while important, is only the first step in providing good quality education for all, particularly for the marginalised and disadvantaged.

There are a number of reasons why there is a growing concern with the quality of education. First, as more children enrol in school (though there are still 72m out of school children), the question becomes what education people have access to. In this regard, there is a need to focus attention on meaningful learning in educational institutions and what Morrow referred to as providing learners with epistemic access. The second reason centres on the reality that quality has, as the GMR 2004 has shown, a significant effect on the decisions households and communities make in enrolling and staying on in education institutions. Yet these two reasons are not compelling in and of themselves to command the attention of policy and decision makers. What has driven the policy potentates’ concern with quality is what could be described as the assessment shock. This is the scramble for quick fix solutions to declines in student achievement scores in selected subjects as reflected in regional and international assessment exercises such as PISA, TIMMSs, SACMEQ. There is no better motivation it seems, for ministers of education to act, than languishing at the bottom of a League Table, no matter how problematic assessments may be.

A problem that bedevils policy discussion and dialogue is the lack of clarity about what constitutes good education quality. The GMR has outlined an approach to quality taking as its starting point Goal 6 of the EFA agenda agreed at the World Education Forum (WEF) at Dakar in 2000:

- Goal 6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Quality is at the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and
other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living. Evidence over the past decade has shown that efforts to expand enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to enhance educational quality if children are to be attracted to school, stay there and achieve meaningful learning outcomes.

What is notable about the WEF definition of quality above is that there is tendency to conflate good quality education with measurable progress in a limited range of learning areas. For example, no mention is made about social studies. The emphasis on universal notions of progress and enrichment. The definition essentially reduces quality to the satisfaction of ‘basic learning needs’. A significant omission is the focus on equity. Alexander (2007) argues that quality and equity are part of the same picture.

While the goal may not mention equity, the Dakar Expanded Framework of Action does state that there are eight conditions for ‘basic education of quality for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language, or ethnic origin’. The eight conditions that are identified, include

- healthy, well-nourished and motivated students
- well-trained teachers and active learning techniques
- adequate facilities and learning materials
- a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners
- an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe
- a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and, values
- participatory governance and management
- respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures

Building on the Dakar Framework and related research, the GMR has developed a framework of quality outlined in its 2004 report which posits an interrelationship between context, input, process, and outcome. However, it is unclear what the exact relationships are between the different dimensions and despite the stated intention, it reproduces an input, process and outcome model of quality. At the outcome level, the GMR definition emphasises cognitive development on the one hand and values, attitudes, and citizenship on the other hand.

While the proposed framework of the GMR is compelling and persuasive, there are a number of key issues, which need to be addressed. The report fails to engage substantially with two key areas of teaching & learning and equity. First, while it does recognise the link between teaching and learning, it does not define what constitutes teaching and learning. Second, most of the GMR reports tend to reduce the notion of teaching and learning to cognitive achievement. Third, where the reports have attempted to include other non-cognitive indicators of good quality teaching and learning, there has
been a drift towards quantitative measures. These include indicators like number of instructional hours (a common measurement in most GMR reports), number of assessments countries have carried out (nationally or internationally), and the list of subjects/learning areas. While these are important measures to describe the act of teaching and learning, they are not indicative of what Alexander would describe as ‘pedagogy’ - the missing element in understanding good quality education. Alexander (2007) also stresses the need to distinguish between indicators and measures. There is urgent imperative to focus on the specificity of the teaching and learning space to avoid narrow and economistic claims about quality. Fourth, in discussions of quality there is a school centric focus, which tends to underplay the quality of learner-educator engagement in other sites and spaces, including but not limited to vocational colleges, further education colleges, adult education centres. Fifth, any definition of education quality has to take into account regional and national education specificities. Cross-national comparable measurable global targets for education quality should not become a new form of tyranny and surveillance over low-income countries. Sixth, it is important in any discussion of education quality to focus on equity. Quality matters more for the poor as the wealthy have access to social and cultural capital that advantages them in education and compensates for poor quality. Unfortunately, current dialogue about education quality tends to ignore these issues. Essential to quality is the extent to which teaching and learning are facilitated for the poor and the marginalised.

Placing teaching and learning at the heart of education is an important step in advancing dialogue and securing policy attention. Yet there is still a long road to travel to ensure that issues of education quality remain at the top of the policy agenda. First, reports such as the GMR need to impact on those countries where the challenges is greatest - low income and resource constrained contexts. International monitoring reports need to extend its readership base beyond research, international agency, and international NGO audiences. Second, well-researched and detailed reports need to be placed in the hands of policy makers and education officers, teachers and local voters who have a key role to play in ensuring good quality education. Third, there is a growing need to extend the debate on quality and reports such as GMR can help by bringing to the fore additional qualitative measures and overcoming the reductionism narrow the focus in current national, regional, and international assessment exercises. There is a current misplaced policy assumption that good quality education implies assessment of learning rather than using assessment for learning. It is the latter which is important in improving quality. Let me illustrate this by an example of a senior South African education official who correctly commented that the problem with international reports and national education research in South Africa, is that it tends to repeat simply what the education officials know and what parents see about the low cognitive achievement levels of learners. While not discounting all such research, it is important to promote critical investigations which explain why there is poor performance and how it can be remedied. Developing an evidence base for what kinds of policies, actions, and interventions have a positive effect on efforts to improve the quality of education is as equally important as monitoring progress.
The key questions that confront all those who are concerned with education quality is, what can be done to improve the quality of education. A starting point is to recognise the narrowness of the MDG agenda and the reduction of the EFA goals (no matter how imperfect) agreed at the World Education Forum in 2000. Clearly, the international development agenda need to recognise that achieving access to a cycle of basic education is an important but limited and narrow goal for any society –a point that many countries including South Africa have consistently been making. What is needed five years from the 2015 target date is inclusive policy dialogue about a number of issues. The most pertinent are that:

- There should be clear focus and goal for education quality
- There should be commitment to an agenda which considers good quality education as an imperative across all levels of the education system and all sites in which teaching and learning takes place
- Quality should not be reduced to narrow, quantitative assessments. A holistic, contextual account of quality that embraces multiple indicators and multiple assessment processes should be the desired goal.

In summary, good quality education is a matter of public concern for all and a vital ingredient in the creation of a just and human society. Access while important is only the first step in providing good quality education for all, particularly the marginalised and disadvantaged.

**Reference**

Alexander, R 2007 Education for all, the quality imperative and the problem of pedagogy. DFID, New Delhi
sense, as a summary, it is a great instrument for information and support for the crusades of those concerned about education of the poor and of the poorest in our world.

Its focus on marginalisation is a key one. It highlights the exclusion of millions of children and young people, noting that for a multitude of these a bare two years of education is all they may have. Marginalisation is described as covering a variety of groups: those in extreme poverty, even in rich countries (as with illegal immigrants), cultural pariahs (as in the case of small linguistic groups or pastoral people), large populations in continuous displacement through warfare (as in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestinian territories), and the well-known state of quasi-permanent exclusion of girls and disabled children and young people around the world. The categorisation of marginalisation is useful in that it allows us to see that marginal people exist not only in the poorest locations but are often invisible in rich countries, or unfavourably treated by national policies and local practices in highly segmented societies such as in Chile or Brazil. However, less acknowledged in the Report is the extreme poverty and invisibility of large populations in failed states that only become visible when tragedy erupts as in the case of Haiti. Little or almost nothing is said in the Report about this country and yet the background information provided in the National Strategic Plan of Action for Education for All (Haiti, 2007) suggested, among other problems, an almost total lack of functioning teacher education provisions.

To some extent, the decision to deal with the issue of marginalisation in just one of the four chapters of the Report is disappointing. It would have been useful to distinguish types of marginalisation in short chapters in order to see more clearly that the solutions are not necessarily the same general ones offered towards the end of the chapter on Marginalisation. Particularly, one would have wanted to hear about how education activities including teaching survive in extreme contexts and what conditions in those situations allow teaching and some learning to occur. Missing is a stronger focus of what it takes to bring education to conflict ridden situations although the text does refer to the situation in the Palestine Occupied Territories. Sudan’s “islands of education” that Sommers (2005) described in the context of a long war which is still not totally over, need highlighting because these are examples of how some education survives under extremely harsh conditions and what could be done for some improvement to take place.

As in all the previous Reports, and as it should be, after highlighting problems and issues we are told what financing is needed to deal with the problems and what actions are needed to raise quality and learning results. Reference is to the same tools we all know about: affordability, social protection, schooling in relevant languages, better teachers, better teacher preparation as well as support for alternative forms of education delivery. However, extremely difficult situations require imaginative approaches, some of which are exemplified in the text and boxes, but more as anecdotal references that are suggestive rather than as developing threads to illuminate policy, the development of teachers and the structuring of teaching. Interesting among these examples are the “Tipping Points” in Harlem, Chile Crece Contigo as a government policy to reach preschool education, and the “floating schools” in Bangladesh.
The Report is the result of the information explosion, which is part of our global society. We welcome the new Deprivation and Marginalization in Education (DME) data set, but miss a broader view of how, for example, “marginalized” youth around the world are using communication tools and technology to educate and reinvent their culture in a blend of the new and the old (see Hull, Zacher and Hibbert, 2009); and how these tools could reinvigorate young teachers willing to work with excluded populations, and even older ones willing to reinvent themselves in favour of a more just society.

References


Michele Schweisfurth
University of Birmingham
Email: m.schweisfurth@bham.ac.uk

Key words: EFA; GMR; Policy Process; Contextualisation

Summary: This article asks: do the depth, breadth and reach of the GMR guarantee a policy role.

Since they started in 2001-2, the annual Global Monitoring Reports (GMR) have become essential documents to a range of constituencies concerned with Education for All (EFA) in a global development context. The scope, depth and reach of the reports are impressive. Arguably, these reports are compiled by the best possible organisation and teams, using the best available information. They offer cogent analysis of data, clarity of presentation, and an astute focus on crucial issues. They are compiled and released in a spirit of consultation, and discussion and debate are encouraged. But are these enough to guarantee a policy role?

As an academic, I find the reports invaluable. They are consistently useful as sources of a range of information. They include a wealth of relevant statistical data putting education in comparative perspective. They reflect (and therefore help to set) agendas in
terms of which themes and issues are at the forefront of development co-operation and national policy concern, and they pull together convincing evidence as to why these themes demand attention. As with other ‘league tables’ which rank countries’ achievements, whether these be examination results or gross enrolment ratios, the precision implied by numbers and rankings needs to be treated critically – but a GMR is, in my opinion, as reliable a source as any. The reports are of particular utility to post-graduate students on our International Studies in Education courses, in the first stages as a source of information providing an introduction to key themes such as gender and educational quality, and as a compendium of essential data on ‘how the world (or my country) is doing’. Over time, or at doctoral level, the best students learn to treat these reports as texts which capture powerful global discourses, and they learn to ask questions about sources of data, how they are treated, and what the implications of the rankings might be.

My perspective does not stretch to commenting in an informed way on whether and how these reports might be used to influence policy. This certainly seems to be a serious part of their intention, and indeed expectations are constantly being raised for high-quality research of all kinds to have an identifiable impact in the policy arena. However, expecting the GMRs or indeed any research report, no matter how carefully compiled or comprehensive, to fulfil consistently a role as a policy tool suggests a particular model of the policy process. It implies that the process is linear and evidence-based. It ignores the roles of political will, party politics, unaccountable governments, Ministry of Education capacity (who is this week’s Minister?), and the human factors of reading time, attention span and circles of influence. These issues are certainly not exclusive to the developing world or to national governments! The global scope of the reports also necessarily blurs the importance of context and of the insights that people closer to the specific national or local situation can bring to bear on policy decisions.

It is essential that modern tools such as these are available to policymakers. If they then instead choose to use a hammer, or locally-appropriate technology, that is beyond the reach of the GMR’s influence.

Further reading


What Do and Might the EFA GMRs Achieve?

Rosemary Preston
University of Warwick
Email: r.a.preston@warwick.ac.uk

Keywords: EFA; UNESCO GMR; Universalia review

Summary: There are no mechanisms in place for us to learn how well the UNESCO GMRs contribute to policy processes, EFA itself, reduced marginalisation and later to stable social inclusion. A review of the GMRs is currently underway and may help to illuminate these issues.

A decade after the first World Development Report, the UNDP’s endorsement in 1990 of broader parameters of Human Development was welcome. Now, the plethora of increasingly specialist and costly annuals, produced by different agencies to high presentational standards, raises questions as to how they interrelate, what they achieve, for whom and for how long. Many find the EFA GMRs authoritative and attractive in their multiple modes (full and summary, in hard and virtual copy, and video and slide show versions), welcoming their guidance on educational policy and practice to overcome disadvantage. Core texts derive from readily available background papers and syntheses of other research. Complex cross-national consultation suggests a holistic approach and applying lessons learned from earlier volumes implies commitment to relevance and accessibility.

Report evaluations - quality, use, finance and infrastructure

As with other UN annuals, there is no required monitoring of the EFA GMR process, quality or impact. The one formative review, after the first three EFA volumes (Universalia, 2006), found the GMR to be meeting its remit, providing up-to-date information on education and development. Amid the praise were concerns about: data reliability and differences in national and international interpretations of findings; report unwieldiness; the limited evidence of use by governments; surprisingly little comparison within and between states; a dearth of information on impact; and a readership largely restricted to academic and donor groups (UNESCO HQ used the reports infrequently and CSO and High Level Committees were citing them in advocacy and progress reports rather than in policy statements). Universalia agreed that the GMRs were framing EFA priorities, but found them too factual, lacking explanations and not persuasive policy-wise. In the main the prime emphasis on poor people in poor countries, overlooking those in more developed states, was politically unfortunate. In terms of process, Universalia notes that the c$US3m budget was exceeded for each of the first three volumes. Tight deadlines were met, but stress was very high. Discrepancies in team experience and cultural background exacerbated difficulties, as did the lack of continuity attributable to changes in partner representation and contributions. Costs were high in managing the background papers, the UNESCO bureaucracy and partner liaison, with multi-lateral, bi-
lateral and CSO organisations, individual consultants and staff team members all working for different periods under different terms of contract. Failure to encourage inputs from national governments, particularly among LDCs, effectively precluded ownership among intended primary users. The extent to these problems persist is not known. Their implications for policy processes can only be inferred.

Other reviews

Alternating enthusiasm and coolness are reiterated by later NGO and higher education commentators. For many, unrealistic and missed target dates weaken the value of the EFA movement (Packer, 2008), while privileging primary learning has undermined post-initial, secondary and tertiary sub-systems (Goldstein, 2004). Applying a language of non-formal learning to outlets offering non-state primary schooling has diverted hard-won but scarce resources away from basic adult education, itself crucial to family support for children’s schooling (Duke and Hinzen, 2006). Inconsistent attention to gender and other diversity is a repeated lament (Bown, 2007; Preston 2006). There are concerns about the fitness of data to policy purposes (Bown, Ibid), complaint when misleading, even erroneous statistics are knowingly published (Lievesley, 2006; Limage, 2006), and frustration when trying to articulate GMR databases to those of parallel reports (Preston, 2005). Year on year, without considering their hidden costs or implications for equity, the GMR promotes partnerships as the preferred funding management mechanism, while reporting below-promised spending and other weaknesses across the aid community. Recurrent blind spots include failure to acknowledge how the political and economic moment in which EFA, MDGs and GMRs evolved has systemically widened inequality on a global scale and just what this means for its reduction. There is no questioning of how the EFA GMR has strengthened the dominance of transnational and global institutions over educational policy processes, reducing national autonomy, self-realisation and esteem for local cultures, knowledge and histories.

Marginalisation

The EFA project aims to redress exclusion and increase the inclusion and later opportunities of those in socially marginal groups, particularly in poor, disaster-prone, conflict-affected areas, subject to trafficking, early marriage, and income-generation schemes, the while focussing on women and girls, ethnic/religious minorities and those with disabilities and different life style preferences. The 2010 GMR, Reaching the marginalized, is the largest to date (525 pages). It is more richly illustrated than ever with photographs, figures, boxes and statistics. Published as I write, its highlights show the multiple interacting parameters of marginalisation, their group as much as individual dynamics, the ways in which social stigma and enduring financial crises exacerbate the fragility of the vulnerable, and the continuing failure of national and international funders to fulfil their pledges. It reviews progress to primary education for all and discusses the implications if youth and adults are to find economic opportunities to sustain livelihoods in the new global economy. It proposes approaches to the measurement of deprivation and marginalization in education, differentiating educational poverty from extreme educational poverty, but leaves ideas of advanced marginality and the precariat to be
explored (Wacquant, 2007). We are again offered a rich menu, combining a text synthesising issues, micro-level case studies and other illustrations exemplifying cases in point. It concludes by listing ways to overcome educational marginalization, insisting that no two sets of educational or wider social circumstances will be the same. There is welcome criticism of global financial mechanisms and emphasis on increasing and sustaining resource mobilisation in poor states and communities, nationally and through the aid system, with the implication that unless this happens, educational and other inequalities will grow. There is recognition that political and social mobilization are key components in forging alliances to effect change, although their scope for harnessing the energy of transnational advocacy networks (Evans, 2000) for educational purposes is not elaborated.

For the moment, the GMRs may be wonderful tools for teaching, even influencing people to work in international educational development, but there are no mechanisms in place for us to learn how well they contribute to policy processes, EFA itself, reduced marginalisation and later to stable social inclusion. Hopefully, a second evaluation by Universalia, currently in progress, may help to answer these questions.

References


Education for All – and the Value of its EFA GMR Report

Lene Buchert
University of Oslo
Email: lene.buchert@ped.uio.no

Keywords: EFA, GMR, UNESCO Global Monitoring Report

Summary: This note comments on the value of the EFA GMR, noting that primary purpose of the report is to provide the knowledge base for change, while other bodies – such as the EFA High-Level Group, are responsible for policy action.

‘How does this mass of policy-related knowledge translate into any policy or action at the country level? Who brokers this knowledge and adapts it for national or local needs? Who are the real targets for this battery of reports? How do these reports impact on academic thinking and policy?’ These are some of the editor’s background questions for this issue of NORRAG News on world reports and policy papers, including the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR). They reflect questions often posed by those who fund this report and by government representatives who are generally seen as its primary target group.

