



The future of aid for education: Three essays

Nicholas Burnett ^a, Keith Lewin ^b, Stephen Heyneman ^{c,*}

^a Results for Development, Washington DC, USA

^b Sussex University, UK

^c Vanderbilt University, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Educational assistance
International education policy
International organizations and economic development
Foreign aid

ABSTRACT

There is a growing sense of disquiet that the UN Sustainable Development Goals on education are unrealizable in many of the poorest countries. The implications of this conclusion has been the subject of much discussion in this as well as other journals. We have tried to summarize our views by responding to four questions: (i) How should domestic revenues and other secure sources of recurrent finance be increased; (ii) what changes are needed in the international architecture of education and development; (iii) should educational assistance be concentrated on humanitarian emergencies, and (iv) should non-emergency educational assistance be concentrated on education public goods?

1. Background

There is a growing sense of disquiet that the ambitions of UN Sustainable Development Goals on education are unrealizable in many of the poorest countries. The goals and targets are over ambitious and cannot be financed without unprecedented and improbable amounts of external assistance. Domestic revenue has to be mobilized to cover most of the costs of sustainable educational development but will not be sufficient to achieve the goals set.

Since the SDGs were agreed the context for external assistance to education has changed and the appetite for external assistance to education has evolved. Corruption of educational assistance funds is common. The demand from local political officials for educational research to make policy decisions is often disappointing. The absence of follow-through adhering to agreements about reallocation of tax resources to education sometimes leaves the impression that international assistance may be used to supplant rather than add to local resources.

The official UN agency representing education issues, UNESCO, has been the subject of political manipulation and calls for technical action without resources or realistic architecture.

Recent events that have implications for aid and development include reverberations from the withdrawal from Afghanistan, dramatic cuts in UK Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) funding in general and for education, uneven and continuing impacts from Covid-19, the rise of new donors to education with different priorities, and macro geopolitical realignments including massive lending to some low

income countries by China.

A dislocation is developing between global education strategies and educational development priorities, not least in relation to environmental challenges, demographic transitions, changing labor markets, and lessons from five decades of curriculum, learning and assessment reforms. Fundamentally there is a gap in perceptions of the purposes of external assistance to education and in the most effective modalities to raise and disburse revenues, deploy grants and prudently lend.

In 2005 the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness committed development partners to a new framework for aid. Fifteen years later these ambitions have yet to be realized. A “low financing trap” has persisted and shows no sign of being resolved. The idealism that infused the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions and which was reinvigorated at World Conferences in Jomtien, Dakar and Incheon needs rethinking. The institutions that support educational development need reform.

It is timely to review progress as we approach the mid-point of the SDG development cycle 2015–2030. New theories of change are needed that go beyond the post-Washington consensus that underpinned the Millennium Development Goals. Different modalities are needed to accelerate development and make better use of domestic revenue and external assistance to support the emergence of fiscal states able to finance education themselves.

The IJED has attempted to stimulate the discussion by invited essays on the topic by Burnett (2019), Keith Lewin (2020b) and Beeharry (2021). These were then followed by Webinars sponsored by the IJED,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: nburnett@r4d.org (N. Burnett), k.m.lewin@sussex.ac.uk (K. Lewin), s.heynean@vanderbilt.edu (S. Heyneman).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2022.102571>

Received 9 February 2022; Accepted 10 February 2022

Available online 18 February 2022

0738-0593/© 2022 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

the World Bank, the Comparative and International Education Society and UKFIET in February, April and September, 2021. These discussions consisted of senior academics and staff from FCDO and other development organizations. Each was animated by asking presenters to respond to these questions:

1. **How should domestic revenues and other secure sources of recurrent finance be increased?**
2. **What changes are needed in the international architecture of education and development?**
3. **Should educational assistance be concentrated on ‘humanitarian emergencies’?**
4. **Should non-emergency educational assistance be concentrated on education public goods?**

The responses to each question helped identify some of the implications. As to the first question, one implication was whether there should be a new coordinating agency for education. The second question raised issues of the responsibility of national officials and the commitment to raise and re-allocate domestic revenues. From the third surfaced issues of the international response to the destruction of schools as a result of armed conflict, natural disaster, uncontrolled migration and pandemics wherever they occur geographically, as for example educational opportunities in Turkey, Bangladesh, Uganda, Pakistan, Lebanon, or Columbia for those who have fled armed conflict in a neighboring country. From the last question, examples of education public goods included the quality of administrative and assessment data, their accessibility, interpretation and use.

