Changing dynamics in the governance of education: A comparative analysis of emerging issues and reforms in emerging countries

This is a preliminary version, not for quotation

UNESCO Education Sector
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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

BRICS  Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CABE  Central Advisory Board of Education (India)
CEE  Central East European
CEL  Compulsory Education Law (China)
CIS  Commonwealth of Independent States
CNEF  National Education and Training Charter (Morocco)
CPEM  Comprehensive Projects of Education Modernization (Russia)
D. R. Congo  Democratic Republic of Congo
EEPCT  Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition
EFA  Education for All (UNESCO)
EMIS  Education Management Information System
EU  European Union
GDP  Gross domestic product
GPA  Grade point average
GPE  Global Partnership for Education (World Bank)
GRP  Gross regional product
HDI  Human Development Index (UN)
ICT  Information and communication technology
IDEB  Basic Education Development Index (Brazil)
IEA  International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IIEP  International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO)
INDIRE  National Documentation Institute for Educational Innovation and Research (Italy)
INEP  National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Brazil)
INVALSI  National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System (Italy)
IRRE  Regional Institutes for Educational Research (Italy)
MDG  Millennium Development Goal (UN)
MoE  Ministry of Education
MoES  Ministry of Education and Science
NGO  Non-governmental organization
OECD  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSF  Open Society Foundations
OSI  Open Society Institute
PIRLS  Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA  Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP  Public–private partnership
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<td>PRI</td>
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<td>Systems Approach for Better Education Results (World Bank)</td>
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<td>South African Schools Act</td>
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<td>SBM</td>
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<td>SMC</td>
<td>School Management Committee (India)</td>
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<td>SSAC</td>
<td>State Commission for Student Admission (Azerbaijan)</td>
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<td>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study</td>
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<td>UN</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>USE</td>
<td>Unified State Examination (Russia)</td>
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<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational education and training</td>
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CHAPTER 1. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

As in many other policy domains, governance is nowadays one of the key issues in the education sector internationally. A number of factors have contributed to this, including an ever-increasing number of stakeholders, the impact of globalisation and the influence of new paradigms in policy making and public management. If the governance of complex systems is already very high in the policy agenda in developed countries, there is even more interest in this issue in developing countries, where the complexity of the education sector tends to be higher for a number of reasons, ranging from the actual capacity of governments to an even wider landscape of policy actors than those usually to be found in developed countries, including international organisations and donors whose influence seems to be growing.

Against this context, UNESCO is launching this comparative analysis of emerging governance issues in the education sector and the resulting reforms and policy alternatives that are being explored by some Member States, sometimes in quite innovative ways. The main aim of this analysis is to contribute to the global debates about education governance while providing opportunities for peer-learning and international exchanges, evidence-based advice and a set of policy recommendations to Member States. All in all, this state-of-the-art comparative review of governance issues and reforms in education is intended to assist Member States in their making of strategic choices for increased effective governance arrangements in their respective contexts, particularly in developing countries. This review takes thus the form of a comparative analysis intended to find out how countries are currently reforming their governance systems and mechanisms in the education sector.

In so doing this review aims to contribute to three key functions of UNESCO, namely, 1) laboratory of ideas: anticipating and responding to emerging trends and needs in education, and developing education policies based on research and country priorities; 2) clearing house: promoting the development, implementation and dissemination of successful educational policies and practices; and 3) capacity development: through strengthening various levels of capacities of Member States to plan and manage education systems in view of achieving their national education goals (UNESCO, 2013).

Taking into account the paramount differences in approaches to governance across regions, this comparative analysis draws on a series of regional policy reviews with a shared analytical framework that addresses a common set of research questions. This framework defines first the key concept of governance in the education sector. Second, it reviews existing research and then makes the case for this comparative analysis. Third, it presents the research questions to be addressed in the regional policy reviews, with a focus on the identification of the factors that increase the complexity of governance in developing contexts. Finally, it provides an overview of the methodological approach, its advantages and also possible limitations.
Exploring the concept of governance

1. Conceptual framework

Although intuitively governance is usually identified with the mechanisms that governments use to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate their public policies, the interactions with other political actors in so doing and the resulting dynamics, the fact is that it is a very elusive, if not ambiguous, concept. Taking this into account, this section reviews first the most commonly used definitions of governance and introduces the perspective used in this analysis, which equates governance with a shift in public organization and public action from hierarchic bureaucracies, where governance was the sole action of government, to markets and networks, thus creating new arenas for policy development. The section discusses then the dimensions and implications of this paradigm shift for the education sector, paving the way for the research questions addressed later in this report.

