



SALZBURG
GLOBAL
SEMINAR
75th Anniversary

EDUCATION POLICYMAKERS NETWORK

Breadth of Skills: Education Transformation

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You can join in the conversation on Twitter with the hashtags [#SGSedu](#) and [#EducationPolicymakersNetwork](#) and see all your fellow Fellows [on Twitter](#).

If you're interested in writing either an op-ed style article for our website or the program report, or a personal reflection blog post while you're here this week, please email your submission to Salzburg Global's Communications Associate, Aurore Heugas: ahugas@salzburgglobal.org

Whether writing articles or Tweeting, please make sure to observe the Chatham House Rule (information on which is in your Welcome Pack).

We'll be updating our website with summaries from the panels and interviews with our Fellows, all of which you can find on the session page: SalzburgGlobal.org/go/762-02.

We're updating our Facebook page facebook.com/SalzburgGlobal and our Flickr stream flickr.com/SalzburgGlobal with photos from the session during this week and also after the program.

We will also be posting photos to Instagram instagram.com/SalzburgGlobal.

Use the hashtag [#SGSedu](#) and [#EducationPolicymakersNetwork](#) on either Twitter or Instagram and we might feature your photos in the newsletter!



@shail2018: Attended the 2nd in-person meeting of the Education Policy Network @SalzburgGlobal this week [...]



Another Successful Meeting for the Education Policymakers Network

Salzburg, Austria – For the past four days, members of the Education Policymakers Network have been able to escape their usual environment and soak in the holiday spirit in Salzburg and Schloss Leopoldskron.

This second in-person meeting felt like a homecoming for many of them. As one of the participants said upon arrival, “We’re not only colleagues but a big family.” Since their last meeting in April, many of them have seen real personal growth, as well as evolution in their respective education systems. This week allowed them to come up and refine new reflections using the breadth of skills agenda to advance

education transformation, allowing them to carry their findings home and apply them all over the world.

“It has been fantastic to have had so many of the network members back with us in person here in Salzburg. Seeing how the dynamics between the participants have changed over the last year and how much the group has grown together as an entity was just wonderful. Now, the next step will be to finalize the different essays and case studies the two Learning Circles are working on for the network’s second publication to be published early next year,” said Corinna Nawatzky, Associate, Salzburg Global Center for Education Transformation.



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Inclusivity in Education During War

Larysa Samsonova told Salzburg Global about the main challenges children and educators are facing during the war.

Valeriia Chernysh

Larysa Samsonova is Ukraine's National Consultant to the Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Rights of Children and Children Rehabilitation. Previously, she worked as the chairman of the board of the public organization "Family", which took care of the problems and rehabilitation of children with complex disabilities.

It has been almost a year since the full-scale war started. We all see the pictures of children studying in air-raid shelters, and children doing their homework with head torches because of the total blackout. So, what are the main challenges the system of education faces right now?

Both adults and children are in constant anxiety, waiting for "something" to happen. The constant feeling of anxiety affects the development of children's memory. It is very difficult to study consistently. But of course, our teachers are heroes. They hold on as long as they can, but still, they are also in a situation where they experience a lot of psychological and emotional pressure. And I think this is the most threatening challenge.

We already had the experience of online education. Back then, a lot of tools were developed. Teachers learned to work online. That's why online studying is not a problem. The problem is that, when the children are at school, the teachers have to immediately gather the children when there is an alarm and send them to the air-raid shelters. And then the parents have to wait for the air-raid warning to end because during the air-raid they can't take their children – it has to be over.

How do you see the influence of war on the development of social and



emotional learning skills in children with special needs?

It is even more difficult for them during the war because inclusion most often happens offline when children are present in an educational institution, when the process of socialization, habituation, and friendship takes place.

At this moment, Larysa got a call from her son to warn her about the air-raid all over Ukraine and asked her to hide. She decided to stay and continue the interview.

Of course, most of our efforts were aimed at providing basic needs because many people were left without work and funds. Children with special educational needs usually study in special educational institutions in our country. These include ordinary educational institutions, where every school can become inclusive because, according to the Law on Education, all children can study at the nearest educational institution where they live. But inclusive education has been developing for only five years. This is a very long-term process. The teachers

were not fully ready for that change, and ordinary students and their parents also were not.