The discussion has advanced and these three essays are designed to maintain the momentum. We do not necessarily agree with all elements of what others have said but we do agree that it is time for the international community to reconsider the goals and mechanisms of providing external assistance to education. The essays are “Post the Post Washington Consensus: What to do with Aid and Education Financing,” by Keith Lewin. Second is “Re-Imagining Aid to Education After the Post Washington Consensus” by Nicholas Burnett, and last is “What to Do About Foreign Aid in Education,” by Stephen Heyneman.

Post the Post Washington Consensus: What to do about aid and educational financing?

Keith M Lewin

Finance for education and development is at a crossroads. The current global goals for education (SDG4) are no longer achievable and cannot be financed without a step change in the allocation of domestic revenues to education and a qualitative shift in the nature of international aid. No plausible amount of external assistance can finance the recurrent costs of education in low income countries in a sustainable way (Lewin, 2020a). Rhetoric and reality have diverged. Pledges to increase the proportion of national budgets and the percentage of GDP committed to education have not been matched by changes in actual allocations since 2000. A low financing trap has developed which is complemented by low levels of learning.

The “learning crisis” (World Bank, 2018) is in large part a financing crisis that cannot be resolved by piecemeal interventions that fail to address the reasons why public financing is consistently inadequate and unsustainable. External assistance to education has peaked and the appetite for aid to education is diminishing. The SDGs are now of decreasing value to governments and development partners. Large volumes of aid to education in the past have not diminished the demand for more aid in the future.

There are no good reasons why all children do not experience a full cycle of basic education and learn at a level appropriate to their age. It is time to have a different conversation about how to accelerate Sustainable Educational Development (SED) and make more effective use of scarce resources for common benefits.

Four questions have been posed.

1. How should domestic revenues and other secure sources of recurrent finance be increased?

There are two ways of increasing public educational investment sustainably.

- expand the share of education in the government budget
- collect more domestic revenue and increase government spending

Public education systems have to be financed largely from domestic revenue generated from taxes. Expenditure on education averages about 15% of public expenditure in low-income countries. Tax revenue averages about 15% of GDP. This is not nearly enough. Projections show that more than 6% of GDP is needed to finance universal access grades K-12 leaving aside investments needed to enhance quality. Currently more than half of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) spend less than 4% of GDP on education as is true for all low income countries. This level has been constant for two decades. So has the amount of government spending for education.

The gap between what is allocated and what is needed is about \$45 billion a year in SSA alone (Lewin, 2017). Aid to education in SSA has been running at about \$3.6 billion annually only half of which is for basic education and much is tied aid (GEMR, 2021). An increase in domestic revenue from 15% to 16% of GDP in low income countries in SSA would generate more than all the grant aid to education in SSA not just once, but every year. Going forward, most financing of education systems will be generated from increased domestic revenue and from enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, rather than directly from aid.

Escape from low financing traps depends on prioritising education’s share of public investment and increasing domestic revenue (Moore et al. 2018) The good news is that tax GDP ratios are likely to rise for reasons that include real economic growth, greater tax collection as a result of digitisation and tax identification numbers, globalisation of corporate tax liabilities, fiscal drag of tax thresholds, and money laundering and anti-corruption measures. Other possibilities include hypothecating some revenue to education (e.g. a percentage of VAT/GSDT or oil revenues). Governments, not development partners, will determine how much of growing public expenditure is directed to education. Development assistance has to be designed as complementary and catalytic (Fredriksen, 2010) rather than as a substitute for insufficient domestic commitment.

2. What changes are needed in the international architecture of education and development?

The global architecture for education and development has failed to realise the global goals for education set at Jomtien (1990), Dakar (2000) and Incheon (2015). Responsibilities for education and development are spread across a myriad of stakeholders with different motives, competing priorities and varied modes of financing. This multiplicity of agents co-exists with a global framework for education and development that lacks coherence (Burnett, 2019). The SDG agenda has dramatically expanded the scope of global goals and the cost of achieving them. The targets now include universal participation K-12, expanded TVET and higher education, massive investment in assessment and learning in foundational literacy and numeracy (Lewin, 2019). Not only is the agenda unachievable it is also contested and underfunded. Thus donors have focussed on foundational literacy and numeracy but this not de facto the highest priority in many low income countries (Beeharry, 2021; Crawford et al., 2021). UNESCO, the lead UN agency for education, has a global budget that is similar to a single medium size OECD university.

