GPE KIX EAP HUB
KNOWLEDGE INNOVATION EXCHANGE

KIX EAP

KIX EAP

Workshop on Using Education Data for Policy and Practice

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A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON THE FACILITATOR

JAMES SHOOBRIDGE has almost 30 years of experience in International Education Development. James has worked extensively in the areas of Monitoring and Evaluation, the development of Education Information Systems, Education Planning, Education Sector Analysis and other forms of analysis and evaluation. James has worked as both a team leader and consultant on a wide range of projects in the areas of education and public sector reform throughout Africa, Asia and Central Asia. In recent years James has been heavily involved in evaluating programmes, developing monitoring systems, sector planning activities and project design in a number of Asian and African countries. James has also worked extensively in the commercial sector having built and managed an information systems company in Australia which supports both the public and private sectors and is now active in four countries. James has worked on projects in Australia, Belarus, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Timor-Leste, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Laos, Libya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Tanzania, Tonga, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Zimbabwe. James has worked for agencies including UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, DFID, DFAT, Asian Development Bank and the European Commission and for service providers including Cambridge Education, GOPA, the British Council, Cardno and CfBT. James was educated in Australia with a BSc (Minor computers), Units earned in a PhD in Science, a Graduate Diploma in Computing and a Masters in Business Information Technology focusing on Monitoring using Education Information Systems. His current areas of interest include education sector analysis, Policy and Planning, Education Programme and Project design, Education Information Systems and methods of Monitoring and Evaluating in the education sector, child protection and Early Childhood Development.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Education planners and statisticians use data to help identify inequalities in access and participation in education, and to increase the use of data for policy and planning. This is particularly true in achieving SDG 4 to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."[1]   The sustainable development goal on Education (SDG 4) supports the education agenda 2030 and places strong emphasis on data generation, data use and monitoring to manage the education sector more efficiently and effectively with the goal of enabling equitable access to education. Education planners and statisticians are also often required to compare multiple data sources which require new measurements and tools. For example, 'global citizenship education and Non-Formal Education (NFE) are difficult to measure if a reliance is made on traditional data collection mechanisms'[2].

The KIX EAP hub organised a workshop on the 23rd and 24th of March 2022[3] which aimed to engage education officers at all levels of ministry, academics and policy experts on how to source, conceptualize and use education data from international websites and sources to help address gaps in the current education data regime from a global and regional perspective with an emphasis on highlighting disparities such as inequalities in the education system. The workshop aimed to help participants answer the questions:

1. How can I identify and address disparities in my education system using data sourced from national and international data banks?

2. What are the links between data, planning and policy and how can I use data to strengthen policy and planning within my country?

The specific objectives and desired outcomes of the workshop were:

1. To learn about important databanks in education, such as UIS SDG 4 data base, WIDE, OECD GPS, World Bank, etc. (see my syllabus)

2. To learn how to export data from online databanks and undertake analysis that highlight disparities such as inequalities in the education system

3. To learn to identify gaps/overlaps/ inconsistencies between international databanks and national level data

4. To promote exchange of experiences between participants and strengthen linkages between education officers, statisticians, as well as education researchers/academics.

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1   In September 2015, at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, Member States formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in New York. The agenda contains 17 goals including a new global education goal (SDG 4). SDG 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and has seven targets and three means of implementation.
Source: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit. (Accessed on 15/02/2022).

2   UIS (2021) have recently published guidelines for data collection to measure SDG 4.7.4 and 4.7.5 which offer simplified methods of monitoring these indicators in challenging environments.

3   Advertised at: https://www.norrag.org/kix-eap-workshop-using-education-data-for-policy-and-practice/. (Accessed 12 April 2022)

GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) PERSPECTIVE

The workshop considered throughout issues of equity, gender equality and human rights, in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards (2016)[4]. Workshop participant selection incorporated a gender equality perspective. The workshop ensured throughout that issues of equity, gender equality and human rights were addressed where needed. The fact that education data cuts across genders, ethnicities and disabilities, were important aspects which were emphasized during the workshop to raise awareness of all the participants.

# PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND PROFILES

Country representatives from the KIX EAP countries were eligible for participation in the workshop. The target audience included individuals working on education policy, planning, practice or research in one of the EAP countries for whom the skills addressed in this workshop are relevant. 51 participants joined from 15 countries throughout the KIX EAP hub region of which 26 were female (51%).

