



**POLICY TRANSFER OR POLICY LEARNING:**

**INTERACTIONS BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL  
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES FOR POLICY MAKING**

Hosted by the Graduate Institute  
of International and Development Studies

Geneva  
25-26 June 2009

6<sup>th</sup> draft agenda  
June 2009

## **RATIONALE OF THE MEETING**

In a context of renewed interest in skills development in the international agenda, this meeting is devoted to three issues:

- A) Policy learning & transfer in the context of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;
- B) The relationship of skills development to other sub-sectors of education, within a wider cross-sectoral context;
- C) Knowledge requirements for policy learning and cross-sectoral skills development.

### **A) POLICY LEARNING & TRANSFER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PARIS DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS**

As from the mid 2000s, there has been an increasing concern among international cooperation (IC) actors to foster harmonisation among themselves and alignment with particular national policies. The Paris Declaration has become a shorthand for this set of pressures on IC actors to consider how their own skills development (SD) - including vocational education and training (VET) - priorities relate to issues of national ownership. Some of the aid architecture and aid modalities preferred by several IC actors, such as sector-wide approaches, sector support programme and direct budget support have not really been thought through for their connection to the skills agenda. Indeed, SD has often not figured in sector support programmes. However, there is clearly a possible contradiction between the IC actors' priority for particular approaches to policy learning and transfer in the skills arena and this wider aid architecture. For instance, the promotion of national qualification frameworks (NQFs) may feature in IC actors' priorities, but may not be a feature of national policy. Also, the increasing need in some donor countries for their cooperation to be visible and to be appreciated by their own domestic audiences is at variance with the spirit of the Paris Declaration.

Therefore the interactions between national and international actors have become a key issue. Beyond the specific field of SD, these interactions have been studied in other research areas such as policy studies. In order to put this in context, the meeting will begin with a presentation of the framework elaborated in the area of policy learning and policy transfers and then will address the specificities of SD policies. The following questions will be addressed:

- Which are the main approaches in public policy learning and policy transfers?
- How do these approaches analyse recent trends relevant to SD such as decentralisation, national sovereignty and rural development?
- Which are the tendencies in terms of public policy making in the field of SD?
- How do the concerns for harmonisation among donors and alignment with national policies impact in the field of SD?

- What are the main issues in the interactions between national and international actors in the definition and implementation of SD policies?
- What are the specific challenges of SD policies?
- What are the possible ways to take up with these challenges?

#### **B) THE RELATIONSHIP OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TO OTHER SUB-SECTORS OF EDUCATION, WITHIN A WIDER CROSS-SECTORAL CONTEXT**

One of the specificities of SD is that it stands at the crossroads of several fields (education policies, labour market analysis, economic development and rural development) and depends on many different actors such as private sector (including for-profit actors but also NGOs and civil society), ministries of education, labour, economy, agriculture, etc. The meeting will address this complex cross-sectoral dimension of skills development by interrogating particularly the link between education, SD and employability in international cooperation strategies. It should be borne in mind that IC actors priorities for, say, basic education and skills development, may be in conflict with sector programme support, and with the ambitions to align with national priorities.

- What are the interactions between education and SD actors at the national level?
- What are the interactions between education, SD and employability in IC strategies?
- What are the cross-sectoral implications of these interactions?
- How do donor priorities for basic education and other sub-sectors conflict with the Paris Declaration and with national priorities?

#### **C) KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS FOR POLICY LEARNING AND CROSS-SECTORAL SD**

Renewed attention to SD in recent years is also associated with an increasing demand for knowledge in this field. This demand is expressed at several levels and by different actors: at the international level by bilateral and multilateral agencies who are implementing SD policies; at the country level by IC actors who have an increasing weight in strategy formulation and implementation; and above all by the national policy makers, who should now be taking the lead in the definition and implementation of SD policies.

The meeting will aim at assessing and elaborating ways to meet the demand for knowledge in SD. It will pay particular attention to the connection between the policy transfer agenda of donors and the research evidence on particular mechanisms and modalities. It will also explore the trade-offs between short-term policy research and the long-term reinforcement of research capacities.