Four changes are needed.

- renewed commitment to aid effectiveness to realise ambitions of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability
- generation of sustainable development targets that are achievable and encourage equi-finality – different pathways to the same ends – and multi-finality – different ends linked to national priorities
- rationalisation of responsibilities across different agencies with consistent messaging and funding linked to a new compact for catalytic aid
- either UNESCO's responsibilities should be accompanied by adequate funding or an alternative institutional arrangement should be made building on existing capacities

3. Should educational assistance be concentrated on 'humanitarian emergencies'?

The short answer is that emergency assistance should be separated from programmatic support to educational development to avoid a competition for resources that disrupts on-going programmes and may underfund emergencies when demand is high. Better to ring fence a proportion of total aid in a fund to be replenished periodically, available on demand and profiled to meet varied needs.

Emergencies occur when natural disasters or human actions cause large scale dislocations of development judged detrimental to well being. Emergencies are more or less predictable in time, duration and space and have very different pathways of impact and recovery. Disaster relief is different from mitigating the mass despair of failed states (Collier, 2018) as it focuses on catastrophic events rather than systemic failures. Responses should have links to cause and culpability.

Decisions are needed that agree:

- the order of magnitude of resource commitments to a pooled fund (10% of all aid?)
- institutional arrangements for standing capabilities to respond
- national audits of resilience and capacity to anticipate and respond to emergencies
- global insurance funded by progressive levies on contributing nations

4. Should non-emergency educational assistance be concentrated on education public goods?

Non-emergency aid should finance national and global public goods through grants and concessional loans. Grant aid should not be tied to single suppliers or used to "de-risk" loans that would not otherwise be made. Key issues are to establish who are the main beneficiaries of specific national and global public goods and how such public goods should be financed efficiently.

Public goods may include:

- national pedagogic and curriculum institutes
- copyright free curriculum based learning materials with single payment authoring
- free on-line access to the internet for public educational institutions
- studies of achievement linked to national curriculum and pedagogic practice with international comparabilities as an option
- software for educational planning e.g. school mapping, EMIS, high stakes and formative assessment

2. Going forward

The post-Washington consensus sought to reconcile markets with the measured interventionism of the state and international aid. Development driven from the North by bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies has not succeeded in transforming education systems in the South and made rights realities (Lewin, 2015). Grants and loans can accelerate

development but they have many limitations of magnitude, political legitimacy, and consistency over time. Loans are limited by creditworthiness and the burden of repayment. Aid cannot fill gaps in recurrent expenditure but it can catalyse change.

Most low income countries except the poorest and most fragile states now collect more tax than they receive in aid (Moore et al., 2020). If they do not do this, they should. The relationship between low income countries and development partners is changing fundamentally as more countries become fiscal states that collect enough revenue to finance their own public services and determine their own development priorities. This has many implications for aid, the architecture of development institutions, and the relationships between principals and agents.

A post post-Washington consensus needs to recognise that aid to education is a precious vector to accelerate development. However, it has to be deployed to complement national initiatives financed with domestic revenue. The priority is to invest in catalytic inputs that support sustainable gains in participation and learning. If aid is used to address immediate crises without identifying or mitigating underlying causes then low financing traps gaps will remain chronic. Persisting with the SDG's and the architecture of aid as currently configured is not an option and will lead to poor allocative decisions, disappointing progress by 2030, and unsustainable outcomes. What is needed is:

- national and international targets for education which are achievable, costed within plausible country resource envelopes
- action to increase domestic revenue and use more of it to finance education
- external assistance that shifts emphasis from stand-alone projects to development of financially sustainable systems with enhanced efficiency and effectiveness
- grant aid that is catalytic rather than a piecemeal solution to endemic problems
- concessional lending that is close-coupled to fiscal reforms and increased revenue collection
- coordination of external assistance to generate consistent messaging and alignment with national development priorities
- more realistic sequencing of progress with the domestic resources and external assistance available