1.1. The elusiveness of the concept of governance

There is a wealth of definitions of governance, which is in itself an indication of the elusiveness of the concept. Governance has been defined as “the manner in which something is governed or regulated; method of management, system of regulations” (Oxford English Dictionary). But beyond this generic approach, there seems to be no widely accepted definition internationally (Bevir & Hall, 2011) (Holmberg et al., 2009). Reviews of literature generally conclude that the term “governance” is used in a variety of ways and has a variety of meanings (Rhodes. 1996: Stoker, 1997).

Certainly, the way in which different international organisations (namely the OECD, UNDP and the World Bank) have defined the concept of governance still puts forward the idea that governance is what governments do and, implicitly, that their activity could be improved if became more effective. To begin with, the OECD defines governance as: “the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority necessary to manage a nation’s affairs.” (Ref: OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms –Governance Definition, 2007). The OECD been operationalized this definition to measure effective governance1.

UNDP in its turn defines governance as “the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels. It’s a neutral concept comprising the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions

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1 See below the contraposition between effective and good governance.
through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences.”

Finally, one of the most cited definitions of governance is the World Bank’s which presents it as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (World Bank, 1992). However, the ever-increasing expectations about good governance have contributed to twist this definition as to include a major reference to common good: the World Bank has defined governance more recently as “the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good” (World Bank, 2011). Moreover, it can be seen as “the rule of the rulers, typically within a given set of rules. One might conclude that governance is the process – by which authority is conferred on rulers, by which they make the rules, and by which those rules are enforced and modified. Thus, understanding governance requires an identification of both the rulers and the rules, as well as the various processes by which they are selected, defined, and linked together and with the society generally.”

Broadly speaking, thus, governance refers to all processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market, or network; whether over a family, tribe, corporation, or territory; and whether by laws, norms, power, or language. In this respect, governance is a broader term than government because it focuses not only on the state and its institutions but also on the creation of rule and order in social practices (Bevir, 2013). Different scholarly communities use the term “governance” to address issues across fields such as development studies, economics, geography, international relations, planning, political science, public administration, and sociology. For instance, social theorists refer to “governance” to frame and conceptualize analyses of social coordination and organization. Changes in patterns of governance across corporate, public, and global affairs have also been widely studied by social scientists.

From a policy perspective the surging interest worldwide on governance it is more than a vogue, but rather an indication that the way in which governments have exerted their action of governing is, if not challenged, at least evolving towards increasing complexity -even if hierarchy remains the most common form of public organization. Therefore, from this perspective governance is less about what a government does and more about how policies are formulated, implemented and evaluated in the context of the interplay of a multiplicity of stakeholders –including also governments. It involves thus a paradigm shift in the action of governments, which is particularly challenging in the context of developing countries. In line with this, the following paragraphs describe more in detail such a paradigm shift.


1.2. The old paradigm: governance as the action of government

The traditional use of the term “governance” and its dictionary entry define it as a synonym for government. In fact, political theory refers the term “government” to the formal institutions of the state and their monopoly of legitimate coercive power. Government therefore is characterized by its ability to make decisions and its capacity to enforce them, which is the act of governing. In particular, government is understood to refer to the formal and institutional processes that operate at the level of the nation state to maintain public order and facilitate collective action.

The academic literature on governance is rather eclectic (Jessop, 1995) (Bevir, 2013). Its roots can be traced to institutional economics, international relations, organizational studies, development studies, political science, public administration and Foucauldian-inspired theorists. Its precursors would include work on corporatism, policy communities and a range of economic analysis concerned with the evolution of economic systems. It is in this vein that Fukuyama (2013) has openly equated governance with what governments do, or are expected to do. Same applies to the usual definition of governance adopted by diverse international organisations.

Under this paradigm of governance, there is a growing emphasis devoted to *good* governance, which is different from *effective* governance being the latter the one that matters most for this analysis.

*Good* governance refers broadly to a set of qualitative characteristics relating to processes of rulemaking and their institutional foundations. According to the World Bank, a central element of good governance is the responsiveness of policies and public institutions to the needs of all citizens. Policies and institutions must represent the interests of women and men and promote equal access to resources, rights and voice. Good governance stresses on participation, decentralisation, accountability and governmental responsiveness as important dimensions along with social equity and justice. It is therefore meant to embody values such as enhanced participation, transparency, or accountability. It also helps to combat corruption and secure both basic human rights and the rule of law. Such values are often associated with Western liberal democratic political institutions, but are now increasingly sought within existing national institutions in diverse political contexts (Overseas Development Institute, 2013). The fact is, however, that good governance has become a controversial term because of its usage in the realm of international development assistance (Best, 2014) as developing countries are concerned about the use of good governance targets and indicators as a form of aid conditionality.