Table 1. Participants by Country and Gender

| | Participants | | % Female | |
Country	Female	Male		Total
Bangladesh	2	2	50%	4
Bhutan	2	3	40%	5
Cambodia	2	2	50%	4
Georgia	1	2	33%	3
Kyrgyzstan	8	0	100%	8
Maldives	4	1	80%	5
Moldova	1	0	100%	1
Mongolia	1	1	50%	2
Nepal	0	4	0%	4
Pakistan	0	3	0%	3
Papua New Guinea	1	1	50%	2
Sudan	0	3	0%	3
Tajikistan	1	0	100%	1
Timor-Leste	0	2	0%	2
Vietnam	3	0	100%	3
Total	**26**	**24**	**51%**	**51**

Participants came from 45 different government and non-government agencies, including Ministries of Education, Research Institutions, Local and International Non-Government Organisations, as well as Bilateral and Multilateral Organisations.

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4   UNICEF United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNICEF, 2016. http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914, Accessed on 15 April 2019
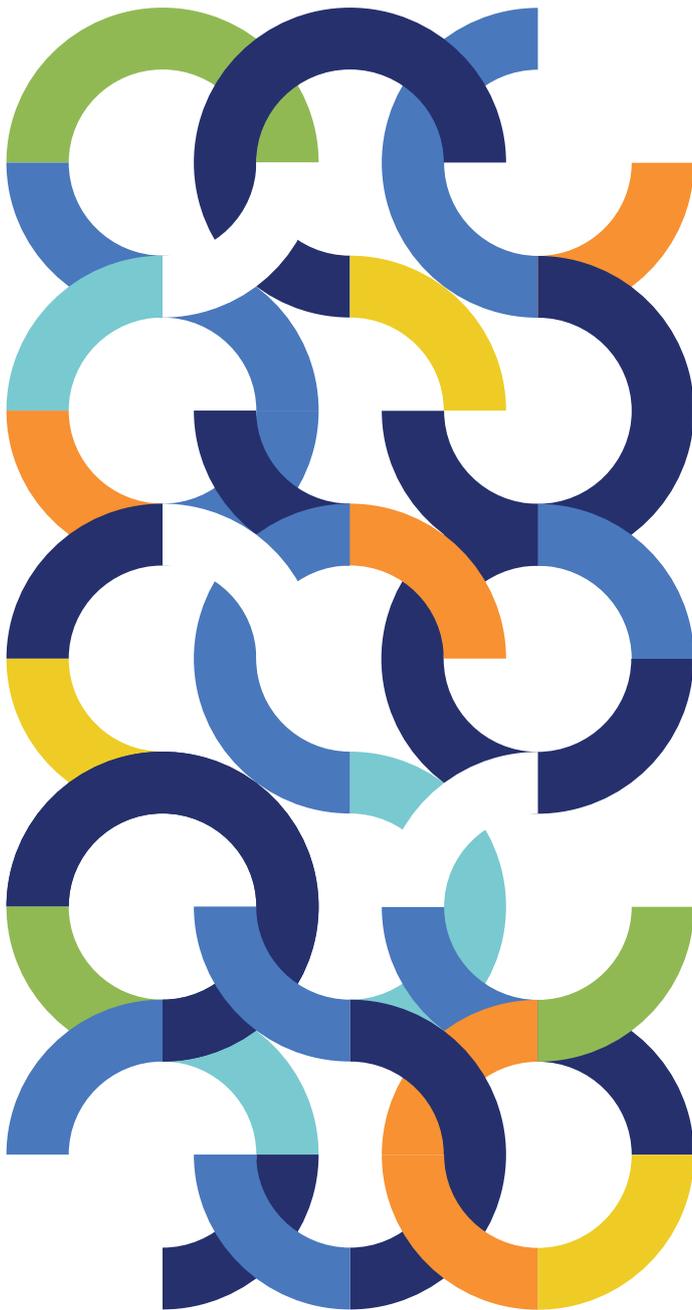
WORKSHOP SCHEDULE AND LOGISTICS

The KIX EAP hub organised the online workshop to run on 23 and 24 March, 2022 (10 AM – 12 PM CEST). The workshop was designed to be hands-on in nature and conducted over two days. Each day comprised a single two-hour session which was designed to include instruction, breakout working sessions and knowledge exchange opportunities. The workshop was led by James Shoobridge, Senior Education and Information Systems Adviser. The sessions were conducted in English with interpretation into Russian and Arabic. An invitation to participate was posted at the following link:

https://www.norrag.org/kix-eap-workshop-using-education-data-for-policy-and-practice/