Given the devastating effects of the war, what is needed to recover and heal?

Of course, we all dream of winning. And a lot of people are now thinking about how we will continue to live because it will no longer be the same. It seems to me that it is necessary to use the potential of volunteers. We now have a lot of people working as volunteers, helping both the army and each other, and, well, everywhere you look. If this potential were realized in everyday life, then it would be the best success after victory. Every person will be seen as a treasure, as something valuable, regardless of whether it be a person with special educational needs or not. And the third thing we will focus more on is children, because having children in such conditions is already a challenge. So even now we talk a lot about the early aid system, about early interventions in the family, to help the whole family cope with all difficulties.

Transforming Education amidst the Political, Technological and Economical Shifts

Renan Ferreirinha talks about the importance of honoring teachers' commitment to what might be most timeless and powerful of human endeavors – shaping children's development.

Douglas Leung



Renan is secretary of education for the Brazilian city of Rio, where he is responsible for leading the largest municipal public school system in Latin America. Renan ran for “state deputy” in 2018. In his first term, he became president of the Economic Committee and vice-president of the Science and Technology Committee.

What do you see on the horizon for the transformative implementation of education?

The pandemic changed how we perceive education for a few reasons. First, there was the dilemma about how technology would impact basic education, and if technology would substitute teachers. It has been proven now that technology will not substitute teachers. They are the mediators of knowledge, their role is guaranteed. And we saw how we miss them in society, how we miss them in the process, our kids need

them. Technology should be there to complement, not as a substitute. The second thing is how we structure and perceive school, not only as a deposit of knowledge, where you study maths and languages but also as a place for social collaboration, where you interact with other kids, where you play and eat, most kids usually have their only decent meal in schools, especially in third world countries. I know how important this is for psychological well-being as well, so I very much defend the institutional school.

Reforms usually take longer than most democratic cycles. How do you feel now that you have longer ahead of you, what are your plans?

In 2018, I ran for the state level and now I ran for the federal level. In between, I became a secretary for education in the city of Rio. Even though I had a good turnout this year and I might assume the position

of MEP next year, I have decided to continue as a secretary so that I could do more in the executive branch. I feel that the Parliament has its role, but I prefer to focus on delivering public policies. And I feel that is important in a democracy - how you perceive the role of the executive, the role of the mayor or governor, or the president, what his or her cabinet could do, but also what the Parliament should do. [...] Fostering more debates and going into more provocations is key for the curriculum reforms, it is essential for society, for how we develop and evolve. But we need to have people with a good formation and ready to serve in the executive branch. It is where things get done. We have the largest municipal public school system in Latin America. This is what I have decided to focus on in the next two years, and I am very much excited.

A Twin View on Tanzanian Education

An undisputed benefit of the EPN is the opportunity for Fellows to learn about education systems from around the world. When it comes to the Tanzanian education system specifically, the opportunity to gain new insights is even greater, thanks to the dual participation of Hawa Selemani and Salvatory Alute.

Douglas Leung



The Education Policy Network (EPN) boasts two Fellows from Tanzania: Hawa Selemani, a Senior Education Officer at the Ministry of Education, and Salvatory Alute, a Pre-Primary Education Coordination Officer at the President’s Office of Regional Administration and Local Government. Both shared their views on education in Tanzania for different generations and the recent influence of a breadth of skills on the curriculum.

The Big Education Conversation’s opening question, “Describe your favorite teacher”, piqued curiosity about the personal educational experiences of those who are now responsible for shaping the educational experiences of current students.

Hawa recalls that she had “a good teacher who helped [her] to learn foundational skills from pre-primary”. Her memories of the earliest stages of education prompts her assertion of school as a place “where a person can learn literacy and numeracy skills”.

Salvatory characterizes school as an “escape” from home. In the telling of his own educational experience,

Salvatory focuses more on his experience in higher education. He reveals that he originally wanted to pursue a career in law, but the opportunities to do so were limited, and so he entered the education field – with no regrets: “Now, I’m enjoying it.”