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On the other hand, *effective* governance is focused on the capacity of institutions to resolve problems of public policy and implement effective rules. These are challenges shared by countries at every point of the development spectrum. Discussions on this issue have so far been limited to issues of “means of implementation” or rule of law. Integration of effective governance needs to go beyond these discussions: official development assistance, technology transfer, and well-functioning issue-specific institutions are all crucial in effective governance. Moreover, greater focus on capacity building, foresight and long-term planning are necessary to deal with the vast range of public policy problems faced by all countries. In contrast to the multiple indicators of good governance, there is still “no universally accepted measure of state administrative and legal capabilities” (Hulme, 2010).

1.3. A paradigm shift in governance

Yet, in the growing academic work on governance there is a redirection of its definition. Rather than government, governance signifies “a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing: or a changed condition of ordered rule: or the new method by which society is governed” (Rhodes, 1996, pp. 652-3). Too many things for just one word—a situation which, in fact, reflects the shift from the emphasis from government to governance. What is interesting is how governance is used in a range of settings in an attempt to capture a shift in thinking and ways of working.

Clearly, there is nowadays a baseline agreement among political analysts that governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred. The essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government. “The governance concept points to the creation of a structure or an order which cannot be externally imposed but is the result of the interaction of a multiplicity of governing and each other influencing actors” (Kooiman, 2003).

Indeed, governments have experienced a vast array of reforms associated with marketization, contracting out, new management fads, joining up, and partnerships. As a result, present-day governance increasingly involves private- and voluntary-sector organizations working alongside public ones. Complex packages of organizations deliver most public services today. The resulting fragmentation means that the state increasingly depends on other organizations to implement its policies and secure its intentions. Further, the state has swapped direct for indirect controls. Central departments are no longer invariably the fulcrums of policy networks. The state sometimes may set limits to network actions, but it has increased its dependence on other actors. State power is dispersed among spatially and functionally distinct networks (Weller, Rhodes, & Bakvis, 1997).

While the term government refers to a very specific state-centered mode of social and political organization, governance is defined as a multitude of formal or informal steering and coordination mechanisms to make demands, frame goals, issue directives, pursue policies and generate compliance whether by public or private actors (Benz, Lutz, Schimank, & Simonis, 2007). Under this new paradigm, governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs of governance are not therefore different from those of government. It is rather a matter of a difference in processes. Governance is thus associated not just with greater sensitivity to networks as a type of social
organization but also to the spread of networks in a new politics, partly as a result of neoliberal reforms of the public sector (Stoker, 1998).

For the purposes of this analysis, a narrower view of governance is taken whose value rests in its capacity to provide a framework for understanding changing processes of governing. The common ground is that governance concerns the use of power: the effectiveness of rules, policies and the functioning of public bodies that affect the lives of the members of a community, be that in education or in any other sphere of public policy. Therefore, the term governance goes beyond the traditional notion of political steering as hierarchical state regulation by command and control, which is generally associated with government. In response to the changing nature of real world politics the debate on governance mirrors the emergence of an enriched set of actors and policymaking levels which are involved in the political process. As an analytical concept it thus refers to processes of de-nationalization along two different axes of change: from public to private on the one hand, and from national to multilevel governing on the other (Leibfried & Zürn, 2005). In the public-private dimension of change it involves regulatory agencies with new constellations of actors. The interplay among these often implies a delegation of function formerly executed by the state to non-state providers or semi-private bodies (Schuppert, 2006). The new cooperative or enabling role of the state along this public-private axis of change has been referred to as de-hierarchization of the relations between state and society (Scharpf, 1991). The territorial dimension of change, i.e. the emergence of multilevel governance, has become most prominent, for instance, in the context of European politics in the shift of competencies from the national to the European or sub-national levels (Bache & Flinders, 2005).

1.4. Governance in the development context

From an analytical perspective, approaches to governance in the development context have fitted a multiplicity of dimensions: from the type and quality of political institutions, to the set of economic institutions and policies. For instance, the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank, 2012) make reference to six elements of governance: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, control of corruption. In particular, political democracy is often considered as part of good governance (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2010).

Theories of development disagree on which and how many dimensions of governance are crucial to prosperity. The type of governance that promotes it may vary according to the proposed mechanisms through which institutions and policies affect development outcomes: some emphasise the protection of property rights (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012) (Tabellini, 2005); others point to the role of the state involvement in overcoming coordination failures (Bardhan, 2005); or of protecting specific economic sectors, supporting technological innovation, providing infrastructure and engaging in human capital formation (Evans, 1995). Consequently, the concept of governance must be mapped according to the functions one deems key to development.
2. Governance as an analytical perspective in education policy

For decades, public policies in education seemed to be designed to materialize the philosophy of the welfare state: the search for a stable equilibrium between redistributive interventionism and market freedom. Yet that weak equilibrium has been raising conflicts lately. Welfare policies were built as a logical response to demands that were presumed homogeneous and well defined, and were rigidly and bureaucratically managed under the assumption that education is, above all, a public good—as UNESCO, in its revisiting the Delors report, still considers it to be (UNESCO, 2015). Clearly, today’s scenarios show that the demands are not only multiple but also increasingly heterogeneous, and can only be addressed from less rigid and bureaucratic forms of management.