Re-imagining aid to education after the Post-Washington Consensus

Nicholas Burnett

Almost all donors frame their stated education aid strategies in terms of global goals; multilateral donors and most bilateral ones commit their resources to achieving SDG4. Yet SDG4 is only the latest in a long line of international goals for education dating since 1960, all of which have at a minimum included universal primary education and which now include the entire education sector from early childhood to lifelong learning, a focus on equity, and a recognition of national sovereignty and responsibility. This worthy expansion of the scope of international education goals fails, however, to recognize that, despite huge progress, universal primary education is still to be achieved, educational equity is worsening, the goals are unattainable for most poor countries, most aid for education is bilateral and heavily politically influenced, and countries neither act responsibly nor are held accountable. SDG4 needs to be amended, either literally or de facto through prioritization of its various sub-goals; equity needs specific attention rather than just exhortation in the international goal; and donors and developing countries need to be held more accountable in putting their resources where the needs are greatest.

1. How should domestic revenues and other secure sources of recurrent finance be increased?

There are two principal problems with current domestic levels of recurrent financing. First, and not specific to education, most developing countries' tax effort (ratio of revenue to GDP) at around

14% is less than half the 34% average of OECD countries; developing countries therefore need to increase their tax revenues through various mechanisms, making more revenue available for public spending in general and for spending on education in particular. A high priority for aid, both financial and technical, is therefore to help improve revenue generation. As [Mustapha and Krause \(2016\)](#) have shown, there is a positive correlation between spending on education and tax revenues. Reducing tax injustice by reducing corporate tax incentives is one important way to increase revenues ([Balseira et al., 2018](#)). Second, the share of education in public spending needs to increase to at least 20%, though developing countries currently average below 15%. Earmarking taxes to education, as with the Indian cess tax or Brazil's VAT, can be helpful here. Third, inefficiencies in current spending need to be reduced in order to free up funding for high priority uses; within education, this implies increasing the share of spending on primary and lower secondary education, especially in the poorest areas, while limiting or reducing the share devoted to higher education but ensuring that appropriate borrowing mechanisms are in place to enable higher education students to finance their education out of future earnings.

2. What changes are needed in the international architecture of education and development?

As noted in the introduction, changes are needed both to SDG4, the global goal for education, and to the international architecture. It is literally crazy to have an architecture build around an unattainable goal, not to mention an architecture that excludes accountability. The principal criterion for changes to the architecture thus has to be that they lead to a revision, or at least prioritization, of SDG4; that they increase the share of multilateral (in 2019 \$4 billion) rather than bilateral (\$15 billion) aid to education (as multilateral aid, for all its problems, tends to be more related to need than does bilateral aid); that OECD redefines its definition of aid to exclude aid to foreign students attending domestic OECD higher education institutions (more than half of Germany's aid is in this category, for instance); and, most important, that they result in an architecture that holds countries accountable, both donors and recipients.

Provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic that has decimated education in the developing world, an attempt to improve the architecture is currently underway. Interagency data and analytical collaboration have improved among the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, for example, on the impact of Covid-19 and on trends in financing. In July 2021 the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee, run by UNESCO, was revamped and renamed the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee, with a reduced number of member countries, agencies, NGOs and the like (28 compared to 44 before), a more balanced regional representation, a "no delegation" policy to ensure that members are at ministerial/agency head level, the creation of a Sherpa group to support and prepare its meetings; and the establishment of an inter-agency secretariat. These changes followed a remarkable admission of previous failure by the various agencies involved, including UNESCO.

Encouraging though these changes are, they are essentially minor. They do not address the fundamental problems, notably the inappropriateness of SDG4, the low share of multilateral aid and the lack of accountability in the system. They also occur in parallel with an extremely unhealthy emerging coordination competition between the High-Level Steering Committee, still UNESCO-driven, and the World Education Forum, driven by The Education Commission. There are enough problems with the current architecture that we do not need a competition to coordinate it better!

At the root of the problems of the current architecture is the ever-declining role of UNESCO in education combined with the continued adherence to the unprioritized SDG4 that UNESCO played the major role in defining. UNESCO's previously excessively small budget has been devastated since 2011 by the failure of the United States to provide its financial contribution and then by the formal US

withdrawal from the organization. Its Director-General's speeches and pronouncements on education, which is after all UNESCO's principal area of activity, are notable for their absence. I have argued elsewhere ([Burnett, 2019](#)) that the ideal would be to establish a new UN apex organization for education that could coordinate prioritization and the development of global public goods for education. This is probably not politically feasible right now. Instead the United States, which UNESCO would dearly love to have rejoin, should insist on dramatic reform as a condition of reform, including of apparently mundane matters that contribute to UNESCO's weakness, such as the de facto lifetime job protection that its regular staff currently enjoy (see [Burnett, 2011](#)).