According to an evaluation conducted in 2005 of the first three reports, the EFA GMR is considered an authoritative document that is well used by two of its important constituencies, namely aid agencies and non-governmental organisations, as a reference and reporting tool and for advocacy and accountability purposes. The academic community uses it widely particularly as a reference document and for teaching purposes. Government staff make limited use of the report in prompting policy initiatives and it is unevenly used by UNESCO staff, with modest use at Headquarters.25

UNESCO’s role, according to the Dakar Framework for Action, is to coordinate the international community’s movement towards the EFA goals, including monitoring of progress. While a report would ensure that progress towards the goals is closely monitored, it was the setting up of a small, flexible High-Level Group on EFA (HLG) that should ensure turning its findings into action. The onus of linking knowledge to action and impact should, therefore, be placed with the HLG (and perhaps other bodies such as UNESCO’s General Conference and Executive Council) rather than with the report. The communiqués of the HLG contain global, rather than country-specific, action steps that have not been monitored and whose influence is uncertain.

Nevertheless, it is the EFA GMR which is now undergoing an evaluation for policy impact based on the last four reports. On an impressionistic basis and interpreted as a correlation between the publication of the report and reactions in policy constituencies, the report already had some success. Boys’ underperformance compared to that of girls led to headlines and parliamentary debates in the United Kingdom and Sweden (EFA GMR, 2003/4). Lower ranking than neighbouring countries made Brazil reinforce support for education (EFA GMR, 2006). The mid-term review established that progress is fastest in countries furthest from the goals (EFA GMR 2008).

The last finding may be the strongest indicator that the setting of, perhaps doubtful, goals and targets and the close analysis and monitoring of progress towards their achievement can provide the basis on which widespread advocacy and accountability discussions can take place nationally and internationally to affect policy change. It underlines the primary purpose of the report, namely to provide the knowledge base for change, while not relieving other bodies of their responsibility for policy action.
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
IN OTHER GLOBAL SINGLE
AND SERIAL REPORTS
Transforming Tertiary Education in Developing Countries:  
The Role of the World Bank

Jamil Salmi*  
World Bank, Washington  
Email: jsalmi@worldbank.org

Keywords: Tertiary education; World Bank

Summary: Since the 1990s, the World Bank has produced three major documents offering policy advice on tertiary education (in 1994, 2002 and 2009), which have influenced attitudes and behaviors towards this sub-sector.

Introduction

In 2008, during a debate with a group of academics and students at a European higher education conference, an African student got quite upset after I explained how much support the World Bank was currently giving to tertiary education in developing countries including Sub-Saharan Africa: “it’s not fair, you cannot change your mind like that!” His candid cry from the heart seemed to reflect a kind of disappointment that the World Bank could no longer be criticized for neglecting tertiary education nor be easily subjected to the type of bashing previously practised in academic forums on both sides of the Atlantic. But for me, it was the best compliment I could have received after dedicating almost twenty years of my professional life to the promotion of tertiary education as part of the World Bank’s development agenda.

Over the past two decades, I have had the privilege to lead the preparation of three major documents offering policy advice on tertiary education. The first, Higher Education: Lessons of Experience, was published in 1994; the second, Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education, in 2002; and the most recent one, The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities, in 2009.

In the context of this special NORRAG Issue on Global Development Reports, this short article is my personal—and, therefore, undeniably biased—account of how these documents have influenced attitudes and behaviors towards tertiary education in developing and transition countries, within the World Bank itself, and among donor partners in the international community.

Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience

Lessons of Experience (1994) was the first ever World Bank policy statement on tertiary education. It marked an important transition from higher education being almost a taboo

* Tertiary Education Coordinator, the World Bank. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the author and should not be attributed in any manner to the World Bank, the members of its Board of Executive Directors or the countries they represent.
subject to becoming a mainstream topic. *Lessons of Experience* did not precipitate so much a transition of focus from primary / secondary to tertiary education as the realization that tertiary education served a complementary and equally important function in social and economic development. Such a realization was accompanied by an acknowledgement that a distinct level of attention and expertise in tertiary education would be required to provide focused analysis to help guide reforms and investments in partner countries.

As such the document had much less direct impact on the countries themselves than on the World Bank. Within the Bank, *Lessons of Experience* engendered legitimacy for investments in the tertiary education sub-sector and fueled substantial discussion based on data and evidence in a consolidated form. The report also helped reconcile actual practices in the field with official policies about tertiary education, since the Bank had been supporting tertiary education projects for many years, indeed decades, including a series of successive operations in countries such as China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Indonesia and Malaysia. In fact the share of education lending going to tertiary education was higher in the 1980s than in the 1990s.

**Constructing Knowledge Societies**

This second document provided a comprehensive examination of tertiary education as a tool for poverty reduction, economic growth, and participation in the global knowledge economy. *Constructing Knowledge Societies* emerged from a thorough data collection and research process that focused not only on the efforts of the Bank directly but also examined the experiences of relevant actors in the countries themselves. By bringing together these different perspectives, *Constructing Knowledge Societies* offered an in-depth analysis of the main issues facing tertiary education in developing and transition economies and explored scenarios for the future of tertiary education in these countries.

Because it challenged developing countries to think strategically about the role and evolution of tertiary education, *Constructing Knowledge Societies* had a significant impact in many parts of the world. It served as a catalyst for policy discussions among stakeholders who would not normally work together or even speak to each other, such as public and private universities, or governments, employers and civil society representatives. In several cases, it helped move the agenda beyond the ambit of the Ministry of Education to bring the importance of tertiary education to the full attention of the Ministry of Finance and / or the Ministry of Economic Development in countries as diverse as Azerbaijan, Chile or Malaysia.

The impact of *Constructing Knowledge Societies* was not as transformational within the Bank as it was to our member countries. The 2002 book was received as a logical complement to the Bank’s 1999 World Development Report on the Knowledge Economy, which had paved the way for the recognition of human capital formation as a pillar of national innovation systems. *Constructing Knowledge Societies* did, however, help to challenge, among other multilateral and bilateral donors, the wisdom of continuing to focus only on basic education in their assistance strategy.
The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities

In September 2007, the Government of Russia asked the World Bank for advice on how to transform their universities into world-class institutions. Our Moscow office, in turn, asked me to prepare a short note on this topic. Because several governments and institutional leaders had also expressed a keen interest in this matter, the note initially written for Russia evolved into a full book building on recent World Bank studies and joint OECD / World Bank reviews of tertiary education in countries as diverse as Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Chile and Egypt.

Since the 2003 publication of the first world ranking of universities by Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTIU), the global race for prestige and international recognition has accelerated. National universities have become a source of pride or disappointment, depending on their standing in the SJTU ranking or, since 2004, the UK Times Higher Education international league table. This explains the overwhelmingly—and unexpectedly—positive reception of Establishing World-Class Universities in many countries. In addition to French and Spanish, the book has been translated into Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Vietnamese, Polish and Turkish at the initiative of local institutions or publishers, reflecting a widespread thirst for concrete guidelines on how to establish or develop universities that meet international standards for excellence.

The book has been featured abundantly in national mass-media and the international press, so much so that we had to provide “health warnings” to avoid having its main message distorted or misinterpreted. While the book offers an analysis of the core components of world-class institutions and advice, based on international experience, on the mechanisms through which world-class institutions may be established, it also cautions countries to be sure to build a balanced tertiary education system. The rush by many countries to establish world-class universities should not take precedence over the need to develop high-quality tertiary education institutions of all kinds—teaching universities, community colleges, polytechnics, open universities—to meet the wide range of education and training needs that are required to support a vibrant economy.

Within the Bank, the latest report is being used by colleagues in much the same way as Constructing Knowledge Societies: as a tool to foster policy dialogue at the country level. A major difference from the 2002 publication, however, is that many more World Bank Country Directors—the gatekeepers of our investment—have become directly involved in leveraging the dissemination of Establishing World-Class Universities as a platform to engage developing and transition countries in renewed discussions about tertiary education reform.

Conclusion

To characterize the impact of each document with a summary statement, one could say that Lessons of Experience helped redefine the policy agenda within the Bank, Constructing Knowledge Societies stimulated forward-thinking policy debates in a large
number of developing countries, and *Establishing World-Class Universities* provided an in-depth analysis of certain types of tertiary education institutions in response to the specific concerns of many governments eager to improve the performance of their tertiary education system and to help their economies compete more effectively on the global scene.

It is worth noting that other donor agencies have found it harder than the World Bank to change their mind and include tertiary education in their development agenda. Several bilateral agencies appear to dissociate poverty reduction from knowledge-based growth. As a result, they continue to emphasize Education for All as their main focus of assistance in the education sector, ignoring not only the potential contribution of tertiary education and research to the knowledge economy, but also the importance of teacher training institutions in support of quality basic education, the need to anticipate the growing numbers of secondary school graduates as countries progress towards the EFA goals, and the professionals and specialists without whom it would be difficult if not impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In the past ten years, I have often found myself in the ironic position of being invited by the education staff of donor agencies to help make the case to their authorities that tertiary education is also an important priority area for developing countries.

It is essential to record that the three pieces discussed in this article could not have been written without the invaluable advice and inputs provided by my colleagues in the World Bank’s higher education community of practice. More than anything, the three books were the product of collegial brainstorming and effective teamwork. The contribution of my colleagues, not only in preparing the documents, but more importantly in disseminating them and using them for policy dialogue purposes, has been essential in shaping the policy agenda both within the Bank and in the numerous countries which have requested Bank support to reform and strengthen their tertiary education system. At the same time, the influence of policy documents prepared by development agencies such as the World Bank should not be overestimated. At the end of the day, what actually makes the difference on the ground is not what the donors think, but rather the determination of national governments to build up and modernize their tertiary education system. For instance, when in the early 1980s China started reconstructing its education system after the Cultural Revolution, it repeatedly asked the World Bank for financial and technical support on tertiary education, resulting in four Bank investment projects and several technical assessments over twenty years. Similarly, the impressive reforms implemented in Pakistan in the past five years have been the direct result of national efforts to develop a vision for tertiary education and drastically increase investments in the sector. Finally, the successive tertiary education projects financed by the World Bank in Mozambique over the past twelve years reflect, more than anything else, the priority given by its post civil war governments to the development of a strong tertiary education system that could support the growth of the economy. Despite being among the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Mozambique has become a pioneer in articulating a vision for the future of its tertiary education system and implementing a comprehensive reform strategy that has been fully supported by donors such as Sweden, the Netherlands
and the World Bank. In tertiary education as in many fields, the most successful reforms are those designed and carried out by the countries themselves.

0-0-0-0-0

The TICAD Process and the Discourse among Stakeholders

Shoko Yamada
Nagoya University
Email: syamada@gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp

Keywords: Japan; TICAD

Summary: This piece examines the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD); the process and struggle for consensus building, and the possible impact the global financial crisis may have on Japanese ODA.

Introduction

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was held for the fourth time in 2008. Although the Japanese government has hosted this event since fifteen years ago, the public interest in TICAD and in the issues related to Africa was raised highest around the time of the TICAD IV. With frequent news coverage and publications, not only people who have been involved in aid, diplomacy, trade, and research in and with Africa, but also the general public has come to know some more about this continent. This phenomenon was, in part, a sign of the maturity of civil society organizations and their success in advocating the issues by means of media to the wider population, after some years of trial and error. The TICAD process involved stakeholders with diverse interests, such as business, diplomatic, and humanitarian. Due to the geographic distance of Japan from Africa, and hence less apparent historical connections, in contrast to Europe, it has always been a matter of debate why Japan has to increase its commitment in Africa. Different interest groups have their own answers to this question, which have coexisted throughout the TICAD process, often times, without coordination.

The TICAD process and struggle for consensus building

TICAD started in 1993 after Japan became the No. 1 ODA provider in the world and assumed the responsibility of leading on its aid to Africa in the indifferent mood of post-cold war era. Since then, TICADs have been held every five years and the latest one (TICAD IV) was in 2008. TICAD IV was a big success in terms of the number of people mobilized. It was participated in by the national representatives of 51 African countries, donors and Asian countries, and 50 NGO representatives, which totalled up to 3000 people.
The Yokohama Declaration, which was announced at the end of the conference covered wide-ranging areas. It included (1) enhanced economic growth; (2) achievement of MDGs; (3) building peace and good governance; (4) tackling the issues of environment and climate change; and (5) partnership and ownership in the development process. Some critics expressed their concerns, right after the closure of TICAD IV, that these declarations were not supported by any practical programs to be implemented so that it will be difficult to measure how far these principles have been followed and actualized.

The TICAD process has been largely driven by the bureaucrats of a few divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Given the rapid pace of staff transfer within the Ministry, it is also difficult to maintain the institutional memories of the earlier TICADs, which were held five, ten or fifteen years ago. Also, the MOFA officials tend to see this event as a diplomatic tool for Japan to demonstrate its commitment to the global welfare. The TICAD conference itself would not pledge any bilateral aid to African countries but has been considered as a forum to set the overall norms for aid to Africa. From the diplomatic perspective, the appeal of Japanese commitment to African welfare was directed not only to African countries, but to the G8 and donor community as well. Especially, TICAD IV coincided with the Japan’s turn of hosting G8 Summit, which was held in Hokkaido a month after TICAD IV, in early July. Therefore, unlike the earlier three TICADs, TICAD IV was seen as the preliminary forum for the G8 Summit to make a kind of advanced announcement of the Japanese stance on the issues on Africa.

There is also a growing rivalry amongst Asian emerging powers, especially China and India which have increased their presence in Africa rapidly in the last few years. China started its Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 and the most recent triennial conference was held in Egypt in 2009. It was attended by national representatives of very many African countries. Having succeeded in inviting 50 national representatives to TICAD IV, some TICAD organizers have claimed that Japan was more successful than China. However, some Japanese observers analyze that FOCAC Forum, which was accompanied by various commercial talks and bilateral meetings to contract actual aid programs, sent clearer messages to and gained more support from African countries. While there has been a lot of criticism that Japanese government failed to attract attention of African governments, diplomatically, aid to Africa has also been considered as a way to influence votes from Africa at the UN General Assembly, so that Japan will get the permanent seat of the UN Security Council. Regardless of its economic power, having been defeated in the WWII, Japan has never been a permanent member of the UN Security Council and this has been a long-cherished hope of consecutive governments in Japan.

In contrast to the diplomatic interests of the MOFA officials, business sector tried to draw government’s support to promote trade with and investment in Africa. Keidanren (Japan Business Organisation) dispatched the Economic Research Mission to Africa in October 2007 and came up with a set of recommendations. One of the main messages was to establish stronger public-private partnerships. It includes (1) supplementing projects by private firms with ODA (loans) to promote investment in Africa; (2) enhanced flexibility of ODA grant project to encourage Japanese private companies to participate in bidding; (3) relaxing criteria of eligibility for Japanese ODA loans. Keidanren also requested
coordination among ministries and governmental bodies so that the government will be more effective and efficient in its promotion of trade in Africa. Industrial human resource development (skills training of African workers) was also hoped to be enhanced by means of Japanese ODA. Such voices from the business sector are also linked to the argument that historically Japan was successful in supporting Asian countries to achieve economic development when ODA was used to open the ways for investments by the Japanese private sector; hence the public-private partnership model of assistance should also be applicable to African countries to achieve self-reliant economic growth. Infrastructure building and industrial human resource development are traditionally the priorities of Japanese ODA based on the recognition that they will pave the way for further foreign direct investment into the assisted countries.

In TICAD IV, environmental concerns and support for economic growth have gained wide-based support. Civil society organizations were successful in promoting the achievement of MDGs in general. In the TICAD IV, 50 NGO representatives participated in the core meetings, not to mention various side events. They promoted the importance of achieving the MDGs particularly by increasing the aid for social sectors such as education and health. Also, some of them played the role of ombudsman, evaluating the Japanese ODA to Africa in partnership with African NGOs. Further, as mentioned earlier, the civil society actors contributed a lot in raising public awareness of issues in Africa. At the same time, their advocacy for the MDGs and poverty reduction in Africa tended to create a rather simple image of Africa as a poor, conflict-torn continent, about which some of Japan’s Africanists have expressed concerns. Also, while civil society organizations pushed forward the idea of poverty reduction, there was no strong force to promote the education side of MDGs. MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology) was not a key actor in the TICAD process. It hosted a symposium on girls’ education, but its impact on the mainstream discussion was limited.

The messages sent by the interest groups described above were heading in different directions. There also lacked the capacity to reach consensus or to prioritize the different expectations. They were simply listed as the principles in the declaration with the same weight. In addition, there was a divorce between the discussion about the TICAD and operation of ODA, regardless of the dramatic increase of Japanese ODA to Africa in the few years around 2008.

What will follow? Japan and Africa after TICAD IV

The world economy has experienced a great crisis after TICAD IV was held in May 2008. Even the car exporting companies which have been engines of Japanese economic growth are experiencing serious reduction of the profits, have closed down factories, and fired a large number of employees (even before the recall crisis). The tax revenue of the Japanese government has reduced greatly, while expenditure to rescue moribund financial bodies, industries, and workers is enormous. Given the acute domestic problems, it would become difficult to continue allocating a large fraction of national budget to ODA for Africa. Although the prime minister Fukuda pledged to double the ODA for Africa by 2012 on the occasion of TICAD IV, we have yet to see if the pledge
will be implemented or not. A positive aspect of the situation is, however, that the public awareness raised through the process of TICAD has been kept high and it would be a force to push the Japanese government to continue its support to Africa.

0-0-0-0-0

Japan’s Commitment to African Development through the TICAD Process

Michiko Miyamoto
Japan International Cooperation Agency
Email: Miyamoto.Michiko@jica.go.jp

Keywords: Japan; Africa; TICAD

Summary: TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) is one of a few international fora on Africa that dates back to early 1990s. This piece gives us a quick look at Japan’s commitment to Africa through TICAD.

Japan commenced extending its Official Development Assistance (ODA) from 1954 when it was still a big receiver of humanitarian nature and other aid after the devastation it suffered from the Second World War. Since then, Japanese assistance mainly focused on Asian countries and its effectiveness was proved by the dramatic socio-economic development of the East Asian countries, often regarded as the ‘East Asian Miracle’. This development of Asian countries, whose living standard used to be lower than that of parts of Africa in 1960s, astonished the international community.

