

## **Expert to write Think Piece on Priorities for Missing Data and SDG 4 for countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)**

### **1. Background**

NORRAG is a global network of 5,000 members for international policies and cooperation in education and training. NORRAG's strength lies in addressing under-researched questions of quality and equity in key issues in education and development, and in amplifying under-represented expertise particularly from the South. NORRAG's core mandate is to produce, disseminate and broker critical knowledge, and to build capacity for and with the wide range of stakeholders who constitute our network. Our stakeholders from academia, governments, NGOs, international organizations, foundations and the private sector inform and shape education policies and practice at national and international levels. Through this work, NORRAG contributes to creating the conditions for more participatory, evidence-informed decisions that improve equal access to and quality of education and training. NORRAG is an associate programme of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

As part of its new strategy NORRAG is engaging with the issue of data governance to support the inclusion of marginalized groups in learning. To this end NORRAG seeks to address education data beyond the traditional use of data and evidence by researchers and global monitoring. The renewed importance given to education data goes hand in hand with increased funding, thus creating incentives for all organizations and individuals (including non-data specialists) to engage with and rely more heavily on data-based analyses. These trends can generate an increase in the misuse and abuse of education data and statistics, and can contribute to the further neglect of marginalised people – whether in terms of ability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, or sexual orientation. Developing robust and reliable evidence-based practice and policy is one of the key challenges that compels the education community to think both about the quality and governance of the data and evidence base. For these reasons, it is critical to examine the governance of data and evidence at the global level. If this gap is not addressed, we run the risk of letting evidentiary biases and gaps mislead the education community and perpetuate existing marginalisation. Within this strategic imperative NORRAG has already engaged in mapping out the critical issues constituted by missing data and is seeking to recruit an education expert located in MENA to support this endeavour by producing a 7-10 page discussion brief on what regional priorities regarding priority areas for addressing missing educational data in MENA.

### **2. Tasks**

As the world nears the 2022 mid-point for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, missing data continues to constitute a critical obstacle achieving SDG 4 targets and “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The challenges presented by missing education data can manifest as missing groups, missing types, and missing purposes. Missing data hampers efforts to reach marginalized and vulnerable groups such as out-of-school children in fragile and conflict affected contexts or learners with disabilities among others. Missing types of data can also constrain the global education community's ability to achieve quality education and lifelong learning for all. There exists a wealth of data on access to education yet data on knowledge, skills, learning, teaching, and system-strengthening remain scarce. Furthermore, the systematic exclusion of specific types of data and the drive to standardized indicators may restrict our data picture. Third, some purposes behind the current education data

system are currently well-served while others are notably missing. For example, the current international education data regime is better suited to transnational reporting and advocacy than to addressing implications for policy and practice at other levels. These issues are all part of the Missing Data project which will span until 2022 and will seek to provide guidance to the global education community on improving the availability of, and the role played by, education data. The expert will support this project by producing a concise Think Piece (7-10 pages) which will inform regional deliberations regarding priority areas around missing data groups, data types, and data purposes for further investigation in MENA. The expert is expected to draw from relevant regional academic, governmental, and grey literature on data for SDG 4 from countries in MENA. The paper should spend 1-3 pages on the following four topics:

1. Missing data groups and types: What groups of people and indicators are most systematically under-represented in education data in MENA?
2. Missing data purposes: What purposes do the current educational data system at the national and regional level serve? What is missing?
3. How do missing data issues potentially relate to national and local systems?
4. What are the most dominant challenges faced when linking national, regional, and global educational data systems in MENA?

Please note that upon successful completion the consultant may be invited to continue the work by developing this Think Piece into a chapter for a NORRAG publication.

### **3. Deliverables**

The consultant will deliver the following deliverables

- a. Paper outline
- b. First draft
- c. Final draft and 10-slide PPT with a further round of feedback
- d. Presentation and participation (remote) at the inaugural Missing Data Summit at the end of 2021 and a regional symposium in the first half of 2022

### **4. Qualifications**

The consultant should ideally have:

- ▶ A good understanding of the SDG agenda and monitoring processes
- ▶ Proven writing and publication experience in the field of education
- ▶ At least 5 years of experience in education research in MENA
- ▶ Preference will be given to experts currently living and working in MENA

### **5. Application**

The applicants should submit the following materials to Daniel Shephard

[<daniel.shephard@graduateinstitute.ch>](mailto:daniel.shephard@graduateinstitute.ch) by 11 June 2021 with the Subject: "Missing Data MENA Expert Application"

- ▶ Cover letter including a daily rate (in Swiss Francs [CHF]) and estimated days for completion
- ▶ CV / Resume