3. **Should educational assistance be concentrated on "humanitarian emergencies"?**
4. **Should non-emergency educational assistance be concentrated on education public goods?**

Aid for education has three principal roles: support to countries that cannot themselves afford the education systems they need, the provision of global public goods, and humanitarian education assistance.

The first two are very important and should not be subjugated to humanitarian assistance. This is not to say that a higher share of humanitarian assistance should not be for education (it remains pitifully low), or that there is not a clear global (or common) good in educating displaced people and refugees whose education may represent an excessive burden on host governments, or that new mechanisms are not needed to help finance education in humanitarian settings. Notably relevant here is the idea of insuring education systems against natural disasters, as currently happens, for example, with climate vulnerability among some island nations through the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility and the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative, along with the African Risk Capacity mechanism that insures African Union members against crop losses. Such insurance could have been invaluable for the Covid-19 pandemic. Rich countries should make their own provisions for domestic humanitarian education emergencies; there is no case for them being part of any arrangements aimed at countries that simply cannot afford to self-insure.

Nor should education aid be concentrated only on education public goods. Aid to countries is essential if they are to overcome domestic financing constraints. Even those who make a major effort, such as Niger that spends 5% of its GDP and over 20% of its budget on education, simply do not have sufficient resources to finance the education systems that their still rapidly growing young populations need. There is no reason to deny aid to countries that make an effort and hold themselves accountable.

Again, this is not to say that the use of aid for global public goods in education should not be increased. The fact that the UNESCO Institute for Statistics is seriously underfunded is an international scandal. New methods of technical cooperation in education, based on South-South coaching rather than old-fashioned technical assistance by Northern expatriates, have enormous potential. The technical knowledge of many education professionals needs strengthening.

The fundamental issue is that aid to education is too low. It is only this that leads to suggestions like those in the two questions here considered. Aid should be higher, more of it should go to global public goods, more to humanitarian assistance, but the bulk should be targeted on low-income countries that make an effort and hold themselves accountable, domestically and internationally.

What to do about Foreign Aid in Education

Stephen P. Heyneman

The last 50 years have been devoted to the expansion of nation-building education assistance to low and middle income countries, but now I believe the enterprise should shift to new purposes. The reasons are explained below.

Corruption and lack of recipient country accountability is critical. Corruption is no worse in education than other sectors – power,

transport, infrastructure, public and financial sector management. But corruption is prevalent in education. Salaries continue when teachers do not exist. Contracts to write and supply textbooks are offered family members of education ministers. Universities have to apply for re-accreditation after the accreditation agency is suddenly managed by a relative of the president. Schools are declared to be free of private cost but then governments do not invest in the needed infrastructure to serve the onslaught of new students. Private fees become the norm in countries with free education; state school systems hemorrhage students to low fee non-government schools which governments then restrict by inserting new regulations.

Development assistance agencies know all this but have not been successful at stopping it. Instead of holding recipient countries accountable, development assistance agencies concentrate on how poor the schools are, how little children actually learn and how little it would cost (two aircraft carriers?) to solve the problem. Political attention is focused on how to get donors to be more generous. Little attention is paid to the aid which displaces local education expenditures. Raising educational expenditures by recipient countries is not seen as a solution. What have the results been? Tax-payers in OECD countries are tiring of the argument that providing more charity is the solution and that the heart of the problem is the stinginess of industrial democracies rather than the responsibility of recipient countries.

The phone book for NGO's operating in Nairobi is huge. Each NGO claims that it does good. They raise contributions from advertising their accomplishments. However, the means by which 'good' is achieved is not mentioned. Consultants and foreign officers can be seen in the cafes, bars, swimming clubs, golf courses. They are the ones with air conditioned Land Rovers spouting fancy exhaust snorkels and refrigerators in the back.

Example. I once spoke with the director of an NGO whose purpose was to provide fresh water wells for rural villages. After a few years the charity had a multimillion dollar budget and an expanding number of employees. The director described a recent inauguration of a village well. There had been a ceremony with dancing and singing. Had the District Health Officer been invited to the well-opening ceremony? "No, we did not consider it," the director said, "the only thing the government does is delay and throw up road blocks."