The Japanese government has an intention to help create another miracle by introducing what had been successful in Asia to Africa and promoting and understanding of the Japanese way of supporting partners; as a result, Japan initiated the TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) process to create an international forum to draw international attention and support while fostering the ownership of the African countries. This international initiative led by Japan in 1993 was highly appreciated by the African nations, as the continent was then considerably marginalized after the end of the Cold War. Currently, there exist numerous fora on Africa (i.e. China-Africa Summit, Turkey-Africa Summit, EU-Africa partnership etc.), however, TICAD is one of a few international fora on Africa that dates back to early 1990s.

The fundamental principle of the TICAD process is the ‘ownership’ and the ‘partnership’, which stems from Japan’s own experience of achieving its post-war reconstruction through receiving and utilizing the foreign aid in the spirit of “self-help effort.” The TICAD process evolved in consultation with African countries, with regional meetings held in Africa prior to the summit-level meeting in order to set agendas, themes and outcomes. In respect of the nature of the partnership, TICAD is a multilateral forum,
with the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank as co-organizers, all positioned well to promote and coordinate support to Africa.

In 2008, the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) was held in Yokohama, Japan. It marked the 15th year of the TICAD process. The Government of Japan committed to double its ODA to Africa by 2012 to support the progress currently achieved by the African countries, so that their development efforts would be consolidated, and to contribute to achieving a balanced and sustainable development of the continent as a whole. The time is now or never, as Africa’s economies have been growing fast and more countries have achieved stability. Japan is ready to support Africa, a continent of hope and opportunity, by respecting Africa’s ownership over its own development agenda and by extending various support programmes in the most flexible manner. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as an implementing agency of Japan’s ODA, also stands ready to realize ‘Inclusive and dynamic development’ in Africa though actual implementation of TICAD IV commitments.

Last but not least, one of the most significant achievements of TICAD IV was the establishment of its follow-up Mechanism. The Conference adopted the Yokohama Action Plan that illustrates the commitment made by various partners for the development of Africa. Up to this point, it’s been a question of what usually happens with big conferences. However, at TICAD IV, the Government of Japan confirmed it would establish a monitoring system with annual ministerial review meetings, in order to ensure that ‘what has been said is done on the ground’. An annual progress report is submitted to the ministerial meeting and all the stakeholders are positioned to share the progress made in implementing the Yokohama Action Plan. The commitments made by the Government of Japan include those on the volume of assistance such as doubling ODA to Africa by 2012 as well as time-bound, measurable and output-oriented goals such as “providing safe drinking water to 6.5 million people by 2012” and “constructing 1,000 primary and secondary schools by 2012”. By concentrating our resources and knowledge, these goals have become within reach. With this firm mechanism to follow-up on its own and other partners’ commitments, Japan is striving to make Africa truly a continent of hope and opportunity.
The State of the World’s Children 1999-2010

Sheldon Shaeffer
Development analyst (formerly UNESCO), Bangkok
Email: s_shaeffer@hotmail.com

Keywords: UNICEF; State of the World’s Children

Summary: UNICEF’s annual State of the World’s Children (SOWC) Reports contain some valuable content, and – like other long reports – the media messages offered by the SOWC reporting team tend to be the most widely disseminated pieces of information. Being able to explain the key messages of such long reports in 60 seconds is crucial!

I arrived at UNICEF New York as Chief of its Education Unit just a few days before the launch of the 1999 State of the World’s Children (SOWC) report on education and was asked immediately to prepare a briefing for the Executive Director and other senior staff who were about to fan out across the globe for its official launch. I’d been warned to keep the briefing short, and so produced what I thought was a clear and concise ten-minute summary of the 100+ page document. When I was done, the Executive Director, not known for her patience with jargon and long-windedness, said something to the effect of: “Now that you’ve bored us for the last ten minutes, Sheldon, maybe you could say the same thing in 20 seconds!” I knew then that what turned out to be another three years in New York would be a challenge....

But I also learned a valuable lesson about UNICEF and its flagship publication, the SOWC: the sound bite is essential. And when I went with the Executive Director to London for the global launch and had 60 seconds on national television to “sell” the SOWC, I understood this lesson even better. Although the volumes have important content (albeit less detailed, academic, and nuanced than, for example, the EFA Global Monitoring Report), their real value comes from the media messages which are featured in the various global, regional, and national launches held around the world and highlighted in the accompanying press releases, online interviews, country reports, statistical tables, and “fast facts”.

The themes of the last many years are, of course, what UNICEF is all about – child labour, children at war, maternal and newborn health and nutrition, early childhood, leadership, child participation, girls, child protection, the excluded and invisible, gender equality, child survival, maternal and newborn health, child rights – a vaster terrain to cover than the EFA Global Monitoring Report. In this regard, I would guess that the audience for the SOWC is more specialised and perhaps less consistent over time – health readers one year, gender specialists another. This reinforces the SOWC’s value as highly visible heralds of news (some good but mostly bad) but diminishes their value as insightful, studied analyses of important development issues – especially over time.
A more studied comparison of the major annual reports (perhaps by a meta-analysis of internal assessments they likely conduct) would be instructive: What percentage of readers of each are academics, journalists, government officials, practitioners, development agency staff, and the “person on the street”? What percentage read the full report as opposed to the executive summaries? To what use are put the graphs and charts and statistical tables and where do we find them quoted? To what extent are the data for the same countries the same year after year – and if not, are the reasons for the differences clear? And to what extent do the reports “live on” before their expiry date and the publication of the next report? A Ph.D. topic anyone?

---

The Impact of the Human Development Index (HDI) 1990-2009

Santosh Mehrotra
Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi
Email: santoshmeh@gmail.com

Keywords: Human Development Index (HDI); Human Development Report (HDR)

Summary: The HDI is hugely more influential than the Education Development Index (EDI) which was developed in association with the UNESCO GMR. This piece comments on the evolution of the HDI, and how education is covered (or not) in the HDRs.

When the Human Development Index (HDI) began in 1990, it had only adult literacy rate as the indicator for education/knowledge, with a weight of one-third (with life expectancy and GDP per capita as the other two components, with one-third weight each). Somewhere along the line, the adult literacy rate component was supplemented with combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education – to arrive at a composite index for education, to be incorporated into the HDI. The adult literacy rate now had, within education’s one-third weight, a two-thirds weight, and the combined enrolment ratio had a one-third weight. That was a clear recognition that knowledge is not best captured only by the adult literacy rate, but also must include some reflection of educational achievement for different age-groups of the population. Of course, there still remains a problem in that there is still no indicator, within education, for the quality of knowledge that individual’s possess. In other words, HDI remains a relatively crude indicator of well-being generally, and of educational development, in particular.

Education has received relative short-shrift within the Human Development Reports. That is perhaps not surprising, given that among the international reports produced by the UN system on a regular basis, the Global Monitoring Report (GMR, UNESCO) is now seen as the education report. In fact, it would have been somewhat illogical for the UN
system to be duplicating its efforts, at least in the most recent years since the GMR started in 2002.

However, nor can one say that education has been ignored in the HDRs. The 2003 HDR dealt with the MDGs, and given that two of the seven goals of the MDGs are education-related, the discussion of those two received major attention. Almost every HDR will examine some aspect of education, whether it is expenditures on education (e.g. the early 1990s HDR that examined social priority ratio) or the HDR 1995 devoted to women (which introduced the Gender Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Index).

Of course there is little doubt that the Human Development Index (HDI) is hugely more influential than the Education Development Index (EDI) which was developed in association with the UNESCO GMR. Since the HDI is broad indicator of development, it inevitably commands more attention from both governments as well as journalists, and hence, the media within each country watches out for that country’s HDI rank within the global league table – and the HDI is regularly remarked upon by commentators from different disciplines. That too is hardly surprising since, to some extent, the HDI was always conceived of by Mahbub-ul-Haq and Amartya Sen as a competitor to the GDP per capita indicator.

It looks at a glance that education or even human resource development is not a core topic for the HDRs. However, one should also note that the HDRs take seriously the notion of human resource development or human capital only as an input into human capabilities, which is the real concern of the HDRs. Knowledge, derived from education, is only one of the basic functionings that Sen speaks about. Human capabilities, on the other hand, are about the combination of different sets of functionings.

---

**The Contribution of Technical and Vocational Education and Training to Education for Sustainable Development: Fact or Fiction?**

**Rupert Maclean**

The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong

Email: maclean@ied.edu.hk

**Keywords:** TVET; Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

**Summary:** Despite UNESCO rhetoric over the years, there is currently a paucity of reliable evidence regarding the impact of TVET on achieving sustainable development. Therefore, it is not possible to know at the current time, in any reliable way, whether the contribution of TVET to ESD is fact or fiction.
Numerous conferences, congresses and meetings organised by UNESCO have stressed the importance of strengthening skills development for employability, with particular reference to technical and vocational education and training, to contribute to achieving sustainable development, poverty alleviation, greater equity and justice.

For instance, at the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul, Republic of Korea, whose theme was Lifelong Learning and Training: A Bridge to the Future, participants concluded that ‘technical and vocational education is an integral component of lifelong learning, and has a crucial role to play in this new era as an effective tool to realize the objectives of a culture of peace, environmentally sound sustainable development, social cohesion and international citizenship’ (UNESCO, 1999, page 2).

Five years later, at the Seoul + 5 UNESCO International Experts’ Meeting on Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability, October 2004 in Bonn, Germany, participants expressed their support for promoting action planning in TVET related to the 2005-2014 United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, noting the importance of TVET in promoting social equity, economic prosperity and environmentally sound sustainable development. This meeting resulted in the adoption of The Bonn Declaration, where participants affirmed that the appropriate development of TVET is central to the attainment of sustainable development as reflected in the agreed goals of:

- the recommendations of the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (1999),
- the goals set out at the World Forum on Education (2000),
- the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (2000); and

The Bonn Declaration also notes that ‘since education is considered the key to effective development strategies, technical and vocational education and training must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development’ (UNESCO, 2004, page 107).

Most recently, at the UNESCO General Conference in Paris, October 2009, in the Resolutions for 2010-2011, skills for the world of work (TVET) was identified by UNESCO’s 193 Member States as being one of three fundamental, priority areas for achieving Education for All and Education for Sustainable Development, requiring greater attention, focus and action over the next 2 years, with the potential to impact significantly on the lives of learners and their communities and to advance human development (UNESCO, 2009). (The other two areas of major importance identified at the 2009 UNESCO General Conference are literacy and teachers.)
Special mention was made of the importance of TVET’s contribution to furthering the goals of education for sustainable development, with particular reference to the reform of TVET systems and to building the capacity of Member States to take concrete, effective action to equip youth and adults with necessary knowledge, competencies and skills for the world of work.

Despite such UNESCO rhetoric over the years, about the importance of skills development for employability to achieving sustainable development, poverty alleviation, equity and justice, and the numerous TVET programme activities funded by UNESCO in Member States worldwide, as I have noted elsewhere (John Fien, Rupert Maclean and Man-Gon Park, 2008, Work, Learning and Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges, Falmer Press) there is currently a paucity of reliable evidence from UNESCO regarding the impact of skills development for the world of work on achieving sustainable development (and EFA). This is because UNESCO has paid scant attention to gathering concrete, reliable evidence on the interrelationship between TVET and sustainable development, in its various forms. It is therefore not possible to know at the current time, in any reliable way, from available UNESCO evidence, whether the contribution of technical and vocational education and training to education for sustainable development is fact or fiction.

As an intellectual organisation, UNESCO needs to do much more to gather reliable research evidence on this matter to make sure that its limited funds are being put to the best use in achieving EFA and education for sustainable development through strengthening TVET.

Are China’s Africa Summits Different?

Liu Haifang
Institute of West Asian and African Studies, CASS, Beijing
Email: haifang_l@163.com

Keywords: China-Africa Summits

Summary: Africa’s relationship with China has changed significantly over recent years. But to what extent are China’s Africa Summits different from the international and national summits on Africa, and to what extent do they engage with EFA/MDG debates?

There has only been one China-African Summit so far. This was actually an upgrade from Ministerial level conference of the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2006. Yet, partly because of the attendance of Prime Minister Wen and several African heads at the opening ceremony, the 4th Ministerial FOCAC meeting (held in November 2009 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt) is frequently dubbed as another China-Africa Summit,
though it has been very clearly defined as a ministerial level conference on the official website of FOCAC.\textsuperscript{26} But one reason it is seen as another China-Africa Summit is that the African governments are watching closely how their new relationship with China is affecting Africa’s relationship with the rest of the world.

However, within China, other world summits, conferences or commissions related to Africa and international development are currently only lightly reported on to the Chinese audience. This is even more the case when such events take place that have been initiated by one country – like the Africa Commission, initiated by the UK, which hasn’t led to any reporting in the Chinese media yet.

Another example, noted by Li Anshan - one of the China’s leading Africanists – is the scant reporting of the fourth TICAD meeting in Chinese media and the neglect of the potential relevance of TICAD and of Japan’s African Policy by Chinese academics.\textsuperscript{27}

But are China’s Africa Summits - if we follow the current media fashion of calling all FOCAC meetings summits - different from other parallel events, be they multilateral or bilateral? Has any analysis or data from other global summits or from international reports been mined and found their way into the declarations and action plans generated by China’s African conferences? Here is an example. A German scholar asked during a post-FOCAC discussion seminar last November (2009) in Nairobi: are the MDGs incorporated into the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration? Indeed the MDGs are there, and they even appeared in the very first Beijing Declaration in 2000 when the first FOCAC meeting was held. Both education and human resources have been identified as priorities to cooperate with Africa since 1998 when the first batch of Africans were invited to China to attend workshops. The Chinese government has been offering increasing numbers of scholarships and human resource training programs for Africans, especially after the FOCAC mechanism was established. However, rather surprisingly, the Education for All (EFA) goals that the nations of the world adopted in 2000 at the Dakar World Forum have never been mentioned in any of the documents generated through the FOCAC platform.

At the same time, in the CNKI (Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure), the most well-established, widely-available and authoritative Chinese academic database, there are 18 articles searchable under the term “China - Africa education cooperation” written by Chinese scholars from 1990 to the end of 2009, including 2 MA and PhD theses. Among all the articles, most just describe how much progress the cooperation has made since 1980s in a proud way, such as numbers of trainees, students and mutual official visits, etc. However, there is still a dire need for an accurate and substantive way to review how these training projects have been implemented and what specific lessons could be learnt; especially given the recent rapidity with which China has been engaged in Africa since the FOCAC mechanism was established in 2000.

\textsuperscript{26} Refer to the official website of FOCAC, http://www.focac.org/eng/

\textsuperscript{27} Li Anshan, “TICAD and Japan's Aid Policy to Africa”, \textit{West Asia & Africa}, Issue 5, 2008.
Interestingly, one article published in 2008 was about the development of international aid to African education and its enlightenment to China. The author concluded that “to further the effectiveness of educational aid, China should enhance its capacity building and international cooperation in aiding African education, strengthen exchanges with the recipients and innovate models of the education aid.” The “westernized” tone of the article to use “recipient” and “effectiveness” terms is not unique among Chinese authors; yet indeed it is a little bit controversial; the trend, as we could see from the latest Action Plan coming out from the Egyptian FOCAC meeting is to even refrain from using the term ‘aid’, while instead accentuating that the key characteristic of the China-Africa relationship is partnership.

Just as Kenneth King has insightfully commented with regard to the impacts that Ethiopia is getting from international cooperation with China, “there is some crucial synergy between China’s own capacity to transform its own world and the chemistry of its partnership with Ethiopia’s urban transformation.” Indeed, China's domestic situation is still very much crucial for any difference it might be able to make abroad. The 12th 5-year plan that is in currently in the air has been greatly expected to adapt Deng Xiaoping’s White- Black- Cat developing strategy into a Green Cat Strategy for China’s next five years’ development. There have also been some signs to suggest a change in its behaviour in Africa in the new FOCAC Action Plan, such as the very much top priority position that climate change and relevant initiatives taken among all initiatives in the Action Plan.

As for the Chinese scholars, as well as potential think tanks for both the government and the business sectors, we would argue that they need to develop their capacities to learn more and write more about these parallel global, international drivers. Also as Kenneth King has suggested, we also need to have more local African scholars thoroughly evaluating the established cooperation between China and Africa, as well as Africa and other development partners. After all, if you know yourself and your enemy, you will never lose a battle, just as the ancient Chinese philosophical book, The Art of War, concludes.

---

30 Kenneth King, “China’s Cooperation with Ethiopia, A comparative approach with a focus on human resources”, 4th June 2009, University of Hong Kong.
31 No matter if it is a white cat or a black cat; as long as it can catch mice, it is a good cat.
Education Strategy Papers

Steve Packer
Consultant, formerly DFID, London
Email: stevepacker@blueyonder.co.uk

**Keywords:** UK; ODA; DFID; education strategy papers

**Summary:** This piece takes us through the series of education strategy papers produced by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) and its predecessor, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). It comments on the changing emphasis over time, but notes that for the past twenty years ODA/DFID has accorded priority to basic education and to primary schooling in particular.

A quick rummage through the websites of OECD-DAC member countries unearths a plethora of aid strategy statements. On education, some are quite detailed, stand-alone papers: others are much shorter summaries; frameworks embedded in overarching development policy documents. USAID’s *Improving Lives through Learning* (2005) is an example of the former; France exemplifies the latter.

The rationale for separate education papers is often quite complicated. Some reflect the interest and commitment of individual ministers. Others mark significant shifts in direction or ways of working. Sweden’s marriage of education and human rights in the nineteen nineties is a case in point. Australia’s *Better Education: A Policy for Australian Development Assistance in Education* (2007) signalled new modalities for engaging with partner governments. Major world conferences such as the World Forum on Education for All (Dakar, 2000) see a mini-avalanche of strategy papers on conference related themes. Other considerations include: responding to the campaigning and prompting of civil society organisations; providing guidance to education advisers and programme managers within aid agencies; and informing a wider general public of recent achievements and of activities that are planned. Few, if any, are written as a clear response to the collective demands of the partner governments with which aid agencies work.