On the other hand, while education has traditionally been a prerogative of the modern nation state and denoted a core element of its sovereignty and autonomy, today it is shared with international organizations and market actors. Contemporary governance in education is accordingly spread around a large set of different actors, which changes their relationship to each other. This is where the concept of governance comes at hand as a paradigm shift that can both help to understand how the governing the education sector is changing and to find new, maybe promising, avenues for the interplay among very diverse stakeholders.

The concept of governance has been gaining ground as a new analytical perspective also in the study of education policies by emphasizing, in particular, the rise of new actors; the growing shift to multilevel political processes; and an ever-growing complex interplay between the private and the public sector. Such a governance perspective is also particularly useful in offering new insights into recent educational reforms.

As an analytical perspective, the reference to governance in education underlines questions that deal not merely with the outcomes of education but with the way education politics work. The search of the state for a new role in education, the consequences and the limits of denationalization -these and related trends of change raise new questions which can be easily addressed and subsumed under the umbrella of new modes of governance: a shift from a hierarchical mode of steering to various loci and ways of governance. In fact, once seriously examined, education turns out to be a particularly enlightening field of observation in which many general patterns of policy changes, the conditions under which they take place, and the problems raised by them, can be analyzed in many ways.

While the political goals to enable or pursue the education of citizens are still inherent in countries all over the world, and all the more in times of worldwide debates on lifelong learning (Jakobi, 2009; Jakobi & Martens, 2007), education for all or the 2030 agenda (UNESCO, 2015), the provision of education increasingly differs, standards of education might be ensured by semiprivate or private bodies, or the funding of educational institutions relies on private investments. As a result, business models built on educational provision, international processes that enhance convergence of national education policy systems, such as the Bologna Process, the Lisbon agenda, the UNESCO Global Convention on Higher Education, or the definition of education as a service sector, can be observed worldwide.
In education, as in other sectors, discussions concerning governance originally draw on neo institutional theories, such as agency theory or stakeholder theory. These approaches focused on an optimal design of governance mechanisms to enhance performance and its exchange especially in a corporate context (corporate governance) in the private sector. However, it is clear that, for a number of reasons, the pure corporate approach is not applicable as it is to education, although it has to be acknowledged that the theoretical impetus from the New Public Management has been an important rationale for the transformation of several school systems in the last decade. These often include a standards-based reform with high-stakes testing and school choice policies that imply more competition among schools in a context of devolution and school-based management.

Therefore, education is, when it comes to governance, a difficult sector. When discussing educational governance mechanisms, complexity emerges soon and what proves to be valid in other fields, may not work well in education. For example, research on public management shows that employees in the public sector have a high degree of intrinsic motivation. Initial empirical studies corroborate the hypothesis of a crowding-out effect of intrinsic motivation in the public sector when introducing extrinsic incentives such as rewards or certain control mechanisms (Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma, 2010) (Anderführen-Biget, Varone, Giauque, & Ritz, 2010) (Stazyk, 2012). Yet these findings on the crowding-out effect and the characteristics and motivation of the teaching profession suggest that extrinsic incentives, such as particular control mechanisms or performance-oriented reward systems, can only be used in the education sector with caution.

While overall the concept of governance and its political dimensions can be easily applied to the analysis of the education sector, there is another outstanding specificity: the social nature of education that adds yet another layer of complexity –that of social participation. As already stated in the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report: “Education governance is not simply the system of administration and management of education in a country. In its broadest sense, it is concerned with the formal and informal processes by which policies are formulated, priorities identified, resources allocated, and reforms implemented and monitored. Governance is an issue not only for central government but also for every level of the system, from the education ministry down to the classroom and community. It is ultimately concerned with the distribution of power in decision-making at all levels.” (EFA GMR 2009: 129).
3. Existing research and knowledge gaps

As a research subject, the study of governance in education has long been a ‘neglected field’ for political scientists (Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2011) (Agostini, 2012). This is not to say that educational sociology, the comparative education sciences or the economics of education haven’t done a lot to analyze in particular issues of governance in the education sector (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007). Rather, what is missing is an equivalent patrimony of comparative public policy analyses dealing with governance in education to the one that other sectors have cumulated over the past decades. In sum, the kind of studies on processes of policy change prevalent in comparative welfare state and social policy research (Pierson, 2001) are lacking so far in the area of education governance.