Example. A few years ago I asked to speak to the director of education finance in a West Africa country which receives an abundance of foreign education aid. I was warned that I may not like what he would say. He was crotchety. I asked him what the problem was. He cleaned his rimless glasses and took his time responding. "We need the money" he said, "but we should NEVER have allowed a development assistance agency or foreign charity to implement projects." He said he felt like a visitor in his own country. He outlined the problem caused by the difference in salaries, equipment and life styles of foreigners, their youthful inexperience, and their gross ignorance of local cultures.

Example. Graduate school candidates often advertise work they do for a charity. One young man listed an activity as 'building schools in Kazakhstan'. His work was part of a church mission. He spent three weeks in Kazakhstan. Two weeks were spent in the largest city and one week 'in the field'. In the field he spent three days touring a city of 300,000 and three days commuting to and from a village school under construction. His total time building schools? Three days. Many who work in education on behalf of faith-based charities might be less likely to over-state their sacrifices. But this particular individual was hardly isolated. He was convinced that he had contributed to solving the problems of education. He seemed to believe his activity in Kazakhstan made him virtuous; that he had made a sacrifice so significant, that 'building schools in Kazakhstan' deserved to be listed on his curriculum vitae and provide an advantage over other candidates to graduate school.

Part of the issue of assistance in education has to do with the problematic nature of charity itself.

Here is how one person expressed it:

Perhaps the most overrated virtue in our list of shoddy virtues is that of giving. Giving builds up the ego of the giver, makes him (feel) superior and higher and larger than the receiver. One has to remember some of our wolfish financiers who spend two-thirds of their lives clawing fortunes out of the guts of society and the latter third pushing it back. (Steinbeck, 1941. p. 272).

What Steinbeck argues here with respect to private individuals could apply to nations. A parallel set of circumstances is established, between superior and inferior, giver and receiver. In terms of foreign policy, it has proven counter productive. Nation-building goals have lowered the reputation of the donor and has made a mockery of the claims of the donor agencies. The structure of nation-building education foreign assistance is broken, but it is broken for reasons which are broader than its outdated 'architecture'. It is broken because the moral spirit behind it is debilitating. Aid to education for the purposes of nation-building reinforces a country's ego-centric views of its contribution. Without justification, it claims to solve problems which have over many years proven intractable. And it has left untended the responsibility of those who own the problem in the first place, the recipient countries themselves. I tend to agree with someone who taught in Malawi in 1967, about the same time I did. Here is how he puts it:

"I have tried to understand how to reconcile the nature of poverty, the role of charity, the intervention of aid organizations, and the maneuverings of governments... After repeated visits to Africa over fifty years, I concluded that foreign aid as it is conventionally practiced is essentially a failure, futile in relieving poverty, and often harmful, relieving the ills of a few at the expense of the many. Most charities are diabolically self-interested, proselytizing evangelists, tax-avoidance scammers with schemes to buff up the image of the funder — often someone in disgrace or mired in scandal or obscenely rich. Claiming to be apolitical, such charities allow authoritarian governments and kleptocracies to go on existing, because the charities do the governments' work, and in doing so, prevent oppressed people from understanding how they are being exploited" (Theroux, 2019, p. 408).

3. Responses to the four questions

Domestic revenues and other secure sources of finance are the sole responsibility of the national and local government. It is their choice as to how to allocate domestic resources. International organizations might offer advice and support the necessary professional mechanisms to monitor progress.

The Education Sector in UNESCO has been moribund for decades. It has failed to adequately recognize the importance of statistics on which the world depends (Heyneman, 1999); it has stubbornly ignored the priorities of member states which would attract new resources (Heyneman, 2003, 2011); it has been captured by naïve advocacy campaigns over evidence to insure sector-wide progress (Heyneman, 2009); it considers itself an agency with authority to pronounce goals to nations though equipped with the resources of a community college (Heyneman, 2006; Heyneman and Lee, 2016); and for reasons of political ideology it has ignored the educational concerns of nations which are not classified as 'developing' (Heyneman and Pelczar, 2006).

The pandemic has reminded us that educational emergencies are real and deserve to be addressed by the international community. Helping education recover from natural disasters, armed conflict, uncontrolled migration and collapses in public health should be the focus of a new international education agency. However, its terms of reference need not be confined to countries at one end of the economic spectrum. A new international education agency should be able to respond if education is threatened because of an emergency. In rare but important instances, this might be justified in an OECD country if adequately co-financed (Heyneman, 2007).