A workshop flyer was made available at the following link:

https://www.norrag.org/app/uploads/2022/03/Concept-note-on-KIXEAP-data-workshop-EN.pdf

WORKSHOP FLOW AND DISCUSSION

Day 1

Participants briefly introduced themselves through the chat window at the commencement of the workshop. The KIX EAP hub gave an introduction to the KIX EAP hub which was followed by the first session.

SESSION 1.

The first session was an introduction to global data, the basis for global indicators and their relevance to regional and national education monitoring and planning. The session highlighted inequality and equity and opportunities were presented for participants to discuss the types of inequality applicable to access, participation and learning outcomes and how data can be used to inform equitable policy and planning. Participants entered breakout groups in which they discussed the types of equity issues apparent in their own country and data sources which were used to inform equity analysis.   Gender and poverty were raised as significant equity issues by participants who noted that the most common data sources were data derived from Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and household survey. Participants noted the challenges in data production and use. One participant noted, that a lack of data within their country can also attributed to the lack of knowledge of the government officials to see the importance of data and therefore there is minimal funding of data collection and use.

Participants from Pakistan noted that data sets are not standardized throughout the country. Pakistan are gradually moving towards 'tracking every child', but they have a long way to go. A National Citizens Database records data for 18+ year old citizens and they are working to include children under 18.

Another participant noted that the research culture within their country is lacking and even though they collected a vast amount of data concerning students or the school system, often they are not utilized to inform decision making in a systematic way. The commitment to gathering data is given less emphasis as it takes too much of teachers' time, which results in significant data gaps. Many participants noted the importance of ensuring that data systems served the needs of actors at the school level, such as attendance and grade monitoring.

However, it was also noted that such systems require significant resources. "In the US, several classroom management systems have been utilised where teachers enter scores from regular classroom tests into the system and get reports on how the students are doing. Then teachers could modify instructions based on that. At the district, state and national levels, officers can have (anonymised) information on learning levels of students. These ideas have not necessarily been applied at scale so applying them for an entire province or a country will require a lot of resources."

See Session 1 slides here.

SESSION 2.

The Second session focused on global data sources which helped introduce participants to online data platforms, types of data, displays of data and disaggregation found at each. The following platforms were reviewed in this workshop.

- https://www.education-inequalities.org/
- https://data.worldbank.org/topic/4
- https://datatopics.worldbank.org/education/
- http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/equity-education
- https://www.education-inequalities.org/
- https://data.oecd.org/
- https://fragilestatesindex.org/
- https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/
- http://data.uis.unesco.org/

Opportunities, gaps and issues in each data set were highlighted for participants. Participants were asked to try each website at home and to give their thoughts on each on the following day. Participants from Vietnam noted that the issues mentioned related to "missing data" were true in the case of Vietnam and that it would be good to hear more on how to address this.

See Session 2 slides here

Day 2

SESSION 3.

The following day commenced with an overview of the previous day during which participants gave their thoughts on using the websites. Participants noted the data gaps and old data evident in many of the global data sources. Methods for obtaining up to date and disaggregated data were discussed. Participants requested more information on the reasons data gaps existed which included issues such as governance, capacity to produce and use data, and weak data systems. The conversation also veered towards the structure of data systems within each country and methods of structuring EMIS so as to ensure capture of data in line with SDG 4.5.1 concerning equity

See Session 3 slides here.

SESSION 4.

The following session covered an overview of bridging data between the international level and the local level and reviewed methods of analysis to highlight disparities in equitable access at the subnational level. Participants engaged in discussion of appropriate methods to display data for different target audiences. A demonstration was then given using the Inequalities in Education website of how to undertake comparable data analysis to identify inequities using global data websites[5].

See Session 4 slides here.

The workshop concluded with further discussions on global data websites and closing comments.

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

The workshop feedback was positive. Participants noted that the workshop gave them an "opportunity to explore the wealth of data related to education and global/national indicators, most importantly the way to process data for presentation which was very useful". Many participants noted the relevance of the content to their work. The workshop helped participants to identify ways in which they can source global data and use it to "analyze the educational situation in <their> country." and "How to identify data gaps".