This is why there seems to be a trend to reduce the multidimensional complexity of governance in education only to a few, and consequently more manageable, elements such as decentralization and school-based management or, on the other hand, public-private partnerships or the internationalisation of education policy (Jakobi, 2009). In addition, it is worth mentioning that the higher education subsector has been so far the one receiving more attention –although this is due to the fact that usually governance in that subsector refers solely to how individual higher education institutions are governed.

3.1. Ongoing research-based discussions

In education often times the discussion about governance has been simply reduced to the need to promote *decentralization*. This has resulted in most debates focused on school-based management and the best ways to address the capacity development needs arising from such a trend to increase the autonomy of schools, or higher education institutions, with many research efforts focused in assessing the impact of policies on the governance of and distribution of power within educational institutions and at system level as well (Enders, 2004).

The theme of decentralisation and school-based management has also attracted most of the research done so far under the heading of governance in education in developing countries. As an example, IIEP focused its research on governance on three main issues: the challenges faced by schools, the partnership between schools and communities, and the use and usefulness of school grants. The research also includes a thorough analysis of key challenges and issues, as well as advantages and drawbacks of decentralization as the major governance reform and lays out key principles for implementing governance reform.\(^5\)

In addition, governance has been frequently associated also with *Private Public Partnerships* (PPP). It is often assumed that public-private partnerships may lead to improving the quality and relevance of an education system or increasing funding possibilities in order to allow the

government to offer a better educational system. However, very few governments are sufficiently equipped to collaborate with the private sector in a win-win scenario. IIEP research intends to reduce the knowledge gap in this area through contributing to the ongoing debate and providing technical support to government in designing policies and regulatory frameworks6.

Various governance reforms carried out so far in higher education spearhead the drive for change; innovations in higher education financing being an appropriate example. Long-standing research by the World Bank explored various aspects of formula funding mechanisms for higher education and examines to what extent it allows for the realization of different types of policy objectives to promote: access, equity, external and internal effectiveness, and quality. When formula funding is focused on output, outstanding performance of universities is rewarded, thus creating incentives for further enhancement of the higher education system. To increase access and equity, an input-based formula funding mechanism will be envisaged. To promote external effectiveness, priority-based funding formulas could be applied, while promoting quality would require block funding for research.

Similarly, the OECD explored various typologies of higher education governance, including a classification of major governance arrangements in the OECD contexts. Defining governance arrangements provide an opportunity to clarify a level/balance of autonomy, accountability, power distributions and structures for institutions7.

Going beyond this emphasis on decentralisation, public-private partnerships and the govern of higher education institutions, only very recently there have been some attempts to adopt a comprehensive approach to the analysis of governance in education, one in developing countries by the GMR and another one, still in process, by CERI.

The 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report focused on an equity dimension and governance, under the title of “Overcoming inequality: why governance matters”. The key message was that while governance reform has been positive in some countries, overall outcomes have been rather disappointing. The report identified that governance reforms often do not consider their ultimate impact on the most disadvantaged population and regions. It explored four central themes in national governance, namely: 1) financing, 2) voice participation and choice; 3) governance of teachers and monitoring of learning; and 4) integration of EFA and poverty reduction strategies. The report also identified a close linkage between aid effectiveness and governance reforms (EFA GMR 2009). But since then there have been no more attempts to address governance issues from a comparative perspective in developing countries.

When it comes to OECD countries, CERI is currently exploring which governance mechanisms and knowledge options could facilitate effective steering of complex education systems, under the project entitled ‘Governing Complex Education Systems (GCES)”8. As

7 http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/46064461.pdf
8 http://www.oecd.org/edu/geri/governingcomplexeducationsystems.htm
stakeholders in education in OECD countries have become more diverse, informed and demanding partially due to increased school autonomy and stimulated competition, the national authorities need to respond to an ever-growing complexity in education systems. The research aims to examine how national policies could ensure quality, effective and innovative education systems in such demanding environments.

3.2. The pending agenda

From an academic perspective, there are three basic questions that drive nowadays the governance research agenda in the education sector: First, in terms of systematic description, this debate deals with nothing less than the future political role of the nation state. Much attention has been dedicated, for instance, to the issue of how the state should behave under the current wave of internationalization in terms of decreasing public budgets compared to ever-growing agendas (Zürn, 1998). The descriptive categories which have been developed to capture the process of political reorganization still have to be filled with more and broader empirical evidence in order to make strong and generalizable statements about the future shape and role of the state in the context of governance by, with or without government. Does the emergence of new modes of governance mean a general weakening of the state? Is it indicative of a retreat or even the end of the nation state (Ohmae, 1995; Strange, 2006)? Or are the current trends towards de-nationalization only indicative of a transformation rather than a weakening of statehood (Hurrelmann, Leibfried, Martens, & Mayer, 2007).