In most cases a multiple audience is envisaged. Writing for different constituencies is not easy. Arguments based on authoritative scholarship vie with the search for strong political sound bites. Communicating complexity requires specialist skills. Writing to meet demanding deadlines may limit consultation and investigative processes. And at worst, sudden changes in government may consign hard won agreements to the strategy sin-bin or even oblivion.

The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) is a major bilateral player in the education sector globally and over the past 20 years DFID/ODA has issued its fair share of education strategy papers. A new one is to be published early in 2010 (and is the subject of a separate entry in this edition of NORRAG News).
Scrutiny of the more significant of these UK papers suggests that a good number of the factors noted above have been at work in their genesis, formulation and influence. In 1990, the then Overseas Development Administration (ODA) published *Into the Nineties; an Education Policy for British Aid*. This was very much a public information document, providing examples of ODA at work. But those grappling with the 2010 paper in DFID will find a number of familiar themes. The multiple benefits of education are reviewed; the value of expanding enrolments in schools is set against deteriorating levels of quality; allocating resources in a balanced and sustainable fashion across sub-sectors of the education system is assessed; and a good deal of emphasis is placed on the need to be responsive and context specific. Skills development outside of schools is given some weight; so too is literacy and English Language Teaching (ELT). The intention to work with other agencies to avoid duplication of effort is a pointer to later more structured aid effectiveness initiatives.

In the mid-nineteen nineties, two papers, *Aid to Education in 1993 and Beyond* and *Aid to Education in the 90s* were very short summary statements of intent with but with a greater degree of policy specificity than in 1990. Support for basic education was underscored – including, in line with the outcomes of the World Education Conference in 1990, adult literacy and non-formal education. Gender and other inequalities were highlighted. And educational management and planning were given special emphasis. Support for tertiary education (including technical and vocational education) was to be selective. Policy dialogue with governments was seen as key, and assistance was to come primarily through technical assistance projects.

Soon after the arrival of the new Labour Government in 1997, the elimination of poverty became the overriding objective of aid and development policy. All sector programmes were to be conceived within this rubric. The White Paper *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century* (1997) promised an education policy paper to elaborate the principle of the full participation of all children and adults in quality education at all levels. *Learning Opportunities for All: A Policy Framework for Education* (1999) was the result of the 1997 pledge. This was a hybrid document – which had relatively limited influence both within DFID and beyond. It probably attempted to cover too many bases setting out a very broad canvas, captured in the statement that DFID would help partner countries to build and sustain education systems which give priority to primary education for all, but also develop effective higher education institutions, promote literacy and lifelong learning and capture the benefits of education for development.

Almost as soon as the 1999 paper issued, the UK signed up strongly to the Millennium Development Goals and with slightly less enthusiasm to the Education for All Goals. The then Secretary of State, Clare Short was clear that Universal Primary Education and gender equity and equality should be the central objectives in a poverty reduction, development agenda for education. Accordingly, in the early part of the new Millennium, a small set of topic specific strategy papers were generated. These were harder edged than their predecessors. *The Challenge of Universal Primary Education* (2001) set out ten key priorities for low income country governments and their national civil society
constituencies. It also had a prescriptive policy menu for the international community and for DFID. All of this was geared to achieving UPE by 2015. Papers on *Children out of school* (2001) and *Girls’ education: towards a better future for all* (2005) elaborated further on how to accelerate progress to meet the education-related MDGs but with increasing attention to wider cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Currently, DFID is back to producing an overarching statement on its support for education, this time to 2015. It does so against the backdrop of a commitment to increase its annual spend to £1 billion a year (almost doubling its 2007/08 level of expenditure) and, intriguingly, launching its new paper just before a general election in the United Kingdom.

It is unlikely that the new paper will stray far from a largely familiar script. For the past twenty years ODA/DFID has accorded priority to basic education and to primary schooling in particular. Access to, and completion of, a cycle of basic education of good quality has been a thread running through each and every document; and in 2010 support for the MDGs remains firm. Planning for sector coherence, programme-based budgets and greater levels of accountability have also been ever present. At the same time, it seems likely that the development of skills (beyond literacy and numeracy) will gain some greater purchase after a very modest presence over the past ten years.

Changes in emphasis across the series of strategy papers reflect much more strongly on ways of delivering aid with sector budget support increasing in importance. The move from projects to a much broader array of policy and financing instruments and the rise of global commitments, targets and initiatives (such as the Education for All Fast Track Initiative) have meant that sector policy statements have to be far less self-contained than in the past. They are now part of a much bigger and more complex jigsaw puzzle of aid delivery.

In addition, although the language of partnership and responsiveness has been ever present, the strategy papers have very largely assumed that developing countries are similar one to another in the policies that they should be encouraged to follow and assisted to adopt. The incidence of conflict, terrorism, internal and international migration, climate change, the spread of information technologies and the potential impact, in recent years, of a global economic downturn all point to the necessity of understanding and working with the very specific circumstances of individual countries. While much is known about how to achieve UPE technically, it is interpreting that knowledge within the particular circumstances of individual countries that is critical.

In some respects education sector strategy papers (and undoubtedly for other sectors too) are stocktaking and refocusing exercises within agencies. New ministers, new advisers, new managers need to work through their understandings and intentions. Occasionally they are more than this – they provide a new focus, a new direction, and a new impetus for action. They carry international influence across a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Which strategy papers do you remember having served such a purpose?
Every Child in School and Learning – the New DFID Education Strategy

Gemma Wilson-Clark
DFID, London
Email: G-Wilson-Clark@dfid.gov.uk

Keywords: DFID; Education Strategy

Summary: This piece comments on DFID’s forthcoming education strategy.

In 2009, DFID published a new White Paper on International Development ‘Building our Common Future’. The White Paper committed DFID to releasing a new Education Strategy, the first in ten years, which will be launched by the Secretary of State in March.

The Education Strategy will state how the UK will spend the £8.5 billion committed to education over the 10 year period to 2015, with annual expenditure rising to £1 billion per annum by 2010. The majority of aid will support basic education, with increases in the volume and proportion going to fragile states.

The UK remains firmly committed to the education Millennium Development Goals – universal primary completion and gender parity at all levels of education. The Strategy contains a prioritised strategic vision of quality basic education for all. Three key challenges to achieving this vision are identified;

• Ensuring access to a basic education cycle of primary plus three years, particularly in fragile states,
• Improving the quality of education, particularly core skills such as numeracy, literacy and problem solving,
• Skills to link young people to opportunities, jobs and growth.

The Strategy will explain how DFID will work with partners to address each of these areas. This will entail working with the whole education sector and, where possible, providing long term flexible funding. The Strategy is designed to guide DFID staff, whilst still enabling a country-led approach to development. This has been achieved by presenting the Strategy as a set of principles, allowing individual DFID Advisors to respond to the specific context and needs of partner governments.

Partnership is, of course, vital to get the maximum results for our efforts. We want to help create a vision for global education in 2010 – working with multilateral and government partners, including through the G8 and G20, and with the private sector, faith groups and civil society – to drive progress towards a quality basic education for all. Stronger partnerships will also be forged with the UK public, though expanded support to
UK schools, UK civil society and the 1GOAL campaign, and through research partnerships with UK higher education.

In terms of audience, key constituents include not only the UK public, but partner governments, donors, academics and civil society organisations. Significant input to the Strategy was made through a 12 week public consultation process. Over 2000 submissions were made - online and through stakeholder meetings in the UK and DFID Public Service Agreement countries. The public submissions were invaluable, raising a wide range of issues that informed the design of the Strategy. We would like to express our appreciation to all those organisations and individuals that made contributions.

This issue of NORRAG News is focusing on the utility of global education publications, so I should comment on the relevance of the new DFID Education Strategy to the wider development community. The drafting process has benefited from a strong evidence base, wide public consultation and a multi-disciplinary approach to the challenges facing education. It is our hope that the resulting Strategy will stimulate debate, support the work of our international partners and, ultimately, facilitate progress towards our common goal of every child in school and learning.

The Treatment of Education and Training in the S. Asia Human Development Reports

Shehryar Janjua
Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, Islamabad
shehryarjanjua@gmail.com

Keywords: HDR; HDI; S. Asian HDR; education and training

Summary: This article analyses the role of education and training in the South Asian regional HDRs. Adult literacy and combined enrolment ratio do contribute to the Human Development Index. But only one of the S. Asian HDRs has focused entirely on the status and positioning of education and training in the region; and even then its preoccupation was more with basic education and formal technical and vocational education and training than with secondary and tertiary education, or informal skills acquisition.

As is now well known, the Human Development Reports (HDRs) were launched in 1990 under the intellectual guidance of Mahbub ul Haq. The rationale for the reports was to move the development discourse away from "economic-centric" indicators, such as GDP and income per capita, and to provide an alternative conception of human welfare as the means and end of development. The ranking of countries along parameters of human development – revolving around measures of access to education, healthcare and standard
of living – immediately caught global political attention and introduced a new hierarchy in comparative development. The success and influence of the HDRs can be gauged from the fact that since inception they have been expanded to include five separate regular regional editions, as well as several occasional country and state-level issues.

The regional reports present detailed assessment of the human development picture in member countries around an annual theme, ranging from governance to gender, rural development and technology. Education does not always receive central attention in these reports, which attempt to explore the development landscape through multiple themes. However, given its relevance to the concept of human development (operationalised in terms of adult literacy and combined enrollment ratio), there is hardly any volume that completely overlooks the subject.

An exception to this is the 1998 South Asia HDR on Education. The importance of education to the human development paradigm can be inferred from the fact that this was the first theme-specific HDR for South Asia. The Report presents in candid detail the dismal state of education in regional countries (except Sri Lanka and Maldives), and collates powerful statistics on the subject. It covers topics such as the economic and social significance of education, key challenges in South Asian education systems, social differentials in access to education, the need for technical and vocational training, quality of education, and non-formal mechanisms of education.

However, and perhaps owing naturally to its broad geographical scope, the treatment of education and training in the Report is not sector-wide. In particular, there is little discussion on secondary and tertiary education. Acknowledgement of this is made in the foreword where it is mentioned that the focus of the report is on “ensuring basic education for all the children” and “creation of relevant technical skills”.

In the context of technical and vocational education, the Report draws several valid conclusions and emphasises low rates of enrolment, high drop outs, low quality and mismatches in the supply and demand of skills in South Asia. However, while the goal of universal primary education receives extensive attention in the Report, deliberation on skill development is brief and confined to the formal stream. No mention is made of the complex systems of informal skill training and utilisation in South Asia that serve an overwhelming majority of the regional labour force, and how these can be integrated with mainstream training.

Education has also received extensive coverage in the Ten Year Review of Human Development in South Asia (2007). Within the ambit of education, the Report focuses on primary enrollment, out of school children, student-teacher ratios and adult literacy. Little analysis on skills training is contained in the Report.

Another report that deals directly with issues of education and training is the 2008 edition on Technology and Human Development in South Asia. The Report portrays the potential of technology for affecting social change, and argues that one of the pre-requisites for rapid technological diffusion is the presence of a population with relevant
skills. In this regard, it urges the importance of technical and vocational education, sound tertiary education and investments in R&D. However, the treatment of technical and vocational education in the Report is limited, and country-level analysis is scarce. The Report highlights many of the issues raised previously in the 1998 Report. It also ignores the vast systems of informal skill acquisition and utilisation in South Asia, which are often trapped at the lowest ebb of the technology spectrum.

Of course, over the years, the HDRs have served to significantly mobilise opinion – public, academic as well as in policy circles – in favor of investments in education. But what warrants further consideration is the poor state and pressing need for skill development in South Asia. This is important since skill training can directly contribute towards mitigating problems of low incomes and productivity, unemployment and poverty. Recognition of this is contained in the 1998 Report on Education itself, which highlights the importance of skill development, particularly in a globalising world, and states, “there is perhaps no other field in education that requires from South Asian policymakers more fundamental rethinking, sweeping reforms, and extensive change”.

It would be difficult to precisely identify how the Reports have impacted policy. There are no formal channels through which the HDRs feed into the policymaking structure, which is sometimes divorced from research and based on political interests, international development trends, donor demands, expediency etc. Making claims about the policy influence of the HDRs across Pakistan and the wider region would require detailed analysis that space does not allow. However, there are strong informal channels through which the HDRs do influence policy. This is especially true in Pakistan. In South Asia, the annual launch of the HDR is a well-publicised event. There is broad media coverage, and numerous dignitaries from policymaking, development, academic and civil society organisations are invited. Nonetheless, as the Reports are now more than one decade old, public interest does need to be regularly renewed and sustained.

India ranked at 105 in the Education for All Development Index

Jandhyala B G Tilak
National University of Educational Planning and Administration
New Delhi, India
Email: jtilak@nuepa.org

Keywords: India; EDI (Education Development Index)

Summary: India scores poorly on the EDI; this piece reflects on this and discusses the state of education in the country.
According to the *Human Development Report 2009* (UNDP), India continues to rank around 134 in human development among the 182 countries (2007). There has been no significant change in the rank order during the last decade or more. Similarly, according to the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010* (UNESCO), India’s rank was 105 among 128 countries and continues to figure, along with a bunch of African countries, and one or two Asian, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, in the group of countries of low educational development index (EDI). In 2001 also, in terms of EDI, India ranked exactly 105 among 127 countries. In terms of the EDI, India is behind in 2007 not only countries like Norway, Japan and Germany that figure on the top, but also several Latin American, African and Asian developing countries, which are economically poorer than India, such as Zambia, Kenya Ghana, Bhutan, Maldives and Cambodia. Only a score of countries like Madagascar, Lao, Malawi, Burundi, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Niger are behind India. All this would be quite puzzling to all those who also read at the same time that there has been tremendous progress in India during the current decade. That there are variations in methodology adopted over the years by the UNESCO, or that there are problems relating to data or that there are certain inherent weaknesses in interpreting international rankings of this kind, do not and should not console any serious policy maker.

This indeed requires a serious examination of what is happening in Indian schools. The enrolment ratio in primary education – both gross and net enrolment ratios - has improved over the years. The ‘adjusted’ net enrolment ratio in primary education (it includes children of the relevant age group enrolled in primary or secondary schools) is 94 per cent in 2007, according to the *Global Monitoring Report* (national data reports also present a similar estimate), which is quite a little higher than that in Sweden, Switzerland, and many countries that belong to the groups of high and medium EDI. It may be a matter of great satisfaction and even pride for Indian educational policy makers and planners as it represents a substantial progress over the years.

But India’s performance with respect to all the other three components of EDI, viz., adult literacy, gender specific EFA index, and survival rate to Grade V is indeed appalling. The gender index is only 0.84 in India, compared to above 0.9 in all countries of high and medium EDI countries (excepting Zambia); only 66 per cent of the adults in India are literate, compared to above 80 per cent in most countries of the high and medium EDI groups; and perhaps the most worrisome of all is the poor survival rate. Only 66 per cent of the children enrolled in grade I survive to grade V in India, i.e., as high as 34 per cent of the children enrolled in grade I dropout before reaching grade V, in all probability without acquiring any level of the basic 3 Rs, contributing to the size of out of school children, to child labour and also perhaps contributing to the mass of our illiterate population. The survival rate is above 0.9 in most countries of medium and high EDI. It is, thus, crucial to concentrate in India on the problem of low survival rate in primary education. After all, a 90-95 per cent net enrolment ratio will have no meaning, if it is contrasted with 34 per cent dropout rate. Rapid progress in net enrolment ratio is possible, but a more important challenge is to ensure that the children enrolled in schools progress through the system to complete the given cycle of schooling and even beyond.
Earlier research has shown that children dropout of the schools for three kinds of reasons: (a) schools are not attractive; (b) economic constraints (poverty, direct costs of schooling and child labour) do not allow continuation in schools and (c) other reasons including lack of tradition in going to or continuing in schools. These factors are also important almost in the same order: the unattractive school facilities are the most important ones that push the children out of schools; economic constraints also matter very much, though they matter more for enrolment of children in schools than for the continuation of children in schools; and ‘other’ reasons are not that important. I look at only the first factor here.

How attractive are our primary schools? According to the latest statistics available from the Flash Statistics and Analytical Reports on Elementary Education in India (reports of the DISE – District Information System for Education, published by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi in 2009 and 2010), on average there are only three classrooms per primary school in the country, and there are only three teachers on average per school. About 14 per cent of the schools have a single classroom each and a similar proportion of the schools are single-teacher schools. Note that most primary schools offer schooling from grade I to grade V. While the national norm is to have one teacher for every 40 students in primary schools, 30 per cent of the schools have a ratio above this norm of 1:40; in some states like Bihar the average pupil teacher ratio at the state level is 1:59. What about other physical infrastructure facilities? Only 85 per cent of the schools in the country have drinking water facilities; 37 per cent of the schools do not have toilets; only 44 per cent of the schools have toilet facilities for girls separately. Hardly one-fourth of the schools have electricity connection; 5.7 per cent of the primary schools have a computer! Hardly half the schools have any medical facilities. About 32 per cent of the primary schools require major or minor repairs of their buildings… and so on. Many of these figures are national averages. The actual picture at disaggregated levels – regional and by social and economic groups of population, could be more disturbing.

All this is reflected in the low learning levels of children in primary schools. According to the Annual Survey of Educational Research 2009 Report (Pratham Foundation), only 25 per cent of the children in grade V can read a text of grade I in their own language and less than 40 per cent of the children can do a simple subtraction or division in mathematics.

The picture is indeed disturbing as much progress is claimed in the recent years. For example, after the launching of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) by the Government of India in 2002, which was preceded by investment in elementary education under the World Bank funded project of the DPEP (District Primary Education Project) for about a decade, it is often reported that impressive progress has been made in elementary education in India, in terms of number of enrolments, school buildings constructed, number of teachers appointed, amount of grant released/utilised, etc. Where has all the progress gone?
It may not be altogether right to state that the SSA and other programmes of the Government of India have no significant impact on the educational development index of UNESCO and that they could not change the disgraceful relative rank position of the country even by one point; but such a criticism may not look shallow either. Certainly there is a lot to do with respect to improvement of schooling facilities – both physical and human (teacher), and the overall functioning of the schooling system in order to improve the children’s survival rate in schools in India. This is necessary for building a strong and meaningful educational edifice in India.