- To which extent are SD policies as proposed by donors (for instance NQFs, competency-based training, or demand-driven training) based on research evidence?
- What is the research available on SD in the North and in the South, with a special focus on the knowledge available on the links between SD and

education?

- What is the impact of research outcomes in the South on the interactions between national and international actors and the definition of SD policies?
- What is the role of IC actors in building research competencies for SD analysis in universities, research networks and in other research bodies?

One of the main inputs for this meeting will be case studies devoted to skills development policies and the role played by national and international actors in that field prepared in the framework of the project “Skills development policy assessment”, run by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (IHEID).

These case studies have been elaborated between 2004 and 2009 in Albania, Nicaragua, Peru and Vietnam. A further study was financed by GTZ on South Africa. These case studies have been prepared by local researchers, in collaboration with SDC and the Graduate Institute. They include original information on the interactions between national and international actors in the definition and implementation of SD policies. The case studies have already been presented both in national and regional meetings, and are available on the NORRAG/Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development (WGICSD) Website ([www.norrag.org/wg](http://www.norrag.org/wg)). They will be updated and re-elaborated for this meeting, focusing more specifically on the three proposed themes.

#### **LANGUAGE OF THE MEETING: ENGLISH**

#### **THE CHATMAN HOUSE RULE WILL APPLY:**

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatman House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”

#### **OUTCOMES/PRODUCTS OF THE MEETING**

1. A special issue of NORRAG News will be devoted to the issues tackled during the meeting, which will ensure a larger impact of the meeting.
2. A synthesis of the recommendations and lessons learned will be prepared at the end of the meeting. This synthesis will be translated to Spanish and French.
3. Proceedings of the meeting will be published.
4. The possibility to publish the papers that will be presented during the meeting in an academic journal will be explored.
5. The NORRAG partner networks will reflect on the outcomes of the meeting at their regional level.

## DRAFT PROGRAM

**THURSDAY, JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup> 2009, MORNING**  
**VENUE: GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES,**  
**ROOM BUNGENER, 20 RUE ROTHSCHILD, GENEVA**

8:15 – 9:00            **Welcome coffee**

### SESSION 1

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT POLICY TRANSFER OR POLICY LEARNING? A CRITICAL REVIEW**

Chair: Simon McGrath (University of Nottingham, United Kingdom)

9:00 - 9:15            **Introduction**  
Kenneth King (NORRAG) & Michel Carton (NORRAG/IHEID)

9:15 - 9:40            **Keynote on “international market” for public policies\***  
Santosh Mehrotra (Indian Institute of Applied Manpower  
Research, New Delhi)

The following questions will be addressed:

- Which are the main approaches on public policy learning and transfers?
- How do these approaches analyse recent trends relevant to skills development (SD) such as decentralisation, national sovereignty and rural development?

9:40 – 10:05        **Keynote on “Between autonomy and dependency: policy transfer dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa”**  
Mahaman Tidjani Alou (Laboratoire d'études et de recherche sur les dynamiques sociales et le développement local - LASDEL, Niger)

The following questions will be addressed:

- What are the dynamics in public policy making in sub-Saharan Africa?
- Which are its effects in terms of ownership?
- Which are their roles in the insertion of sub-Saharan Africa in the globalisation process?

10:05 – 10:25        **Coffee break**

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\* Final title to be proposed.

10:25 – 10:50      **Keynote on “Do training institutions learn from experience? Then what?”**  
Claudio de Moura Castro (Faculdade Pitágoras, Belo Horizonte, Brazil)

The following question will be addressed:

- What are the main issues in the interactions between national and international actors in the definition and implementation of SD policies?