Second, the causal relationships which trigger the emergence of new modes of governance and the transformation of the state are of interest. Against this context, competing theoretical approaches offer different explanations (Graz & Nolke, 2008). Is there an underlying functional logic at work, triggered by the conditions of economic and political globalization? Or can the analysis of the strategic interests of powerful actors provide a more adequate account? From a benevolent point of view, the emerging new modes of governance, characterized by the inclusion of new actors, by institutional reforms, and new interaction patterns, may be assessed as some kind of state strategy to react more effectively amid the surrounding changes. Eventually, both perspectives may be usefully applied, or may even have to be supplemented by a view that highlights the incremental nature of individual processes of change and transition without exhibiting such a thing as a masterplan or any general patterns of change.

Finally, from a normative perspective, the effects of the nearly emerging modes of governance are investigated and evaluated. Unlike its previous preoccupation with evaluative standards which focus on the effectiveness dimension of governance, normative questions address the legitimacy of new modes of governance and progressively gain more attention in the governance research agenda (Benz & Papadopoulos, 2006).

Two key messages emerge from this succinct review. First, even in developed countries research about governance in education is still needed. Second, in developing countries research on governance in education has failed to cover so far the multi-dimensional nature of the concept and, more importantly for this analysis, there is still a need to identify what makes governance even more complex in developing contexts.
4. Research questions and methodological approach

Considering the state of the art, this comparative analysis aims to address these knowledge gaps by carrying out first a series of regional reviews on the broad topic of emerging governance issues and reforms in education. To facilitate the inter-regional comparison and the elucidation of key policy lessons and recommendations, this section presents the overarching research questions that guide the regional reviews and elaborates on some of the issues that are covered.

To facilitate the global comparison, the regional reviews focus only on one particular educational level: general secondary education. Such a choice has been made considering the new emphasis added by the 2030 Education Agenda, the Framework for Action, and the subsequent strategic role that this particular level is expected to play in the developing countries in the coming years.

4.1. Research questions

Five common research questions guide the regional reviews. Overall, they are intended to provide an overview of the most salient governance issues at stake in each region and the policy alternatives, eventually leading to reforms, that have emerged as alternative responses. The research questions are:

1. What are the main governance models (typology) that have been put in practice in the region over the past decade? The resulting typology has to consider the following elements:
   a. Regulatory mechanisms.
   b. Leadership, participation and voice mechanisms, inclusiveness, ownership and accountability during the policy formulation and adoption processes.
   c. Distribution of power and responsibilities, funding, main actors, their categories, and dynamics among them for policy implementation.
   d. Accountability.

2. What are the most salient governance issues that have emerged during the past decade in the region? Consider, among others, the following:
   a. Multiplication of stakeholders and providers
   b. Influence of international or regional players
   c. Marketisation and/or privatisation
   d. Lack of government capacity
3. What have been the major policy initiatives or governance reforms in education over the past decade to address these emerging issues?

4. Are there indications of the stability of the current governance models, or rather the contrary, in the region? In other words, how well are the existing governance models adapted to the emerging needs of the education sector?

5. Based on the regional review, what policy recommendations could be suggested?

4.2. Methodological approach

This analysis has been carried out in two phases, notably: 1) analytical phase and 2) synthesis phase. The analytical phase aimed to identify key challenges in governance and alternative policy responses and it was completed through the following activities: collecting documentations and education datasets for review, gathering data on countries’ policies and practices through the regional reviews, and desk review on secondary sources of information and documentation, analysis based on statistical data and central policy documents.

Based on the analytical phase, the synthesis phase analysed, compared, and explored policy options and good practices across countries, through blending analytic and regional review evidence. It aimed at providing overall policy lessons and potential recommendations. Modalities employed were: peer review process to analyse and compare regional reviews, exploring policy options, resulting from the regional reviews, research validation and dissemination of the results and sharing experience and knowledge, and drafting policy recommendations.

In order to effectively demonstrate typologies of governance in different contexts, the following groupings are suggested for the regional reviews. These groupings are essentially based on either similar or comparable contexts or, as in the case of BRICS, a similar stage of newly advanced economic development, as capacities to implement governance reform largely depend on a scale of economic, social and political development.