Let me end this short article by making two brief statements. First, the survival rate of children to the final grade of primary education (sometimes beyond 5th grade) in most of the North American and Western European countries is 99-100 per cent; and in these countries the pupil-teacher ratio is below 20. In contrast, pupil-teacher ratio in Sub-Saharan Africa is 44, ranging between 24 in Botswana and 90 in Central African Republic and survival rates hardly touch 70 per cent. Similarly in India and Pakistan, the pupil-teacher ratio is 40 and the survival rates are 67 and 72 per cent respectively. The implication should be clear: a pupil-teacher ratio of around 20 may be taken up as a desirable goal. We need good quality teachers in sufficient numbers. This is a basic prerequisite for quality primary education.

Second, recently a non-Resident Indian friend of mine wondered, ‘when every gas station all over the country, including in the remote rural areas, could be modernised to an international standard, why cannot every primary school be made to match international standards?’ The Operation Blackboard programme launched after 1986 might have provided basic minimum facilities to most schools, but has not made schools sufficiently functional and attractive. We may need another programme to equip the schools with beyond the basic minimum level of facilities.

0-0-0-0-0

A Civil Society Perspective on CONFINTEA V1, Belem, Brazil

David Archer
ACTIONAID, London
Email: David.Archer@actionaid.org

Keywords: CONFINTEA; UN Conference on Adult Education

Summary: At the UN Conference on Adult Education in December 2009, it was clear that civil society organisations were those providing ideas for developing a framework that could have made a real difference. Sadly, a lack of procedural clarity and transparency in the final steps of the drafting process meant that the Final Framework for Action ignored some valuable inputs and so lacks the punch that it needs to make a real difference.
On paper, CONFINTEA, the UN Conference on Adult Education that took place in Brazil in December 2009, was just as important as the climate change conference in Copenhagen that took place the following week. As a UN Conference it attracted delegations from 162 countries, many headed up by Ministers. In total about 2,000 people converged on the Amazonian city of Belem for this opportunity to review the state of adult education and offer a framework for the coming years. The conference happens just once every twelve years so it is important to seize the moment and build a consensus on how we can make better progress in adult education. On this occasion, this was particularly urgent as the past decade has been distinguished by shockingly low levels of government investment in the sector around the world. The final Belem Framework for Action which was “approved by acclamation” in the closing session on 4th December includes some modest steps forward but fails to provide tangible targets or benchmarks to which governments can be held accountable.

The build-up to CONFINTEA involved an unprecedentedly strong coordination of civil society actors and this is, in itself, a huge gain. The International Council for Adult Education, ICAE, led a wide consultative process to develop a draft position paper that was the basis for discussion at the International Civil Society Forum (FISC) in the days leading up to CONFINTEA. In the preceding months there were e-discussions involving hundreds of people. In Africa, for the first time a broad platform came together to produce a common paper, linking the Pan African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (PAALAE), Pamoja (the Africa Reflect network), FEMNET and the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA). The Global Campaign for Education drew on these other papers to produce a concise ten point agenda for action which was circulated to national education coalitions and activists - mobilising over 15 million people during the Global Action Week in April 2009 (focused on the “Big Read” which would have been on the eve of the original conference, which was postponed).

All of these diverse civil society inputs and many others were taken into account during the FISC meeting, from 28th-30th November, where over 500 people gathered representing organisations from over 80 countries. A small drafting committee met every night to produce an agreed synthesis document based on all these inputs. As well as producing a fully elaborated report on FISC there was an agreement that a short sharp document was needed that would highlight critical issues that we wanted CONFINTEA to address. This short statement went through several drafts over the three days and was finally agreed by all civil society organisations present in the final FISC session. This final two-page paper called “From Rhetoric to Coherent Action” laid out a strong consensus position on how CONFINTEA could make a real difference to the education of adults and young people.

The challenge was then to advance these consensus positions through coordinated action in the main CONFINTEA conference with government delegations from 162 countries. This proved remarkably successful and the civil society positions for strengthening action on the right to education for all adults and young people were fully endorsed by the heads
of 22 national government delegations from all regions and won significant support from another 14 governments.

As a result of this civil society mobilisation and support from many governments there were some significant gains made in the final Framework for Action. For example there was an acknowledgement of the urgent need for action on adult literacy and there was a welcome recognition that we need to move beyond past simplistic understandings of literacy to recognise a continuum of learning. There was a commitment to produce fully costed and well-targeted plans backed up by legislation – and with active participation from civil society, educators and learners themselves. There was strong language recognising different forms of discrimination that undermine access to education. The commitment to monitor progress on adult education was significantly reinforced with clear timelines. Perhaps most importantly there was a commitment to ensure that the major global financing mechanism for education for all (called the Fast Track Initiative) should explicitly support adult literacy.

However, owing to a flawed process the final Framework for Action is much weaker than it could or should have been. The world faces a series of major crises (food, fuel, finance, climate, conflict and war) and adult education is key to helping people, especially women, respond to these. On the eve of the UN Copenhagen Climate conference, the Belem conference could have laid out an agenda for how human resource development is fundamental to addressing natural resource crises. Sadly, this opportunity was missed and similar dynamics that undermined an agreement on climate in Copenhagen also undermined a meaningful agreement on adult education. Notably the UN failed to provide sufficient leadership and key Northern countries (particularly Canada and the US) opposed any specific benchmarks or targets. There were no specific financing targets agreed for national governments in the North or South and there was an active reluctance to define what constitutes an equitable share of education budgets to go to adult education. This will leave adult education chronically under-funded for another decade. The language around the fundamental right to education was also watered down and there was no recognition of the justiciability of the right to adult education.

Civil society has a crucial role to play in promoting public dialogue, in encouraging rigorous monitoring and in being a crucial partner of government around adult learning policy and practice. In Belem it was clear that civil society organisations were those providing ideas for developing a framework that could have made a real difference. Sadly a lack of procedural clarity and transparency in the final steps of the drafting process meant that the Final Framework for Action ignored some valuable inputs and so lacks the punch that it needs to make a real difference. The civil society forum concluded their feedback on the conference with the diplomatically phrased comment: “it is clear that future conferences must ensure that processes for handling amendments and finalising documents need to be significantly improved and made more transparent”. The struggle to secure meaningful action on the right to education for adults and young people must therefore continue for many years to come and we will have to find other ways to hold governments to account! After all, even if we had secured a perfect agreement that included everything we wanted, the real challenge would always have been to ensure that
this was delivered in practice. It is too easy for governments to sign up to declarations from UN conferences that have no binding powers! To secure real change we will always need to build sustained domestic pressure in each and every country

0-0-0-0-0

‘Our Common Interest’ Five Years on: The Commission for Africa Report and Education

Myles A Wickstead
Former Head of Secretariat, Commission for Africa, now Open University, UK
Email: mswickstead@hotmail.com

Keywords: CfA (Commission for Africa) Report; UK

Summary: This article argues that progress towards the education MDGs requires a range of inputs beyond primary education, as argued in the Commission for Africa Report of 2005. The forthcoming DFID Education Strategy Paper will provide evidence of the extent to which the need for such a holistic approach has been recognised.

A point which should be made in this Special Issue of NORRAG NEWS is that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were largely based on Reports from key World Conferences and Summits in the previous decade. There will be a strong focus this year on the MDGs, ten years on from their creation and five years before the target year for most of them. We can expect a number of critiques arguing that the MDG focus on basic health and primary education cannot possibly reflect the complexities of development, and that this is the year in which the MDGs should be abandoned.

These critiques confuse outcomes and inputs. The issue was addressed head on in ‘Our Common Interest’, the Commission for Africa Report, launched in March 2005. It argued that a whole range of elements need to be in place to make progress towards the MDGs, and that the challenges of development need to be addressed in a holistic way. Reasonable levels of governance, peace and security are crucial. It is only then possible to build the education and health systems required to make progress towards the MDGs. But those systems cannot be sustained without significant economic growth. That requires a vibrant private sector and trade development, which in turn depend on a functioning physical infrastructure. And so on….

It is clear that achievement of the education MDGs requires investments in areas like teacher training, staff retention and professional development, buildings, books, curriculum development etc. But the importance of higher education goes to the heart of the capacity building on which Africa’s future development depends.

‘Our Common Interest’ looks at this as a matter of governance: ‘The shortage of skilled professionals in Africa is a critical issue. It has its roots in a tertiary education system
that is in a state of crisis. The emphasis in Africa in recent years has rightly been on the need for primary education. An unfortunate side-effect of this has been the neglect of secondary and tertiary education from which are produced the doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers, lawyers and government workers of tomorrow’. The CfA Report also argues for the strengthening of science, engineering and technology capacity in Africa, on the basis that such knowledge enables countries ‘to find their own solutions to their own problems’ and brings about step-changes in areas such as health, sanitation and water supply which are crucial to underpin progress towards the MDGs.

So how does all this look five years down the road? The Gleneagles Summit broadly endorsed the CfA Recommendations in these areas, though with some loss of specificity over the financial commitments required to support the development of institutes of higher education, science and technology. Certainly there is now a more widespread appreciation both within Africa and within the international community of the need for a holistic approach to development issues and the central role of governance and capacity building.

The forthcoming DFID Education Strategy Paper will indicate how one major donor views this agenda. To what extent will it recognise the diversity of inputs required to make progress towards the education MDGs? What will it say about the importance of higher and further education? Will it recognise that without developing systems and skills, as the CfA Report argues, Africa will remain locked in dependency, and fragile states will remain just that? Will it recognise that new technologies of open and distance learning need to be embraced alongside more traditional methods if the demand for HE/FE – not just for degrees, but for on the job training and continuing professional development at all levels – is to be met?

The extent to which the Recommendations of a Report produced in 2005 have been embraced can largely be judged by the extent to which they are reflected in a Report five years on. Watch this space!

Later

It is now clear that there will be some sort of Report this year (2010) tracking progress in detail against the Commission for Africa Recommendations, as part of the broader follow-up to the focus on Africa in 2005 and effort to determine what has been done - and what remains to be done - to make progress towards the MDGs by 2015.
Realizing the Potential of Africa's Youth:

Report of the (Danish) Africa Commission

Holger Hansen
University of Copenhagen
Email: hbh@teol.ku.dk

Key words: Africa Commission; private sector-led development; vocational skills training; Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso; Benin

Summary: The Danish Africa Commission has identified youth as the principal target and private sector led growth, skills training and entrepreneurship as its principal focus. Despite the strong emphasis on African ownership of the recommendations and initiatives, the ILO has been selected, surprisingly, as the implementing agency for the skills training programme.

The Commission started its work in April 2008 and presented its report in May 2009. It came as a surprise that the then Danish Prime Minister (since mid 2009 Secretary General of NATO), Anders Fogh Rasmussen, took such an initiative, but on a visit to Tanzania and Mozambique in 2005 he saw for himself the great need to focus on Africa's special problems and future development in view of the fast running globalization process. Much of the work in the Commission was in fact due to his determination and drive.

Right from the beginning it was made clear that the Africa Commission was not intended as a duplicate of the Blair Commission for Africa even if critical voices quite often hinted at exactly that. Its work should be limited to a few crucial areas, and the recommendations should be few and immediately operational - the report was clearly not meant for the shelves. One parallel was the membership of the Commission. There were 18 members, and 10 of them, i.e. the majority, was from Africa. They included the Tanzanian President and the Prime Minster from Mozambique, the President of the African Development Bank, the Chairman of the Commission of the AU, and high ranking officials from the UN, the World Bank and regional organisations. The intention was all the way through to secure African ownership and authoritative backing of the recommendations and initiatives.

The report is fairly short (75 pages) and already the title points to its overall theme and target group, Realising the Potential of Africa's Youth. The underlying concern is the population growth and the demographic changes which have resulted in a disproportionate proportion of people under 25 - estimated to be 50% by 2030. The best way to achieve the report's principal goal is job creation on a large scale aimed at the youth and driven by private sector-led economic growth. The implementation of this overall goal is specified in five initiatives:

32 The Commission for Africa had 17 members of which 9 were from Africa.
- benchmarking Africa competitiveness,
- access to investment finance for SMEs,
- unleashing young entrepreneurs,
- access to sustainable energy,
- promoting post-primary education and research.

Most focus has been on the last of the five recommendations while most controversy has been around the Commission's strong emphasis on the private sector as the driver of development in Africa. The critics have seen it as an expression of a neo-liberal ideology that wants to reduce the state and let market forces alone direct development in Africa. The argument runs that such ideas will result in an overload of responsibility for the private sector and a gross neglect of the state as the necessary actor for the establishment of an enabling environment. But during such discussions, critics have tended to overlook that the African leaders in the Commission have supported this policy and have continued to back it in various international fora. For them and for the Commission as a whole, the intention has rather been to adjust years of state-run development activities with a better division of work between the public and the private sector and in general to give more room for a private sector-driven development.

Contrary to the pessimistic expectations following the exit of Prime Minister Rasmussen, the Danish government has budgeted for a follow-up both in the aid budget for 2010 and with increasing amounts in the budget proposals for the next five years. And in a press release of 21 December 2009, the Danish Minister for Development announced that the first three grants had been approved in order to start the implementation of some of the initiatives presented by the Africa Commission. Apart from support to young entrepreneurs in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, the most significant grant goes to the first phase of a project "to strengthen vocational training in the informal sector for youth in Benin, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe". The target group is the youth who have abandoned school, and the overall aim is to strengthen youth employment by easing business access to qualified labour. The amount for the first phase of two years is around 6 mio. USD, and in accordance with the somewhat surprising recommendation from the Commission, the project will be implemented by ILO.

If we first look at the three countries involved it comes as a surprise that Zimbabwe is included in view of the closure of the Danish aid programme and the EU sanctions. But the inclusion of Zimbabwe can best be explained as part of the humanitarian aid to the social sectors and as a first step to bridge the gap between humanitarian aid and development assistance - a policy for which Denmark in particular has been the spokesman among the EU countries. That Benin and Burkina are the main beneficiaries is a consequence of the sector programmes within education (ESPS) that Denmark has started in the two countries as recently as 2002-03. In contrast with other ESPSs, the two new programmes were especially directed towards vocational training, and some - though limited - progress had been made over the last five years.

This leads to a second comment. There has over the years been a kind of paradox in the Danish aid policy regarding vocational training. Almost simultaneously with the two new
Esps, Denmark withdrew from skills training programmes in Tanzania and Zambia giving as the reasons that they were not poverty oriented enough and not reaching their targets and/or the governments were not interested and did not pass the necessary legislation. Instead the emphasis has been on primary education with possible openings upwards to secondary education and downwards to pre-schools, but hardly any opening towards the many school leavers. Even in the Business Sector Support Programmes (BSPS) which have been promoted over the last decennium there has hardly been any mention of the necessity of skills training.

Hence it has come as a major new departure that the Africa Commission has so strongly emphasized the concept of post-primary education and argued for its natural position in the educational system. And it is a clear indication of policy change that post-primary education by now has been endorsed and in future will be an integral part of various programmes. Furthermore, it is a strengthening of the Africa Commission's recommendations in relation to the private sector when the Danish Minister for Development specifically points to the importance of the informal sector as an area for youth employment.

It is so far small money that has been set aside for the promotion of post-primary education, but it marks a start. Denmark has chosen not to let the activity be part of its bilateral country programmes in Benin and Burkina Faso. Following the Africa Commission's recommendation, ILO has been selected as the implementing agency. One can only hope that ILO has sufficient capacity and experience for the enterprise, and that they will be able to establish the vital linkage between training and job opportunities. In the initiation phase it would be a suitable approach to link up with the experiences within the field of post-primary education that Denmark has already gained in the two countries over the last five years. And looking further ahead Denmark is likely to renew and increase its grant after the first two years, but the programme will benefit even more if ILO will be able to attract more funding.
REPORTING ON REPORTS
FROM “THE FIELD”
The Key Dimension of Local 'Policy Learning' in the Role of Global Reports

Søren Nielsen
European Training Foundation (ETF), Turin
Email: Soren.Nielsen@etf.europa.eu

Keywords: Policy Learning; Vocational Education and Training (VET); Transition Countries

Summary: The gathering of Global Reports is unending; we must find new ways to cope with knowledge in the information society. ETF has explored the opportunities for applying active learning principles for educational reforms in transition countries; the focus is on policy “learning”.

These reflections are written in the late evening after a long workshop day here in Belgrade for a group of key policymakers and stakeholders from ministries and social partners in Serbia, now a pre-accession country, who have been introduced to the bulk of documents developed as part of the EU policy framework in education, vocational education and training (VET) and employment. We also discussed recent OECD reports, publications from CEDEFOP as well as ETF. It is a huge stack of reports and many more should have been added.

We can’t go on in this way, the gathering of publications is unending, it is never enough, and we must find new ways to cope with knowledge in the information society. In particular, in our work with transition country policymakers who are in addition experiencing an information overload from other foreign donors.

ETF has explored the opportunities for applying active learning principles for educational reforms in transition countries. The focus is on policy “learning”. This concept was developed to argue that systemic reforms of VET will only be successful and sustainable if policy development, formulation and implementation are firmly based on broad ownership and fit into contexts in existing institutions. The concept of policy learning was developed in a critical discussion with traditional approaches of policy transfer and policy copying. It emphasises the active engagement of national stakeholders in developing their own policy solutions based on the understanding that there are simply no valid models but at most a wealth of international experience in dealing with similar policy issues in other contexts.