Should non-emergency assistance be concentrated on education public goods. Yes.

References

- Balsera, M.R., Klees, S.J., Archer, D., 2018. Financing education: why should tax justice be part of the solution? *Compare* 48 (1), 147–162.
- Beeharry, G., 2021. The pathway to progress on sdg4 requiring the global education architecture to focus on foundational learning and to hold ourselves accountable for achieving it. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 82 (No. 4), 102375.
- Burnett, N., 2011. UNESCO education: political or technical: reflections on recent personal experience. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 31 (3), 315–318.
- Burnett, N., 2019. Invited essay: its past time to fix the broken international architecture for education. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 68 (No. 7), 15–19.
- Collier P., 2018 The ethical foundations of aid; Two duties of rescue in Brown C and Eckersly R in the Oxford Handbook of International Political Theory. Online Publication Date: Apr 2018 DOI: (10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198746928.013.40).
- Crawford, L., Hares, S., Minardi, A., Sandefur, J., 2021. A poll of education officials in 35 countries: Three reasons the idea of a “learning crisis” isn’t getting traction. (<https://www.cgdev.org/blog/poll-education-officials-35-countries-three-reasons-idea-learning-crisis-isnt-getting-traction>).
- Fredriksen B., 2010 Enhancing the allocative efficiency of education aid: A review of issues and options. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*: Vol 134 No 2 CICE Hiroshima University.
- GEMR, 2021. Global Education Monitoring Report 2021: Non State Actors in Education. UNESCO, Paris.
- Heyneman, S.P., 1999. The sad story of UNESCO’s educational statistics. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 19 (January), 65–74.
- Heyneman, S.P., 2003. What the U.S. needs to learn from UNESCO. *UNESCO Prospects* XXXiii (1), 7–10.
- Heyneman, S.P., 2006. The effectiveness of development assistance in education: an organizational analysis. *J. Int. Coop. Educ.* 9 (1), 7–25.
- Heyneman, S.P., 2007. Suppose there were a world bank for American education. *Am. J. Educ.* 11 (2), 167–180.
- Heyneman S.P., The failure of education-for-all as political strategy UNESCO Prospects 1 2009 5 10.
- Heyneman, S.P., 2011. The future of UNESCO: strategies for attracting new resources. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 31, 313–314.
- Heyneman, S.P., Pelczar, M., 2006. Publications of the international institute of educational planning in 2004: a review. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 26, 426–442.
- Lewin, K., 2020a. Beyond business as usual: aid and financing education in Sub Saharan Africa. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 78 (No. 10), 102247.
- Lewin, K.M., 2015. Educational access, equity, and development: planning to make rights realities fundamentals of educational planning 98. International Institute of Educational Planning. UNESCO, Paris.
- Heyneman, S.P., Lee, Bommi, 2016. International Organizations and the Future of Educational Assistance in Miguel Nino-Zarazua (ed.) Aid, Education Policy and Development, a Special Issue of the International Journal of Educational Development (January).
- Lewin K.M., 2017. The Educational Challenges of Transition: Key Issues for Low and Low Middle Income Countries and the GPE Towards 2030. Occasional Paper 2, Global Partnership for Education, Washington DC. (<https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/educational-challenges-transition-key-issues-2030>).
- Lewin K.M., 2019 The Sustainable Development Goals for Education: Commonwealth Perspectives and Opportunities. Round Table. The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs September 2019 Taylor and Francis, London (<https://keithlewin.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Keith-Lewin-SDG-and-the-Commonwealth-Full-Text-August31st-2019-.pdf>).
- Lewin, K.M., 2020b. Beyond business as usual: aid and financing education in Sub Saharan Africa. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.* 78 (No. 10), 102247.
- Moore, M., Prichard, W., Fjeldstad, O., 2018. Taxing Africa: Coercion, Reform and Development. Zed Press.
- World Bank 2018 World Development Report: Learning to Realize Education’s Promise. Washington DC USA.
- Mustapha, S. and P. Krause (2016). Financing Education: Domestic resource mobilization and allocation. The Education Commission background paper. <https://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Financing-Education-Domestic-resource.pdf>.
- Steinbeck, J., 1941. *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*. Penguin Books, New York.
- Theroux, P., 2019. *On the Plain of Snakes*. Penguin Books, New York.