It is noted that the reviews will take an exploratory approach, given the innovative nature of the groupings, leading to the development of a formal hypothesis. Although not exhaustive, the following table lists the main features for each grouping. These are expected to serve as starting points for the regional reviews.
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Chapter 2. Regional reviews

As in many other policy domains, governance is currently one of the key issues in the education sector internationally. A number of factors have contributed to this, including an ever-increasing number of stakeholders, the impact of globalization, and the influence of new paradigms in policy-making and public management. If education governance is already very high on the policy agenda in developed countries, there is even more interest in this issue in developing countries, where the education sector tends to be more complex for a number of reasons, ranging from the limited capacity of governments to a more diverse array of policy actors than those usually found in developed countries, including international organizations and donors whose influence seems to be growing.

In order to effectively demonstrate typologies of governance in different contexts, the following groupings were selected for the regional reviews, based on similar or comparable contexts.

1. **The Mediterranean:** This region includes countries north and south of the Mediterranean that are experiencing periods of transition and economic crisis, including several ‘Arab Spring’ countries.

2. **The BRICS countries:** The BRICS countries are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. They are all emerging economies at a similar stage of newly advanced economic development.

3. **The fragile states of sub-Saharan Africa:** These are countries with a weak capacity to carry out basic governance functions due to long periods of war, civil unrest and political instability. They are more vulnerable to internal and external shocks such as economic crises and natural disasters.

4. **East Asia:** These countries are characterized by solid public policies led by the national authorities and a prominent system of private supplementary tutoring, or shadow education.

5. **The South Caucasus:** These are former Soviet countries grappling with a legacy of central planning and undergoing structural reorganization of the education sector following independence from the USSR.
Education governance in the Mediterranean

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Introduction

This review summarizes the main trends in education governance observed over the past decade in the Mediterranean region, specifically focusing on Algeria, Egypt, Italy, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia. Education systems in these countries have been affected by strong pressure to increase efficiency, quality and results. Attempts at education governance reform have focused mainly on implementing decentralization policies and improving educational accountability. This has been accompanied by the emergence of a lucrative private education sector, mainly seen through private schools in Southern Europe and through an opaque market of private tutoring in Northern Africa. In the Northern Africa countries, emphasis has also been placed on reducing educational inequalities in the wake of mass social unrest. In both Northern Africa and Southern Europe, new models of school governance have proven relatively unstable and difficult to implement fully, due to political upheavals and changing social and political movements. This review will discuss emerging trends in education governance reform in the region, and make policy recommendations for building on and improving those reforms.

Background and regional context

This review focuses on two regions: the countries south of the Mediterranean, or Northern Africa; and the countries north of the Mediterranean, or Southern Europe. Both regions have been affected by major socio-economic challenges over the past decade. In the uncertain global economic environment following the financial crisis of 2008, the two regions have been seeking their place in a globalized world and are facing the challenge of providing younger generations with appropriate education, skills and employment prospects. The countries selected for this review – Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in Northern Africa; and Italy and Spain in Southern Europe – have all experienced profound political and socio-economic changes during the past decade that have and will continue to have an impact on the governance of the educational system. Taken as a group, these countries represent the diversity of educational governance in the region.

In Northern Africa, debates about education governance have been sparked by low levels of educational access and the poor quality of student learning. Unlike other regions in the global south, education in Northern Africa does not suffer from public underfunding. The Northern African countries devote on average about one-fifth of total public spending to education, and Morocco and Tunisia spend even more (Bouhlila, 2011). The problem of quality does not, therefore, come from a lack of public resources for education, but rather from the inefficient allocation of those resources, which can be observed at all levels of education. The problem has been exacerbated by the recent push for increased educational access and universal primary education, which places even more pressure on the education system to use resources effectively.
At the secondary school level, Northern African countries have been overwhelmed by the sheer scope of issues that need addressing: regulating private schools and tutoring, channelling and distributing staff in the different sections, school dropout, employability of those excluded from secondary school, and limited success rates in secondary school final exams. Growing regional inequalities limit states’ capacities to ensure better school governance despite some attempts to allocate more resources to disadvantaged schools and regions. The crisis of education quality is further compounded by extremely high youth populations. Young people under 30 have long been the dominant demographic element in the region, with 30% of the total population aged under 15 years (Joffé, 2011). The role of young people in the recent ‘Arab Spring’ revolutions – accelerated by education and new social media – has been undeniable, particularly in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Indeed, in many regards, the enthusiasm, dynamism and organizational capacity of young people sustained the revolutionary processes in the region. In order to meet the education and employment demands of their youth populations, governments Northern Africa must review their policies on education and training.