Development agencies and their staff often act as classical school teachers who have the right knowledge and know best what has to be done. True knowledge just needs to be transferred to partners who don’t know the truth (yet) and partners should implement measures that are presented to them as best practice. Local actors are regarded as passive knowledge and instruction receivers who do not possess enough relevant prior knowledge and experience. Development or reform is seen as a process of social engineering that will be successful if properly managed technically. In reality, most reform projects are short-lived because they are not embedded and there is no local ownership. Reforms are often not sustainable; they tend to come and go with the donor agencies.
The basic assumption underlying the concept of policy learning is not so much that policies can be learned but that actual policies are learned policies. Learning is not simply the transfer of expert knowledge or behaviour from one person to another but rather the acquisition of understanding and competence through participation in learning processes. However, policymakers are not only policy learners. They also have to act, and acting on the political scene, especially in environments that are undergoing radical change such as in transition countries, does not always leave a lot of space and time for careful and gradual learning. They have to engage in daily political decision-making and, depending on their position in the system, active engagement in political power struggles may often take priority. On the other hand, policymakers engaged in systemic reforms are in need of new knowledge which very often contradicts with established knowledge and routines. For policymakers, therefore, because they are under pressure to act, learning is more than merely a cognitive process: learning is practice. Their learning is situated learning as it is an integral and inseparable aspect of their social practice. Lave and Wenger (1990) argue that all learning is situated learning and more particularly “legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice”. Novice learners learn best when they are engaged in a community of more expert learners; during the learning process they become more competent themselves and move from the margin to the centre.

We need to have a deeper understanding of why and how people learn and develop new knowledge and expertise. The standard assumption underlying most traditional learning approaches is that someone (the foreign expert) possesses the right knowledge and learners who do not have this knowledge (local policymakers) should simply listen carefully and then do what they have learned. New learning theories, instead, argue that learners are more successful in acquiring, digesting, applying and retrieving new knowledge when they have been actively engaged in these processes. Facilitating active policy learning rather than policy transfer may better contribute to sustainable reformed systems.

Reforming education and training systems in transition countries implies combining old and new knowledge in changing contexts for both local stakeholders and international advisers. Policy learning is not just about learning the policies that other countries have developed but rather about learning which policies can be developed locally by reflecting on the relevance of other countries’ policies for the situation at home. Policy learning in this sense can only happen when there is information and knowledge available and shared. The principal role of donors is therefore to enable a reform policy learning process by providing access to such information and experience and by facilitating a critical reflection on their relevance.

VET reform policy development seen as VET policy learning would have to use knowledge sharing to enable decision-makers from partner countries to learn from – and not simply about – VET reform experiences from elsewhere for the formulation and the implementation of their own reform objectives. Knowledge sharing would also enable international advisers to better understand the institutional context and history of the partner country; this will also enable an appreciation of the expertise that partners bring into the reform process. International policy advisers would have to take a role similar to the modern teacher: not that of the expert who knows it all and simply passes on existing knowledge but the one that recognises problems, does not know the solutions yet, organises and guides knowledge sharing and in so doing develops new
knowledge for all involved in the learning process. Policy learning therefore can only happen in partnership.

In policy learning partnerships, the timing and sequencing of knowledge sharing is of major importance if donor assistance is to have a real impact on local ownership and contextual fit, and if it is to create the necessary motivation, commitment and capacities to sustain reforms. This would ask for specific competences from policy advisers as they have to be able to judge where they themselves and their partners are in moving from the periphery to the centre of the community of practice. It would also require a rethinking of the classical development instruments such as workshops, study visits, technical assistance, pilot projects and so on with a view of developing strong learning environments for policy learning to happen.

Policy learning is sharing experience from the past to develop knowledge for the future. It is also about sharing knowledge from abroad and knowledge that is locally produced and therefore about developing new knowledge as well. It contributes not only to creating more coherent system-wide reforms that fit but also facilitates system-deep reforms of VET systems as it enables all stakeholders to learn new roles and develop new working routines. It is still a challenging task to develop concrete approaches that can make policy learning which is based on principles of active learning theory work in practice.

Policymakers in transition countries can be regarded as highly motivated novice learners and policy learning can be facilitated by letting them participate in relevant communities of practice (Wenger 1998). Such communities of practice could be created by bringing together policymakers from different countries that have gone through or are undergoing reforms of their education systems. International and local policy analysts, researchers, advisers and other practitioners could be part of such communities as well.

References


How Does the Mass of Policy Recommendations Reach Policy People in the Field?

Mary-Luce Fiaux Niada
Swiss Development Agency, Bern

Email: mary-luce.fiauxniada@deza.admin.ch

Keywords: EFA GMR; Mali

Summary: This piece takes the position that if there is more engagement with southern experts in the production of the EFA GMR, the probability that such analyses would be diffused and communicated would be greatly reinforced and improved.

In Bamako, Mali, once a year, The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report is given out to all financial and technical partners during a monthly meeting and in the context of a partnership framework led by the Minister of Education. The Report is also distributed through other existing channels and over the Internet, making it widely accessible. Without any doubt, the resulting data and analyses are available the world-over. However, a more complex question arises, on which this article will attempt to shed light: how is information from the report used and translated into educational policies, strategies, programs and financing, most notably in the South? The issue of the influence of research on policy is neither specific to education nor new; it is a recurring theme and will remain as such, so long as the links between scientific thought and political decision-making depend on a diversity of factors. In this case, these factors include the format and language of the Global Monitoring Report, the definition of political decision-makers, and the process used to elaborate the report.

Indeed, one might rightfully question whether the format and language of the EFA Global Monitoring Report are appropriate and comprehensible to a non-scientific audience. Everyone would agree that 500 pages of text written by specialists, and innumerable tables filled with numbers could be a significant put off! Efforts have therefore been made to elaborate an overview of the report, including action-based recommendations and key messages for change; regional summaries are also provided, in order to contextualize and differentiate country-by-country analyses. These products have been conceived in order to help facilitate the raising of awareness of certain educational realities, and the buy-in of the Report’s proposals by decision-makers.

But who are the decision-makers, where education and training is concerned? The configuration of actors is currently in a state of upheaval: the de-concentration of Ministries is progressing, giving new responsibilities to local and regional levels. The decentralized management of education contributes to the same process and confronts communities – and their elected representatives – with the need to assume new competencies. Civil society organizations are awarded new roles in the implementation of non-formal education and training, an indispensable step towards universal education. Central parent-student organizations are preoccupied by the access to and quality of
education offered to children and young people. Regarding the emergence of these new actors, one might also envision broader and better-adapted strategies for the dissemination of the EFA Global Monitoring Report. The key messages of the Report must reach this diversity of actors – with often diverging interests – and the recommendations of the Report should be debated regionally and locally, including in national languages. In our opinion, one of the challenges is therefore to give local actors the opportunity to gain access to simplified information and analyses on educational matters, in order to become partners of the Ministries in the political dialogue on education.

Finally, the way in which the EFA Global Monitoring Report is elaborated can either favor or disfavor how it will be used in countries of the South. Is this process – which lasts for over one year and mobilizes a team of experts based in the North – based on the existence of solid and institutionalized partnerships with research institutions focused on education and/or specialized networks on education, particularly in the South? Our hypothesis is the following: if structures including thematic groups of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) or the Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA), were formally responsible for contributing to the collection of data and experiences in education from their areas of intervention, and to the production of certain analyses proposed in the report, the probability that such analyses would be diffused and communicated would be greatly reinforced and improved. The use of studies by actors in the South depends partially on what status they are given in the research process: with this in mind, it is high time to evolve towards a logic of joint research-production processes and move away from a logic of research consumption where actors of the South are too often confined. Research production would contribute to their empowerment. [Editor: The 43 background papers commissioned by the EFA GMR team for the latest volume (2010) can be viewed at http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/resources/background-papers/2010/]}
Localizing International Best Practices in Education: The case of PETS\textsuperscript{33} in Tanzania

Chambi Chachage
Independent researcher and policy analyst, Dar es Salaam
Email: chambi78@yahoo.com

Keywords: Tanzania, PETS (public expenditure tracking approach)

Summary: This piece discusses the need for better public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS) in Tanzania. [It also examines the localization of global techniques such as PETS, and is an interesting example of the challenge of policy learning – see article by Nielsen in NN43. Ed.]

Tanzania is facing an education crisis. Not least because of corruption. National examination pass rates are falling steadily. So are the percentages of education funds that reach their allocated destinations.

Pass rates for Primary School Leaving Examinations and Form Two National Examinations have declined by 3.3% and 8.3% respectively in a year. These results have ignited a national debate within the context of ‘international best practices’ in education. This analytical brief is a further contribution to that debate.

In his response to my query\textsuperscript{34} ‘What about a Stimulus Package for the Education Crisis?’ Peter Bofin offers a sharp critique: “One of Chambi’s conclusions – that we need more Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) – can be interrogated. There has been no dearth of PETS in education. The most recent, cited by Chambi, was this year. Previous PETS were carried out in 2004, 2003, 2001 and 1999. Their inspiration is the famous PETS of the mid nineties from Uganda, credited with ushering in a sea change in the management of public education funds.” He then aptly questions the efficacy of this ‘best practice’.

Bofin reminds us that the joint Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) and the United Republic of Tanzania’s 2004 PETS were long ago shelved and their findings were not accepted by the government. One of their findings was that 40% of the funds allocated for buying books and other education inputs under the ‘capitation grant’ of USD10 per student per year went missing. He also notes that no copies of the report are available to the public and the “last organisation to make public reference to it – HakiElimu – was banned from official contact with public education officials.” Ironically, as he further notes, its “findings are only easily accessible through analysis conducted by U4, a project

\textsuperscript{33} The Public Expenditure Tracking approach was developed by a group of researchers in the World Bank and was first applied to a study of a primary education reform in Uganda in 1996. Since then, several dozen PETS have been implemented around the world, both in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and in Eastern Europe - http://www.u4.no/themes/pets/petsfindings.cfm

\textsuperscript{34} See: http://udadisi.blogspot.com/2009/12/what-about-stimulus-package-for.html
of Norway’s Christian Michelsen Institute.” Such lack of local access to public information makes corruption in the education sector thrive.

As I have indicated in the forthcoming Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA) & HakiElimu’s Right to Know, Right to Education: A Baseline Report on Tanzania, deliberate failure to implement 2004 PETS recommendations led to embezzlement of over Tsh 5 billion earmarked for Primary School Development Plan (PEDP). The situation was alarming to the extent that a newspaper thus recalled its cover story on a then recent international report by UNESCO that cited pilferage of school funds as the biggest hindrance to attaining Education for All (EFA) goals: UNESCO’s “report on corruption in schools and universities ranked Tanzania as having one of the highest leakages of school development funds. The country’s PEDP spending according to that report was affected to a whopping 54 percent of the budgeted expenditure, meaning only half of the intended money reached beneficiaries” (The Citizen 24 August 2007: 1–2).

The fact that 2009 PETS has revealed that 13% of the primary education budget for local governments did not reach there shows that corruption is still a serious problem. It could be as serious as it was in the 2004 PETS since the 2009 PETS’ headline figure, as Bofin sharply observes, is neither the 40% targeted at the schools that doesn’t reach them nor the 24% of the capitation grant that is still unaccounted for.

It is in this regard that I still insist that we need more PETS, albeit effective ones; not only those commissioned by the government but also those that are conducted by citizens themselves and their civil society organizations at the community levels. That way we would truly localize such a workable international best practice that somehow worked in our neighbouring country. Let’s popularize PETS!

0-0-0-0-0

Are Chilean Policy Makers Using (or Learning from) World Reports?

Ernesto Schiefelbein and Paulina Schiefelbein
Universidad Autónoma de Chile, Santiago
Email: pschiefe@gmail.com

Keywords: Chile

Summary: This article uses five examples to illustrate problems faced by Chilean policy makers in using international education research findings and world reports.

Five examples are presented to illustrate the problems faced by Chilean policy makers in using education research findings and world reports. Even though the “institutional learning” in such process may be scant, some possible intervening factors and lessons learned are discussed below.
Following advice from the UNESCO Regional Office, it was detected that 40% of fourth graders could not answer “literal items” (about evidence presented in a brief text describing explicit situations). Therefore, “poor comprehensive reading level” was presented in March 1994 as the key education problem to be solved and relevant strategies recommended by UNESCO were selected. An International Mission organized by UNESCO visited Chile the next month, endorsing the proposed policy while refining both the objective and the strategies (1). A 17-member Technical/Political Committee was organized and in September 1994 it issued a consensus report on five major projects to be implemented for coping with the problem: longer school year, higher teachers’ salaries, improved initial training, proven interactive learning materials, and access to computers. (2)

The first two projects were quickly implemented, but lack of information on how to teach reading led new policy makers to propose an odd change in grade one curriculum in 1996. Against research findings (the USA National Research Council published “Preventing reading difficulties in young children” in 1998), the “whole-word” approach was approved by the eight members of the National Education Council (representing universities and other institutions, but not being professionally trained in education), thus replacing the phonics approach. A further decline in reading levels forced a reversal to this change in 2003.

Seventeen Teacher Training Improvement Projects (FFID) were awarded US$25 million in 1997. Participating institutions were only asked to review their curriculum and to upgrade their faculty. (3) Then, their projects were approved in spite of using little evidence. Therefore, five years later trainees still were tested on their ability to recall, trainers kept using frontal teaching, there was little microteaching (analysis of videotaped classes), scant reading before starting the class, and less than 10% of trainers had doctoral training in education. On the other hand a project that used relevant information to solve these problems was rejected because it was rated as too radical.

A “Reading Bag” project was launched in 2007, to improve the reading level (40% in Grade 4 since 1994). Information on a similar project in Argentina was used in the design. Over 400,000 small containers with some 15 books and a booklet that provided free access to public libraries were distributed in poor homes in the next two years. (4) An evaluation on the impact of this family library on the ability of poor children to understand a brief text (described above) is planned for 2010.

Testing new teachers - implemented in 2008 to raise teachers’ training - was a project based on contradictory information. Even though this “accreditation” was recommended by the World Bank, the policy makers were not aware of the 766-page report "Studying Teacher Education" that was released by the American Education Research Association in 2005. The report concluded: “evidence showing that teachers who score high on such tests are more successful in the classroom than their low-scoring colleagues is scarce".
These five examples suggest that it is not enough to use international information to select the right objectives. It is also necessary to use relevant information for implementing the right strategies. Also, advisors play a key role filtering the information. Advisors in examples 2 and 3 used different information and/or interpreted the data in a different way than the advisor in the first example. Also, examples 4 and 5 illustrate strategies that may look attractive for the laymen, but failed in previous trials or are aimed to a different objective (using rather than raising reading competency). Furthermore, the success of one project may depend on the success in another link of the chain of advances (as in mastery learning), i.e., improving initial education may require better trained teachers in grade one.

Key education advisors to Chilean policy makers (in the last 20 years) have been specialized in different education areas (and also differed in their academic and professional domains). It is no wonder that they use different sets of information or disagree in the estimated potential impact of alternative education strategies (they might be aware of the international reports and findings, but did not necessarily reach similar conclusions). Therefore, there is a need to compare estimated impacts (and to take into account the required adjustments needed for Chile in reports produced in the North for Northern agencies and academics). Cost-effectiveness studies using the accumulated knowledge of academics and practitioners have proven to be quite useful by providing estimated “indicators that can be compared” (helping to communicate viewpoints and to solve some of the differences among advisors). (5) These studies can be complemented with state of the art reviews of evidence-based data.

After 15 years and still 40% of fourth graders unable to read, the main lesson - learned from the Chilean experience on the use of research findings and world reports - concerns the structure of the policy making process. Should Chile keep political Ministers designing technical strategies for coping with long term education problems (strategies that should be discussed in the Congress to get political approval and resources)? Or, should Chile organize a national council of high level education managers (through a process similar to the appointment of judges to the United States Supreme Court) and let the Congress discuss and vote their proposals? The latter has been in operation in Uruguay since 1985 and is close to the process carried out in the first example that allowed a consensus (on the main objective and key strategies) among the main stakeholders). The other alternative is now in operation and was used in the other four examples.

In summary, it seems that Chilean education institutions have learned from some of the world reports and experiences of the last 20 years, but there is no evidence of a cumulative effect. The examples presented above would be far away from Peter Senge's vision of a learning organization as a group of people who are continually enhancing their capabilities to implement what they want to achieve.

References
1 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000977/097751s.pdf#97752
2 http://www.educarchile.cl/medios/20030506192257.pdf
Global Reports: Issues and Impact in Sub-Saharan Africa

Djénéba Traoré
ROCARE/ERNWACA Regional Coordinator,35 Bamako
Email: dtraore@rocare.org

Keywords: Sub-Saharan Africa

Summary: In Sub-Saharan Africa, global reports don’t seem to be very widely read or accessible. It could be useful to interrogate the plethora reports at the country level, and explore whether there is a coherent account that can be stitched together.

Generally, in Africa south of the Sahara, global reports do not yet systematically generate press-worthy roundtables or written critiques by intellectuals working in academic or political spheres. This is true of a whole series of these, including the Human Development Report, the EFA Global Monitoring Report, the Global Competitiveness Report, the Corruption Perceptions Index (of Transparency International), the World Health Report, the Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, Report of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Global Information Technology Report, and Global Employment Trends. This is mostly explained by the fact that these specific and oftentimes voluminous documents require in most cases a high level of understanding and are only accessible to a very restricted audience. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, this audience faces many other constraints. Indeed, because of the numerous social, economic and academic challenges faced by all of the actors in the educational system in a majority of African countries south of the Sahara, examining global reports is not an academic priority for teachers who have the profile needed for this type of exercise. All the more so because the reports on education barely touch on, if at all, the challenges tied to higher education development in Africa, particularly concerning the university level (See Carton and Weyer NN43).

Furthermore, one of the characteristics of global reports is that they are typically more available over the Internet than on library shelves. But in sub-Saharan Africa, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) is not developed, as opposed to industrialized countries where even the slightest information is accessible easily on the Internet.

35 http://www.rocare.org/
There are six billion people living on the planet today, of which 3/4 live in developing countries, many of them confronted with poverty, sickness, marginalization, corruption and illiteracy. Since the end of the Second World War, UN institutions and other development and cooperation agencies have taken these problems upon themselves, and have frequently analysed what needs to be done through a whole series of global summits and global reports.

In general, global reports help to provide a status update on specific and crucial questions related to the future of mankind, to prevent a more or less imminent danger, and to offer as a result a series of recommendations that could help improve or even definitively end a given situation, - if they were implemented.