Breadth of skills here and now

In Tanzania, Hawa says, skills such as communication and critical thinking are referred to as “21st century skills”. They are certainly apt for pupils growing up in this day and age, which has been reflected in the creation of a National Operation Guideline. Hawa explains that foundational skills are incorporated into the minimum standards set out in this guideline, as appropriate for each age.

Salvatory’s assessment of previous curriculum reforms to make it “competency-based” is striking: “It wasn’t enough”. He shares that the education sector is in the process of undertaking a review of the curriculum, and that a breadth of skills is “one of the areas of so [much] concern”.

Imagining the school experience of future Tanzanian students

Hawa also acknowledges that Tanzania is “in the transition of changing [its] national education policies in order to make [its] education relevant to the needs of the learner”. Nonetheless, she has high hopes as Tanzania emerges from this transition period, based not only on a stronger emphasis on competencies, but also on “having the tools to assess children’s learning outcomes” and subsequently intervene if appropriate.

Salvatory is imbued with equal optimism: “I see a bright future”. He believes that developments in the education sector over the past five years have already been “promising”, and the experience of schoolchildren in Tanzania will be “quite different” in five to ten years’ time.

Given this dual Tanzanian participation in the EPN, the network gives its full support to both Hawa and Salvatory as they contribute to expediting the education transformation that both expect to see in the coming years.



The Power of Play

In conversation with Salzburg Global, Rajdeep Roy Chowdhury talks about the importance of incorporating play into the school curriculum — a versatile approach that fosters creativity and propels social change.

Iva Genova

Rajdeep Roy Chowdhury is a senior advocacy and communication specialist for the LEGO Foundation, partner of Salzburg Global's education programs. His projects include developing a national advocacy campaign for the Government of India on the prevention of violence against children, executing a national campaign on saving newborn lives in India.

Can you tell us more about the Transforming Education Summit?

The Transforming Education Summit was organized by UNESCO and it brought together civil society organizations, policymakers, donors, and other U.N. agencies. [...] The purpose of Transforming Education Summit was 1) to develop a vision for what a transformed education system looks like, and 2) to address what needs to be done to achieve that. Our previous CEO participated in many of the plenaries. We are also supporting UNESCO with the secondment from the LEGO foundation. So, we have a colleague who is currently working with the UNESCO's office in Paris on the follow up from the Transforming Education Summit.

The landscape around the education reform has evolved rapidly in the span of this year. What is the role of the breadth of skills in transforming education?

The traditional education system in most parts of the world is from the colonial era, the era of the industrialization. It evolved to enable generations of workforce for the factories and for the industries [to be involved]. Where it failed, however, was to enable those children who later become adults to develop a constantly



evolving mindset. [...] With this rapidly changing world, we need solutions which are innovative, and in order to develop those innovative solutions, one needs to be creative. One needs to have a mindset to solve problems which are unforeseen.

The breadth of skills helps to develop critical thinking and creative thinking that can address some of the greatest challenges that we face today. We believe that play is the best way to develop breadth of skills. Play is natural for children, it is instinctive. We want to take that into classrooms, into education system. We are working with educators around the world to enable them to deliver play-based learning in the classroom setting, which helps children to develop the breadth of skills. Breadth of skills is defined differently across contexts and countries - "21st century skills, "holistic skills", but ultimately it is those critical

skills that a child needs in order to develop and realize their full potential.

What is your vision for the future of education?

At the LEGO Foundation, we believe that in order to transform education systems, we need to transform learning systems. Learning does not stop at the end of the school hour; it continues at home. We need to have a system where the community has ownership, where educators, parents and caregivers are equally involved. So that when the child goes back home, the child is not in a different environment, and the learning process continues. We would rather call it a transformed learning system. And that leads to a future where children, when they grow up, become the best versions of themselves.

Testimonials from our Fellows

Salzburg Global's Education Policymakers Network is ever-growing. But what have our Fellows gained from the network?

"I think that as countries work towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of quality education, we as network members are able to mainstream the breadth of skills approach in working towards this goal. The EPN is an opportunity to continually commit to this goal for pre-primary and primary school age learners and to reassess in areas where there needs to be improvement. I believe that the results of being part of the network will be realized long-after the meetings end through sustainable implementation in the different countries where we as EPN fellow live and work."