10:50 – 11:00      **Comments to the keynotes**  
Mark Dolowitz (University of Liverpool, United Kingdom)

## **SESSION 2**

**INTERACTIONS BETWEEN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT POLICY MAKING**

Chair: Françoise Caillods (International Social Science Council, Paris, France)

11:00 - 11:40      **PANEL :**

**With the participation of the authors of three case studies:**

- Adrienne Bird (ex Department of Labour, South Africa) & Werner Heitman (GTZ, South Africa)
- Miguel Jaramillo (Grupo de Análisis para le Desarrollo - GRADE, Peru)
- Nguyen Loc (Vietnam National Institute for Educational Sciences)
- Discussant: Anne-Sophie Gindroz (Helvetas, Mali)

This panel will address the following questions:

- How the concern for harmonisation among donors and alignment with the national policies impact in the field of SD?
- What are the main issues in terms of the interactions between national and international actors in this field?
- What are the specific challenges for SD policies?
- What are the possible ways to take up with these challenges?
- What are the lessons learned and recommendations from the case studies?

11:40 – 12:40      **Questions to the presenters and open discussion**

12:40 – 14:15      **Lunch recess**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup> 2009, AFTERNOON**  
**VENUE: GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES,**  
**AUDITORIUM JACQUES FREYMOND, 132 RUE DE LAUSANNE, GENEVA**

**SESSION 3**

**LINKS BETWEEN EDUCATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION STRATEGIES**

**Chair:** Enrique Pieck (Universidad Iberoamericana, México)

14:15 - 14:45      **PANEL:**

**With the participation of the authors of two case studies:**

- Melba Castillo (Centro de investigación y acción educativa y social – CIASES, Nicaragua)
- Sidita Dibra (University of Tirana, Albania)
- Discussant: Sibry Tapsoba (African Development Bank, Tunisia) tbc

This panel will address the following questions:

- What are the interactions between education and SD actors at the national level?
- What are the interactions between education, SD and employability in IC strategies?
- What are the cross-sectoral implications of these interactions?
- How do donor priorities for basic education and other sub-sectors conflict with the Paris Declaration and with national priorities?
- What are the lessons learned and recommendations from the case studies?

14:45 – 15:45      **Questions to the presenters and open discussion**

15:45 – 16:05      **Coffee break**

## SESSION 4

### KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS FOR POLICY LEARNING AND CROSS-SECTORAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Chair: Jos Walenkamp (Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education - NUFFIC)

16:05 - 16:35

**PANEL:**

**With the participation of the authors of the case studies and a discussant (Elda Bagaviki, SDC, Albania) tbc**

This panel will address the following questions:

- To which extent are SD policies as proposed by donors (for instance NQFs, competency-based training, or demand-driven training) based on research evidence?
- What is the research available on SD in the North and in the South, with a special focus on the knowledge available on the links between SD and education?
- What is the impact of research outcomes in the South on the interactions between national and international actors and the definition of SD policies?
- What is the role of IC actors in building research competencies for SD analysis in universities, research networks and in other research bodies?
- What are the lessons learned and recommendations from the case studies?

16:35 – 17:35

**Questions to the presenters and open discussion (led by the Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa - ERNWACA - and the *Red de Educación, Trabajo e Inserción Social* - RedEtis)**

18:00

**Cocktail**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup> 2009, MORNING**  
**VENUE: GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES,**  
**ROOM BUNGENER, 20 RUE ROTHSCHILD, GENEVA**

**SESSION 5**

**LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Chair:** Borhène Chakroun (ETF, Turin)

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| 9:00 - 9:15   | <b>Synthesis of the discussions of the previous day</b><br>Claudia Jacinto (RedEtis, IIEP)   |
| 9:15 - 9:30   | <b>Open discussion</b>   |
| 9:30 - 11:00  | <b>Workshops</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Group 1: Interactions between national and international actors in the definition and implementation of SD policies</li><li>- Group 2: Links between education, SD and employability in IC strategies</li><li>- Group 3: Knowledge requirements for policy learning and cross-sectoral SD</li></ul> |
| 11:00 - 11:20 | <b>Coffee break</b>  |
| 11:20 - 12:00 | <b>Summary feedback from workshops to plenary, and discussion</b>  |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | <b>Conclusions</b>   |

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**REMINDER: NORRAG strategy meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> and continue on June 26<sup>th</sup>, at the end of the conference (by invitation).**