Participants gained knowledge of how to access and use global data platforms. As one participant noted "The workshop showed multiple data platforms as well as their advantages and disadvantages. This will helpme choose the appropriate platforms to obtain data".

Participants noted that the session on displaying and narrating education data was useful and would help them to communicate data within their ministry.

"I'm engaged in using data for policy and planning. This workshop has helped me in reflecting how I present the data for not-so-data-savvy audience (wider education community, including Planners). Learning from this workshop will help me analyse and present data in different ways."

"This short workshop was spot on and was useful in identifying the gaps that exist in data and how data presentation and interpretation is important to get decision maker and policy writers' attention. The color coding is what I have been using in my planning work and find that the spatial mapping too is an important tool I like to learn to use."

"It will help me include different angles of interpretation while analysing policy planning documents."

 "The knowledge/skill obtained from this workshop is very helpful to make/show built- in visualizations in national/sub-national level workshops and encourage/lobby government counterparts to maintain an effective Management Information System (MIS) system to enhance overall sectoral growth in education."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORKSHOPS IN THIS AREA

1) TECHNICAL CONTENT

There are challenges in sourcing data through global data sources. These include::

A) Significant deviations in figures when compared to publications at the national level.

B) Significant gaps in the data. For many countries data is not available for key SDG4 indicators.

C) A lack of disaggregation in relation to SDG 4.5.1 concerning parity indices[6].

D) Older websites with working components which do not work as intended[7].

E) The latest data available on websites being out of date (more than 6 years old and in some cases 14 years old).

These issues limit the use and effectiveness of global data repositories. It is recommended to focus future workshops on sourcing up to date and disaggregated data on countries which require a different approach.

2) NARROWING THE SCOPE OF CONTENT

It is recommended to reduce and focus as much as possible the scope of next wokshops' content. For example, often researchers want to access data on equity concerning targeted groups of people such as data on disabled children, ethnic children or Education in Emergencies[8]. It is often difficult to obtain such data, particularly comparative data. There is likely a strong demand for focused workshops highlighting the options, challenges and opportunities in accessing and using data concerning different targeted groups.

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3) STRUCTURING DATA CAPTURE AND INCREASING DATA USE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Most participants came from Ministries of Education and expressed a strong interest in improving data management, capture and use within their own countries. Participants expressed interest in the following areas:

1) Aligning data systems within their country to enable effective and timely reporting of data.

2) Methods to increase use of data for education policy, planning and administration.

3) Increasing the access and use of data amongst education stakeholders at the grassroots level, including the school and community (parents, teachers, students, community)..

4) FORMAT AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Considering the wide range of backgrounds for participants, it is recommended to enable more points for input and discussion such as giving a small quiz to participants as well ensure sessions end on time so that more time could be spent in breakout rooms.

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6   Indicator 4.5.1: Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated

7   As in the case of the OECD, UNESCO and World Bank websites

8   As recommended by one participant.

About NORRAG

NORRAG is a global membership-based network of international policies and cooperation in education and training. In 1977 the Research Review and Advisory Group (RRAG) was established, which then founded several regional RRAGs, one of which became NORRAG in 1986. NORRAG's core mandate and strength are to produce, disseminate and broker critical knowledge and to build capacity for and with academia, governments, NGOs, international organizations, foundations and the private sector who inform and shape education policies and practice, at national and international levels. By doing so, 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 and is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). More information about NORRAG, including its scope of work and thematic areas, is available at www.norrag.org

Become a NORRAG Member and register for the NORRAG Bulletin, NORRAG's quarterly newsletter at the following link.

About the KIX EAP HUB

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) is a joint endeavour with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to connect expertise, innovation, and knowledge to help GPE partner countries build stronger education systems and accelerate progress toward SDG 4. There are globally four KIX hubs or Regional Learning Partners, overseen by IDRC. The hub functions as a regional forum within KIX. NORRAG (Network for International Policies and Cooperation in Education and Training) is the Regional Learning Partner for the KIX Europe Asia Pacific (EAP) hub.

The KIX EAP hub facilitates cross-country knowledge and innovation exchange and mobilisation, learning, synthesis, and collaboration among national education stakeholders in 21 GPE partner countries in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific (EAP). The hub also offers opportunities for peer learning and exchange by means of professional development and inter-country visits.

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