According to the 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, for example, the economic and financial crisis “could slow, stall or even reverse the hard-won gains of the past decade” in education, rendering null the improvements made over recent years. The authors of the report place an emphasis on the particular state in which sub-Saharan Africa finds itself, urging rich countries and the G-20 to come to the aid of the poorer countries of the world in a more sustained manner with the objective of making primary education universal by 2015. It would take an estimated 16 billion dollars per year to achieve this objective.

In light of a reduction in donor aid for education, the report is deliberately alarmist and raises awareness around several global indicators that are becoming a source of preoccupation. The report underlines a whole series of highly problematic system failures.

In order to eradicate “persistent inequalities” in the educational domain, the EFA GMR report recommends that governments of the concerned nations take a whole series of measures which have been laid out in the report and particularly in the sub-Saharan overview.

However, beyond the purely philanthropic aspect, can all of the recommendations coming out of global reports be really applied in the context of Africa in a way that might improve the situation? In sub-Saharan Africa, it should be noted that for governments, the temptation with few exceptions is to treat the recommendations coming out of these reports as potentially ready for being adopted into policy without even taking into consideration the opinion of the country’s civil society.

Global Reports are really an illustration of globalization. But for globalization not to become a dictate of the more dominant countries’ will, political and social actors in developing countries should be able to analyze global reports in an objective manner, in order to glean the quintessential points, and lead a critical and constructive reflection on the paths and solutions proposed. This means that a country such as Mali needs to interrogate how this set of 10 to 20 reports actually view Mali. Forming such a composite picture would be an extremely revealing insight into whether there really is a coherent
account coming out of this plethora of material. Is this perhaps something that the ERNWACA chapter in Mali could perhaps initiate?

**Web sources for reports to be interrogated at the country level:**

World Economic Forum - Global Competitiveness Report
[www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)

World Economic Forum - Global Information Technology Report
[www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)

Transparency International's Global Corruption Report
[www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

Rapport mondial sur le développement humain 2007/2008

EFA Global Monitoring Report
[www.efareport.unesco.org](http://www.efareport.unesco.org)

World Health Report Annual report on global public health and key statistics
[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
[www.theglobalfund.org](http://www.theglobalfund.org)

2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic
[www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)

Global Employment Trends
World Reports and Need Driven Non-formal Training Programmes: Prospecting a National Vocational Education and Training Commission for Nigeria

Benjamin A. Ogwo
State University of New York, Oswego
Email: ogwoben2a@yahoo.com

Keywords: Nigeria; Vocational education and training

Summary: This piece comments on how world reports are used in Nigeria’s vocational education and training sector, and argues that more focus needs to be given to establishing structures that would aid the domestication of the world reports.

World reports and the associated conferences, workshops, dialogues are meant to keep every country on the same global page. Nigeria’s participation in these global discourses affords scholars and bureaucrats the opportunity of acquiring new vocabulary and the tourism/financial dividends (receipt of per diem allowances). There is no gainsaying that there is hardly any other conceivable method of dialoguing on global issues other convening these meetings; however, what each country does with the reports goes far beyond the intellectual integrity of their contents. In Nigeria, the bureaucratic structure for implementing world reports on non-formal training, for instance, is devolved among several ministries, chief of which include: Education, Commerce and Industries (Industrial Training Fund), Science and Technology, Youth and Sports etc. By definition, non-formal training are those skills programmes located outside the regular school system (Ogwo and Oranu, 2006) which could be agency or industry based and designed for different sectors of the economy. By the devolution of the implementation efforts of the world reports, many training efforts are duplicated, and continuity is sometimes impaired since there are no coordinated efforts.

Nigeria, a rich oil producing nation, lacks sufficient skilled human capital to manage the oil industry (Ozigbo, 2008), even when many of her bureaucrats participated in developing different world reports that had implications for improved training schemes. Derivatives from the following World Reports: UNESCO’s Education for All Global Monitoring Report, the World Bank’s GMR, the Human Development Report (HDR) and the World Development Report (WDR) formed the framework for improving policies and programmes in Nigeria’s non-formal education such as adult and non-formal agency, gender sensitive (boy-child education for south eastern States and girl-child education of the North States) and poverty reduction programmes. Since there is apparently no national clearing house on non-formal skills training, the prevailing scenario is that every bureaucrat in any ministry is left to interpret the various world reports the best way he/she thinks and more often than not government ministries run at cross-purposes. In Europe for instance, many countries are developing national vocational qualification frameworks for validating different forms of training, but this apparently can not happen in Nigeria until there is a common front. Even when programmes are developed based on the World reports, they are not properly domesticated because they are not adequately
based on antecedents – adopting the approach that the new is always better. Thus the purpose of this write-up is to stress the need for a vocational education and training commission that would design as well as implement need driven training programmes that are based on the synergy created from past and future world reports.

Creating an agency to monitor Nigeria’s training needs and other vocational education initiatives is long overdue. Dispensing the national resources through supply driven and unsustainable training programmes developed from the world reports is developmentally counter productive. Various ministries should be kept abreast of developments in the user industries and the information/experiences of other ministries’ training efforts as well as the impact analysis of efforts at implementing programmes derived from various world reports. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and the other existing training and examination agencies should have a platform for validating and reconciling each other’s efforts. A National Commission for Vocational Education and training would serve but not be limited by the following functions: set national training priorities; be the clearing house for training initiatives; harmonize the efforts of the various ministries charged with the implementation of training initiatives based on world reports; establish the national vocational qualification framework; set standards for validating local and international vocational credentials; draw national skills map with which to screen World reports and thus advise on sustainable national development needs.

Funding for the proposed Commission would not constitute much financial stress since the tripartite ministries (Education, Commerce & Industries, Science and Technology) would pull resources from existing budgetary provisions as well as provide the initial staffing. The gains in this synergy lie in providing solid bases for need-driven implementations of existing and prospective world reports.

The onus of effective utilization of World reports rests on bureaucrats as well as the existing national implementation structures. Nigeria can afford the financial wherewithal to send delegates to world conferences but would need to institute the structure for critical reviewing and implementing of the resolutions accruing from such meetings. Attending these world forums would amount to mere jamborees if no sustainable developments accrue from them, owing to uncoordinated implementation of the reports. Donor and international agencies should focus more on establishing structures that would aid the domestication of, and policy learning from, the world reports. Every world report should contain elements specifying the needed structures for implementation and when those structures are not in place, donor agencies should not be encouraged to waste resources in funding unsustainable initiatives. There is increasing need for convening world or regional conferences specifically on developing viable implementation structures for current and future world reports on training and related issues. Many developing countries would remain undeveloped unless they are functionally assisted to institute effective bureaucratic structures. In fact these countries are seemingly being underdeveloped by the international community’s insistence on implementing world reports using unsustainable administrative structures. [See articles by Nielsen and Munns in NN43]
The latest UNESCO Global Monitoring Report (2010) acknowledged the tremendous progress Sub-Saharan African countries had made towards the EFA goals. Some countries such as Benin and Togo adopted schooling fee exemption policies which increased enrolment rates in the short term (first few weeks of the school year). While in the field recently in Northern and Central Benin for a study, we were told that most of School Heads had rightly forbidden parents’ associations to reach out to parents to enroll their children for two simple reasons: they didn’t want overcrowded classrooms and they didn’t want classrooms without teachers. Most of the children enrolled went back home after a few weeks because of the lack of infrastructure and teachers. Most of teacher training institutes have been closed in Benin in the 1990s for a long time, as part of the recommendations of the structural adjustment programs, leaving schools with an insufficient and even decreasing number of well trained teachers. In Togo, meanwhile, socio-economic problems halted recruitment of teachers in primary education. At the same time the IMF is still playing its watch-dog role of public finance in developing countries with a clear option for limiting government spending (especially personnel costs). The 2010 GMR was accurate in mentioning that. But the situation looks very much like one of a trap.
The progress mentioned by the GMR should be put in perspective with high dropout rates as well. In our opinion, in the specific sector of education, progress cannot be measured in the short term only, but rather be put in the long term perspective.

A final remark: everybody seems to be focused on education for all right now, with 2015 at the door. Assuming that every developing country (or at least the majority of them) by whatever miracle achieve EFA goals; what’s next? It seems that some developing countries leaders are accomplices in a plot to focus the continent only on short term goals, while development is much more a long term journey…

Making User-Friendly World Reports?

Elenice Monteiro Leite  
Independent consultant, Brazil  
Email: emleite77@uol.com.br

Keywords: Reader-friendly World Reports

Summary: Make World Reports more reader-friendly is the core message of this note, which also offers some suggestions on how to do this.

I am in favour of world reports. They have been useful for many studies and for research that I have conducted. They have supported proposals that I had to present to policy makers. They have offered guidelines for my own decision process, when I happened to be a policy maker. But I must confess that I had never really read a world report from the preface to the conclusion.

Are they supposed to be read like a book? I have always thought of them rather as reference books, sources of data, facts or explanations relevant for my own analysis or decision process.

In fact, world reports seem to target people like us – academics, researchers, experts and consultants. Accidentally we may become policy makers. But we hardly represent the profile of most Latin American policy makers (ministries, state secretaries, congressmen, mayors, union and NGOs leaders) and their staff.

Anyway, assuming that world reports may be useful, maybe we could think about making them more attractive and friendly to the broad diversity of policy makers in Latin America.
A world report is supposed to adopt a general or universal perspective, in order to reach either PhDs or less educated people. So, simplicity and clarity should be compulsory. The sociological and/or economical jargon should be replaced by the journalistic style, adopted by newspapers or variety magazines (short texts, easy words, few tables, simple charts, photos and illustrations).

Concision would be a blessing. Not a few world reports spend dozens of pages with prefaces or introductions about historical or economic theories, like globalization. Most readers (including me) skip these pages. Let us save paper and time. Thick and heavy volumes, long texts, complex tables – all these scare and repel most of the readers. Probably, a world report must have different versions. Technical/detailed documents could be produced for specialized publics; even in this case, it should not surpass 100-150 pages. For broader diffusion, only executive summaries (around 5 pages – 1 to explain the study, 2 for the main results and 2 for the “what to do”) and/or abstracts (1 page).

Any of these versions could adopt creative shapes, instead of the traditional print form. A world report may be easily transformed into a newspaper or a magazine. Relevant contents could be broadcast as interviews, talk shows, documentaries, movies and cartoons (in DVDs, TV programs, websites etc.). Experts in advertising should be consulted; they certainly know about transforming boring contents into creative pieces.

Creative media may also help to surpass the language obstacle. Most policy makers and their staff are only able to read/understand their national language (English, Portuguese, Spanish, French or Dutch – depending on the Latin American country). Short and concise texts are easier to translate into different languages; electronic media could be subtitled or dubbed.

Translating Policy Related Knowledge into Policy and Action at the Country Level: a Practitioner Perspective

Roger Munns
Education development practitioner, London
Email: roger.munns@ukonline.co.uk

Keywords: Knowledge-policy translation; East Africa; National Qualification Framework (NQF)

Summary: Drawing on the experience of East Africa, this piece asks how policy-related knowledge translates into policy. It addresses the following: the policy development
process, the development consultancy process, and effective knowledge transfer and skills development.

With many years of experience in the education development sector, with specific reference to current experience in East Africa, the question of how does the mass of policy-related knowledge translate into any policy or action at the country level, raises a number of critical issues. In this short contribution from a practitioner perspective I will focus on the following: - the policy development process, the development consultancy process, and effective knowledge transfer and skills development.

As a development practitioner working in the mode of “facilitator” as opposed to “expert” or “substitute”, helping clients understand the process of policy development is critical. Whilst a rational approach to policy development may not always be possible, the consequences of not adopting a systematic approach will impact both on the policy and its chances of success. For example issue prioritisation and option analysis are of limited value if the process does not permit or give sufficient weight to the issue definition stage. Since this evidence gathering stage also offers scope for establishing shared understanding and building ownership among key players, limitations in this stage will also have a direct bearing on the prospect of effective policy implementation. The consultancy dilemma here is the extent to which the policy decision makers will accept the concept of consultation in the policy development process and if so how the dominant political values influence not only the process but the policy product, i.e. the scope for rationale policy making maybe very limited.

Turning to the development process the challenge to the practitioner continues, since operating in the domain of policy development suggests a facilitation model of consultancy, unless of course one accepts that the policy product/document is the key objective, as opposed to the changes that policy development implies. Operating as a facilitator would involve unpacking the policy development process, working with key partners in the particular policy area, providing tools and support to help the key players work through the stages of rationale policy analysis, development and formulation.

However recognising the scope for a rational approach maybe limited, the development practitioner may have to adopt more of an expert model, preparing policy options as a basis for whatever consultation is permitted. This is of course a compound compromise, as this “expert” approach will reduce the consultant’s scope for capacity building, limit the scope for the production of a comprehensive policy and lessen the chance of success in policy implementation.

Taking these issues into account, policy development in such contexts can be reduced to the adaptation of policy statements from other countries; at best those with some shared historical, political, social and economic features. In addition the client may have a picture of policy sourced from ministry counterparts in countries visited during aid sponsored study tours, a random browsing of the internet, or one provided by an international consultant adapted from a previous assignment. In this scenario both the
development practitioner and the client can be guilty of adopting simplistic solutions to a critical and complex area of development.

Unfortunately this crude approach to policy development is often encouraged by the poorly constructed technical specifications detailed in the project terms of reference. These project specifications or technical assistance terms of reference provide little or no time for building capacity for stakeholder engagement in issue identification, analysis and option design, in short a participative developmental process.

Much of the policy related knowledge development I have experienced, some of which is focussed specifically on sub-Saharan Africa, appears to highlight the policy product or document and give insufficient emphasis to the policy development process. Much more attention should be given to the context specific nature of international development work, with consequent health warnings on adopting or adapting solutions from other countries. Such policy knowledge would be of much greater value if the process of policy development was detailed and critically, the relationship of this process to the implementation and evaluation of policy success was clarified.

By way of an example of this inappropriate transfer of policy knowledge, I would cite the propagation of the National Qualifications Framework throughout Europe and into the international arena and in particular into Africa. The NQF is often promoted as policy tool essential for widening access, increasing participation, facilitating learner mobility, improving qualifications and much more. With some direct experience of this propagation in Botswana, Mozambique and now Eritrea I have yet to establish how the drawing of a grid on which qualifications are placed will have any impact on teaching and learning, and provide the solutions claimed by the NQF policy promoters. Apart from any critique of the concept of a NQF and these claims, the adoption of a NQF presupposes a range of institutional and capacity requirements, located within context specific power relations and cultural values. From a practitioner perspective it is difficult to see how such a tool has been identified as a policy priority for developing countries and their concern to improve education and training. Except to say that this is the result of transferring policy ideas in the abstract, which is of course highly problematic and an inappropriate approach to the transfer of policy knowledge.

**Indirect references**


NORRAG RELATED MATTERS

Kenneth King
NORRAG, Edinburgh
Email: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk

Following ‘Best Practice’ of development NGOs and networking organisations (See NN39 for a critique of ‘Best Practice’), NORRAG has a work plan, targets and indicators for the next several years. The purpose of this short section is to mention a few elements that we hope NORRAG members in a series of different countries will be able to participate in. But first a few activities that have taken place since the last issue of NORRAG NEWS, NN42 in June 2009.

Policy transfer or policy learning, Geneva, June 2009
That special issue of NN was timed to coincide with a major international conference organised by NORRAG with support from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). Its focus was on policy transfer or policy learning: interactions between international and national skills development approaches for policy making. There are a series of excellent papers from this conference as well as a sharp policy synthesis done by Claudia Jacinto, from the network, RedEtis in Latin America (http://www.norrag.org/wg/country-studies.php#11).

NORRAG Cluster meeting in Nairobi, August 2009
The decision taken two years ago to organise meetings of members of the NORRAG clusters in different countries has led thus far to cluster meetings in Geneva (2), Utrecht (1) and Santiago (1). Their purpose is to allow NORRAG membership to be more than virtual, and to facilitate interaction with others, face to face, including with the NORRAG management team. As Kenneth and Pravina King were in Kenya doing research in July and early August, it seemed a good opportunity to organise a small cluster meeting. Barbara Trudell, who used to be a NORRAG Assistant for Development, helped in organising this meeting. It allowed a number of NORRAG members in Kenya, who had not met each other, to discuss the way they had learnt about NORRAG, and how they had used it in their work. It was not widely known that on the NORRAG website, the Networking Tool, under Resources on the home page, can be used to identify all other NORRAG members in any particular country. You just put Kenya (or any other country) into the Country of Residence, and Search. In Kenya, this brings up the names, institutions and emails of 55 NORRAG members.

NORRAG and the New Politics of Aid Partnerships’ section at the Oxford Conference, September 2009
NORRAG along with RECOUP and the UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education Research at the University of Nottingham co-organised this major section of the Conference. There were over 20 papers in this section of the Conference, and nine of these have been selected for a special issue of the International Journal of Educational Development which will come out during 2010. NORRAG also organised an open
meeting for existing members of NORRAG to meet, along with others interested in learning more about the network. It will be recalled that NN41 was on *The New Politics of Partnership*, while NN42 was also very relevant to the theme of the joint NORRAG section; it was a special issue on *A Safari towards Aid Effectiveness*. Hard copies of both issues were available to those in this section of the conference, thanks to NUFFIC.

**NORRAG Cluster meeting in New Delhi, December 2009**

India has had a very active series of members for many years, and especially in key institutions like the National University of Educational Planning and Administration. There are now 124 NORRAG members in India, and they are located in a very wide range of bodies, from ministries, NGOs, development agencies, universities and think tanks. Again, it is possible to review the whole list of NORRAG’s India cluster by using the Networking Tool. As in Kenya, Kenneth and Pravina were in India for research; so it was a good opportunity to organise a small Cluster meeting at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA). Professor Tilak, who has been a very regular contributor to *NORRAG NEWS* assisted in organising the meeting, and the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Govinda, chaired the meeting. A number of those present commented that NUEPA had been receiving *NORRAG NEWS* for many years before NN went virtual and when we therefore stopped sending out hard copies. They had found the hard copies very useful, but there was now no mechanism for ensuring that a copy was downloaded and made available for the University Library. We should perhaps explore whether a small number of hard copies should still be sent to key reference libraries across the developing world. Again, NUFFIC had ensured that there were copies of the latest issue of *NORRAG NEWS* available for the meeting.