"The interaction and information sharing has made me compare the technology advancement to that of other countries hence giving policy direction to the education sector. Through the network, my skills have broadened from interactions with professional from various countries who are always more than willing to share their experiences. I feel a better professional than when I joined the network some two years ago."

"The EPN Family has been quite an educative and informative family that has not only enabled me to be a better education policymaker, but has enabled pass over to colleagues in Uganda international experiences and case studies on how to integrate the breadth of skills in the early childhood education. What stood out significantly is the issue of Nomadic education of pastoral communities in Kenya that can be well adopted in Uganda, the happiness education in India and most importantly how to integrate child-play as an integral part of the education of the child. As a consequence of the above we are now planning on forwarding numerous issues that have come up at EPN to the National Education Review Commission that has been set up in Uganda aiming at reforming the education sector."

"Being here is like a playground, free play, and it's such a gift because it creates a lot of positive energy and it's something that trickles down in our systems. It's difficult to find conversation partners you can talk to at this level. Here is a group of policymakers who want to achieve things for children. Being broad is one thing but being deep is another thing. It's the creativity and the playfulness that can spark new learning processes. We should take advantages of having such a playground to push things forward."

Hot Topic: “How does the breadth of skills agenda support education transformation in your country?”

Iva Genova

“As far as education in Kenya is concerned, the academic dimension of it is well established. We have seasoned educators and subject specialists, but we are now beginning to embrace the fact that non-cognitive skills are critical in education. We have yet to appreciate the significant role of SEL in the overall well-being of the child, a lot of advocacy is needed so that it is a joint venture. [...] We are now beginning to mainstream what we call “Pertinent and contemporary issues in education,” which provides an avenue for learners to develop psychosocial competencies. Children will have the opportunity to learn how to develop social emotional skills in the classroom. But they will also learn the same in the non-formal dimension - music and drama. Then we can begin to have thematic areas touching on self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness, the concept of empathy. We are hoping that through social interaction, children can begin to appreciate the need for effective communication. We still have a long way to go, but at least there has been that intention to really make sure that the curriculum articulates these issues.”

Grace Maina

Deputy Director, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

“Lebanon lives in a multiple crisis situation — from COVID to the Beirut blast, the economic and the financial crisis. Practically people see no hope. So, injecting and including the breadth of skills in the education transformation agenda would have an important value and implication. It would open the door for development, academic knowledge, social support,

and stabilize mental health of children and young people who are traumatized. It will give hope for economic and social stability, and growth. Learning these skills will ultimately help them become active citizens. This is part of the transformation agenda education, it will be on the curriculum, and part of the educational governance. It gives accessibility to everyone and ensures parities between children, especially those facing social challenges or coming from poor families, and children with special needs.”

Fadi Yarak

Senior Education Adviser for the Arab States, UNESCO, Lebanon

“The breadth of the skills agenda allows us to collect important ideas and strengthen our strategies so that we can offer new opportunities to our communities, school students and families in Colombia. The topics we discuss here bring suggestions and help us develop a better understanding of the differing problems we have, as well the important aspects in this moment. We need more tools and more arguments. For Colombia, where we have even more problems nowadays, this is essential because we can exchange perspectives with people from different countries who have similar problems. With this information, we can transform our conditions and enrich our work.”

Ángela Nocua

Education Specialist, Colombia



#FacesOfLeadership

Douglas Leung

“If a third of the inhabitants of my country, Mexico, are students, influencing one in three citizens is really transforming a nation, in its present and in its future. For several years, my line of research has been skewed towards early childhood education, because I am sure that what happens in the first 1000 days of life is won or lost forever: “All motor, cognitive, socio-emotional, sensory skills are gestated at this stage of life”.

I have focused on early childhood education, since my main interlocutors are the citizens (parents) who believe in education results based on the experience of their own children and begin to demand a better education for them at higher levels.

In brief, my biggest challenge has been to fight for quality education from the best niche I have found, to face the adversity of those who do not believe in academic excellence.”

Rafael Freyre-Martinez

Senior Adviser to the Mexican Ministry of Education; Technical Advisor, National Commission for the Continuous Improvement of Education, Mexico

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