**NORRAG Cluster meeting in Bamako, Mali, December 2009**

ERNWACA, the Education Research Network in Western and Central Africa, covers no less than 16 countries, and currently has a total of 226 NORRAG members. As a result of the partnership agreement between NORRAG and ERNWACA, it was attractive to piggy-back a Cluster meeting on to ERNWACA’s International Colloquium last December (2009). This was not, of course, a Cluster meeting of those from a single country, but from all the coordinators from the 16 countries. The majority of the countries in the ERNWACA network are Francophone (11 out of 16). It was important therefore to ensure, thanks again to NUFFIC, that there were hard copies in both French and English of recent *NORRAG NEWS* issues available at the Cluster meeting (for more on this meeting, and on the challenges of networking in West Africa, see Carton and Weyer NN43).

**New NORRAG Website goes live, February 2010**

We hope you will update your profile on the website; it will take just a few minutes. You can then search the site for NORRAG members with similar expertise to yourself. For example there are currently no less than 350 NORRAG members who claim to have expertise in technical and vocational education and training. These can then be broken down by country. For example there are no less than 350 members of NORRAG in the UK, and it is very easy to see who they are and what their professional interests are, via
the Networking Tool. This can be useful for planning research or sabbatical visits or looking for professional contacts.

**NORRAG Cluster meeting in South Africa, March 2010**
Currently there are no 100 NORRAG members in South Africa, covering a whole series of tertiary institutions, NGOs, government departments. We are planning to take advantage of Kenneth and Pravina being in South Africa during March 2010 for research to organise a Cluster meeting in Cape Town, Johannesburg or Pretoria. We shall write to the membership to see where this might be best arranged, and around what topics and issues. But if you have suggestions, do write directly to Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk

**NORRAG, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and UNESCO Liaison Office launch of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010, 24th March 2010**
NORRAG cluster members in Switzerland should make a note that on 20th March there will be a launch of the latest Global Monitoring Report (2010) on *Reaching the Marginalised*. There will be guest speakers from UN organisations and from NORRAG. The latest issue of NORRAG NEWS – which analyses the role of the Global Monitoring Report, and many other Global Reports – will be available in hard copy to members of the launch meeting, thanks to NUFFIC.

**NORRAG Cluster meeting in Addis Ababa, 13th April 2010**
At the moment there are more than 30 NORRAG members in Ethiopia, and by good fortune one of NORRAG Assistants for Development, Stephanie Langstaff has been working on her research in the country for over a year. As the editor of NORRAG NEWS will be visiting Ethiopia on a research trip in early April, it was thought to be a good opportunity to run a Cluster meeting with the membership. One possibility would be to produce a paper detailing how Ethiopia is projected, ranked and assessed in a whole series of the global reports with which NN43 is concerned. This would be an excellent chance to review the country reaction to the plethora of international development reports. Stephanie Langstaff can be contacted at this email: stephanie.langstaff@gmail.com

**NORRAG interaction with the entire membership, April/May 2010**
It is now over two years since we last checked with the entire membership what their interests were in NORRAG, and what their suggestions were for special issues of *NORRAG NEWS* (NN), as well as how they used NN in their professional work. In the meantime, the total number of readers and members has grown to almost 3,000. We shall also use the short NORRAG survey to alert the membership to some of the new opportunities with the NORRAG website. Like last time, the survey will be very short, and can be completed in about 5 minutes.

**NORRAG organises small meeting within the Latin American conference on the Sociology of Work in Mexico, April 2010**
As with many other international conferences in the past, NORRAG is organising a session within the large Latin American Association on the Sociology of Labour
(ALAST) Conference in Mexico City in April 2010. Equally, we are planning, as in Oxford, to run a separate Learn-about-NORRAG meeting on the side of the Conference. This will give an opportunity for scholars at the conference to engage with NORRAG, and to make suggestions for development. Hopefully, also, as NORRAG has an on-going partnership with the network of RedEtis, which is concerned with education, training and the labour market, there will be an opportunity to meet with RedEtis members who are at the conference, and plan some common actions. There are currently only 120 NORRAG members in 14 of the larger Latin American countries. This underlines the challenge of language as much as anything else. There are now policy briefs in Spanish, but not the whole issue of NORRAG NEWS, as we have managed to do in French. Hopefully, by being present in this international meeting in Mexico, NORRAG can listen to Latin American scholars concerned with education and work. Fortunately, NORRAG’s largest professional expertise is with skills development (currently 353 members list this as one of their priority areas), so there should be good scope for engagement with this international conference.

SDC (Dhaka) and NORRAG, International Policy Reforms on Skills Development, 3-4th May, 2010, Dhaka (Provisional, TBC)

The successful revitalization of the National Skills Development Council and the elaboration of a Skills Development Policy by key stakeholders (government, development partners and NGOs) in Bangladesh has encouraged SDC Dhaka to propose to partner an international exchange on how this Skills Development Policy has developed and what its implications are for reforms and collaboration to enhance quality, relevance and access in skills. This international policy exchange will seek to learn from other regional examples of skills development including Korea, Malaysia and India, as well as from NORRAG’s 12 years of support through SDC (Bern) of international cooperation in skills development. For more information, contact Tahsinah Ahmed:

Email: tahsinah.ahmed@sdc.net

NORRAG/IAMR International Policy Learning and Exchange Workshop on Skill Development in India, May 5-6th, 2010 (tbc), New Delhi

Following the successful series of Working Group meetings on Skills Development and the Geneva conference on Policy Learning in Skills Development (see above), NORRAG is partnering with the Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR) to examine critically a number of key policy themes in skills development. This chimes in very well with the mandate of the IAMR to help government deliver on the Skills Mission of the Government of India. NORRAG will assist in bringing comparative expertise to bear from Latin America, China, Europe. The Director of IAMR, Santosh Mehrotra, was one of those who did a plenary presentation in the Geneva meeting in June 2009.

NORRAG meeting within the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) in Istanbul, 14-18 June 2010

NORRAG has on a number of occasions, including in Paris, Cape Town and Prague, organised piggy-back meetings within the World Congress. In the next World Congress, NORRAG is planning, as in Oxford, to organise a session within the main congress, as well as an opportunity to learn about NORRAG on the side of Congress. We are aware in
NORRAG that we have very few members in the Middle East. For example just 17 in Jordan, 11 in Egypt and 6 in Turkey. We do carry policy briefs in Arabic, but we need more occasions, as in Istanbul, to engage with local researchers and policy makers.

0-0-0-0-0

NORRAG Cluster Meeting in Bamako, Mali, December 2009

Michel Carton and Frédérique Weyer
IHEID, Geneva
Emails: michel.carton@graduateinstitute.ch; frederique.weyer@graduateinstitute.ch

As a first illustration of the joint willingness of NORRAG and ERNWACA to reinforce their collaboration during the next 3 years, a meeting on “Advocacy in education: meanings, stakeholders and tools” was held in Bamako on December 14th 2009. It gathered 37 participants: ERNWACA national coordinators, policy makers (education and training, mostly from Mali), staff from development agencies and NGOs. A paper prepared by NORRAG was presented during the first part of the meeting. It sought to analyze the origin and sense of the notion of advocacy seen from different disciplinary perspectives. The second part of the meeting aimed at questioning, through a roundtable and a discussion, the links between research and policy making from the perspectives of the stakeholders present.

The main topics addressed during this session were the following:

- **Research needs**: There is a strong need for research both at the national and at the local levels, given the competencies transferred in many African countries to local stakeholders in the framework of decentralisation and "deconcentration", and the increasing influence of the so-called civil society. Research should be produced and the themes defined locally, since “global” research (produced in the North) is not always adapted to the context. This research should be neutral, ethical and trustworthy. Unfortunately, the overall perspective for the development of such research is not very good, as a) the financial and working conditions situation in universities is deteriorating in many countries, b) the “consultancy market” as stimulated by the aid agencies as well as national bodies pushes good researchers outside academic institutions in spite of the fragmented and short term characterististics of the outputs, c) such a deadlock situation pushes good teaching staff and students to emigrate. All these elements are factors, which undermine many attempts to redevelop a culture of research. This situation has also been exacerbated by the priority given for over a decade to basic education at the expenses of tertiary education and research. Fortunately a counterbalancing trend seems to be developing through different bilateral and international (ADB, AU, IDRC, ADEA, WB) initiatives as well as the national “prise de conscience” by some political and civil
society stakeholders of the necessity to call on research for facing the development challenges.

**Dissemination of research:** In order to meet the research needs, research results should be disseminated to a larger audience, including local actors and civil society. This means using an intelligible format and national languages. The discussion highlighted the several dimensions of advocacy, which should be research-based but also require communication specialists and lobbyists.

**Financing of research:** The discussion highlighted the difficulty to mobilize funds for research. This difficulty is due to the limited resources from the state and an overloaded budget. In Mali for example the National Assembly can have an important role to play in increasing public funds assigned in the budget presented by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. The NGOs also have difficulties to mobilize resources for research, as they often depend on external actors, for whom research is often not the priority. They are nevertheless very important to make people realize that a grounded research perspective is the only way to really get ownership of the decision-making processes granted by the decentralization policies.

This meeting took place at the end of ERNWACA strategy session and just before the colloquium celebrating its first 20 years. This colloquium gathered more than 50 participants from all the ERNWACA member countries coming from universities, research institutions, ministries and African international organisations. The richness of the numerous presentations has illustrated the immense variety of issues and problems which education and training systems are facing, as well as the high variability of activities carried out in the national ERNWACA coordination. Some of them depend on the activities developed by the regional coordination (small grants program and transnational research), while other have also initiated other activities such as research (often funded by the Ministry of Education and sometimes by agencies and NGOs), research dissemination, and advocacy events such as the National Day of Educational Research (Côte d’Ivoire). Some national coordinations are close to the Ministry of Education while in other countries the Ministry has its own research department. One main challenge for an ERNWACA coordination at the country level is to gain legitimacy in relation to the Ministry of Education and international actors, who often tend to favour international expertise.

The meeting also reflected the difficulty for the ERNWACA members to define research priorities, which can attract sufficient political and financial support at the national level. Consequently, as in the case of NORRAG, an even more important difficulty appears at the regional level for respecting the national/institutional specificities and priorities and, at the same time obtaining scientific, political and financial support for some transversal activities aiming at implementing the ERNWACA network’s objectives i.e. “

The three events have provided some opportunities for NORRAG to know better the main protagonists and functioning of ERNWACA. It was also an opportunity to disseminate the NORRAG objectives and activities and to distribute material to an
Reflections on NORRAG-ERNWACA partnership

It can be seen that of the 16 ERNWACA countries (see table below), 10 are Francophone, 4 are Anglophone and one (Cameroon) is both. Secondly, it is very obvious that the though the Anglophone countries are in a small minority, they have more than twice the membership of the Francophone countries. Indeed, Nigeria and Ghana alone have more than twice the membership of NORRAG in the Francophone countries. Why should this be? Especially since NORRAG has been publishing La Lettre de NORRAG since 1993. No less than 13 full issues of NORRAG NEWS can be downloaded in French, including almost all those that have been published since 2001.

Contributions from Francophone authors?

One explanation for the difference between the Francophone and Anglophone countries is that there are perhaps insufficient contributors from well-known French-speaking researchers, or from known Francophone institutions. On the other hand, if we examine the 128 members of NORRAG in France, they are drawn from many of the well-known French institutions concerned with development such as AFD, IREDU, CEREQ, and IRD, as well as from numerous universities. The NORRAG membership in France, therefore, is by no means drawn principally from UNESCO (including IIIEP) and from the OECD, but from French NGOs, government departments, tertiary institutes etc etc. In addition, it should be recalled that the Coordination of NORRAG has been based in Geneva at the Graduate Institute of Development Studies (now International and Development Studies) since 1991. And we have had Francophone NORRAG assistants for development, such as Alexandre Dormeier, Frederique Weyer, Jean Chamel, and Stephanie Langstaff for many years. Despite these Francophone members, the bulk of the contributors have been Anglophone, even if their first language was Japanese, Swedish, Dutch, German, Spanish or Chinese! We can improve on this, by having more Francophone contributors provide articles. What are other possibilities for partnership?

Options for closer engagement between NORRAG and ERNWACA

First, there are opportunities for joint publication in the ERNWACA Journal (JERA) or in NORRAG NEWS. We told NORRAG members about the first issue of JERA in NN42,
and we enclose the list of contents from Volume 1 No. 2 in this issue. Contributions from NORRAG members to future issues of JERA would be welcome, and vice versa. [See the latest contents in NN43]

Second, NORRAG participation in major ERNWACA meetings and activities. This has already been initiated with members of the NORRAG management team being present at ERNWACA’s international colloquium and organizing a one-day NORRAG piggy-back meeting on this occasion (see Carton and Weyer NN43). Equally the Coordinator of ERNWACA was present at NORRAG’s international conference in Geneva in June 2009, and took part in NORRAG’s annual management meeting.

Third, where NORRAG members are working in a particular West African country like Ghana, there may be ways of exploring with the ERNWACA national Ghana coordinator, Joshua Baku, or Prof. Agyeman, of the ERNWACA Scientific Committee, possible connections in research, networking etc. But there needs to be common ground.

Fourth, partnership is very demanding, and needs to be driven by shared interests, whether in research, publication or teaching. One question would be therefore in what way could the 68 members of NORRAG in Ghana, or the 74 NORRAG members in Nigeria actually take advantage of ERNWACA? They could apply for the annual research grants of ERNWACA, or contribute to the journal/newsletter, or apply for the training courses. See the most recent ERNWACA Bulletin on 20 years since the foundation of ERNWACA.

Fifth, joint membership. There are apparently some 756 ERNWACA members across these 16 countries. It could then be of interest to explore to what extent there is an overlap between the 226 NORRAG members in ERNWACA countries, and the ERNWACA membership.

**NORRAG members from ERNWACA countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>28-Jan-10</th>
<th>2-Feb-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>6 (50)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>13 (134)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte D'Ivoire</td>
<td>7 (119)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Niger & 4 & 2 \\
Nigeria & 74 (46) & 64 \\
Senegal & 17 & 13 \\
Sierra Leone & 8 & 8 \\
Togo & 3 & 3 \\
**ERNWACA countries total** & **226** & **192** \\
\% annual increase ERNWACA countries = 18% \\

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total NORRAG membership:</th>
<th>2953</th>
<th>2481</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% annual increase in all NORRAG members = 19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Nos in brackets are of ERNWACA members in selected countries]

**Reflections on the NORRAG-RedEtis Partnership**

It will be seen that the total of fourteen of the Latin American countries have less NORRAG members than just two of the Anglophone members of ERNWACA. Another way to look at the Latin American numbers is to acknowledge that Spain has just 20 members compared with 128 in France, 188 members in Switzerland, and 101 in the Netherlands. It is worth noting that the two countries where there has been some NORRAG activity, a Cluster meeting in Chile and a Working Group on Skills Development in Argentina, are the countries with the largest membership. But unlike French, there has been no tradition of NORRAG translating the whole of NORRAG NEWS into Spanish (or Portuguese). For two years, of course, there have been policy briefs in Spanish, but that is very different from dipping into a whole issue of NORRAG NEWS in Spanish.

But we suspect as just mentioned, that one of the key explanations for the large differences in membership, even within Europe, is the extent of NORRAG activity in different countries. Thus Switzerland has a large NORRAG membership because there have been two Cluster Meetings and many other meetings connected to NORRAG, as well as the Coordination being located there. It is not principally a question of there being many Swiss contributing articles to NORRAG NEWS, though we have two in this issue, NN43.

**Shared professional interest in skills development**

As mentioned earlier, one of the largest professional constituencies within NORRAG is that interested in skills development or technical and vocational training. Doubtless this has been connected with the fact that NORRAG has been responsible with Swiss Development Cooperation and the ILO for organizing the regular annual meetings of the Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development, including co-organising one of these meetings in Buenos Aires. But this overlap of some substantial professional interest does mean that there is some scope for shared activity. This is precisely what NORRAG and RedEtis are exploring this year, with the presence of some members of the NORRAG team at the annual meeting of Asociación Latinoamericana de
Sociología del Trabajo (Latin American Association of the Sociology of Labour) in Mexico City in April.

**NORRAG members from Latin America**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>3-Feb-10</th>
<th>2-Feb-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin America total</strong></td>
<td><strong>119</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% annual increase in Latin American countries = 14%

| Total NORRAG membership: | 2954 | 2481 |

---

The Journal of Educational Research in Africa (JERA)

The Journal of Educational Research in Africa (JERA) is published by the Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA/ROCARE), an institution with mission to empower the research capacity of emerging scholars and provoke dialogues and conversations on educational issues in the continent. Thus JERA as a social science review is a mechanism employed to create the forum to enable exchanges among African researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and addresses the gap in regional bilingual reviews on education science to make African research findings available to a wider audience. The Journal is dedicated to creating a space for peer review and a means for legitimising, valorising, and disseminating relevant research results. It is published twice a year and includes articles in both French and English.
ERNWACA/ROCARE presents the second volume of JERA/RARE based on its initial spirit of not only enabling the African voices to be heard as it endeavours to assume leadership in research but also to sustain the conversations it is opening with the world in education research arena.

The second volume of JERA presents eight papers discussing major issues that influence the external and internal validity of education offerings and addresses other socio-biological factors that affect performance of students. Quality assessment procedures of learning are being questioned at all levels of the school system, raising questions of the techniques and its relations to curriculum, pedagogical and social issues. These concerns are pertinent to the education process. The eight issues being discussed are:

- Évaluation des Apprentissages
- Some school factor of poor performance by students in GCE Advanced Level Economics
- A study of Madrassas and other Quranic Schooling Centres (qscs)
- TIC et enseignement en Afrique de l’Ouest
- Vulnérabilité des jeunes au VIH/SIDA et problématique de l’éducation sexuelle en milieu familial
- Crises et Violences en milieu Universitaire : Quelles actions pour des solutions durables
- Investigations into the Factors Leading to Cultism and Violence in Tertiary Education Institution
- Possible effects of Menopause on the Agility and Educational Performance of Postgraduate Women

[See www.ernwaca.org for further details of ERNWACA publications. Ed.]