In Southern Europe, education governance has been influenced by the European Union as well as major national education reforms carried out in the last decade. Most notably, the particular nature of the Mediterranean welfare states is undergoing a transformation. Debates about education governance reflect a fundamental change in perspective on the current concept of the state, and a redefinition of its roles and responsibilities. In Spain, for example, defenders of the neoliberal approach to education criticize the apparent inability of the government to provide quality public services (Olmedo, 2013). In Italy, the critiques focus on the size or inefficiency of the central state and the lack of autonomy granted to the regions.

In both regions, the issue of education quality has received more attention in the past decade due to recent international comparative studies that have highlighted the problem. Among countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa, until 1996 only Iran participated in a number of international evaluations. By 2003, 11 of the region’s countries participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and in 2007 the number of participating countries rose to 16. International comparative measures have also signalled weaknesses in the school systems of Southern Europe. The 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, which assessed the literacy, mathematics and science skills of 15-year-old students at the end of compulsory schooling, showed that students in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy performed consistently below average in all three competencies. With the new availability of indicators measuring quality, awareness of the issue has increased, and sector specialists have stressed the urgency of addressing education quality deficits.

**Analysis and emerging trends**

**Decentralization**

In all of the countries examined, education reform is most often seen through new laws and the establishment of new administrative structures that favour decentralization. The following sections discuss the peculiarities of decentralization efforts in both Northern Africa and Southern Europe.
Education decentralization in Northern Africa

In Northern Africa, education systems have tended to be governed by a centralized state that practices top-down policy formation and implementation. The state’s power over education is significant insofar as education is primarily funded by the state, most institutions are public, teachers are civil servants and the curricula are set by the government (Rugh, 2002). Nonetheless, the past decade has seen a gradual shift towards decentralization. While regulatory mechanisms remain highly centralized in Algeria, an administrative deconcentration process has been established in Egypt and Morocco – and to a lesser extent in Tunisia – involving reform of the steering, administration and funding of education.

In Morocco, for example, the adoption and implementation of the National Education and Training Charter (CNEF) comprehensively and profoundly reformed the sector in terms of organization, structures and educational content as well as administration, management and steering. Validated in 1999 through broad national consensus, the CNEF is a framework for the development of the education system. It defines the basis and aims of the education system, the rights and duties of individuals and communities, and the objectives and a precise timeline for development prospects, as well as an array of measures to achieve all this. It established a decade of education and training (2000–09) and triggered real momentum for change and mobilization of all of the country’s key players in the field of education.

Morocco’s CNEF is based on three main objectives: 1) providing universal basic education for all children aged 6–15 years; 2) improving the quality of teaching, training and performance; and (3) improving governance of the education system and its overall coherence (El Mostafa, 2007). Decentralization and deconcentration of services are at the heart of the reforms recommended by CNEF. Measures to achieve more effective local management that is as responsive as possible to citizens’ and communities’ needs include creating regional education and training academies with independent decision-making and management powers; establishing school management committees that encourage community participation; devolving human resources management to the regional level; and introducing planning at the individual school level (El Mostafa, 2007). This new method of educational management, although of recent date, has created a dynamic of transparency, participation and mobilization around schools, encouraging initiatives and efforts to find appropriate solutions for local education problems. Its positive effects can be seen in improvements to learning conditions, attributable to multifaceted support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other regional and local partners of the education and training system, largely focusing on disadvantaged areas and groups. NGOs, civil society associations and the teaching profession also participate in some of the work of government through guidance, policy-making and operational responsibilities. They are involved in monitoring and evaluation, call decision-makers to account for policy and management issues, and put forward proposals for improving the sector (El Mostafa, 2007).

In Egypt, a 2003 ministerial decree extended the legal basis of the decentralization of education by adding six more governorates to the 2001 protocol, which concerned only the governorate of Alexandria. Moreover, the administrative system in the governorates was strengthened by the appointment of an under-secretary for education in each governorate (Ginsburg et al., 2010).
On a smaller scale, the establishment of school councils in Egypt in 2005 was an important milestone in the reform of school governance. Although some form of these councils date back to 1993, in 2005 they were given new responsibilities such as budget allocation. According to a 2006 ministerial decree, each council has 15 members, including the head teacher (or principal), five parents, five members of the community, three teachers and a social worker. The decree stipulates that decisions should be made by majority vote, with the head teacher retaining the ultimate authority to approve decisions (Hammad, 2010). The ability to allocate budget resources empowers the school councils to implement decisions based on the particular context and needs of the school.

Northern African governments have yielded part of the control held over education since independence, but they are reluctant to engage in the full regionalization of education governance. Local authorities seem to have new responsibilities in the education sector, but they do not always have sufficient funding, capacity and skills to fulfil them. In Morocco, for example, the text of the CNEF calls for an increasing role for local authorities in the management and funding of the education system, but the division of power between the state and local authorities in the system is unclear, and confusion over the distribution of political and financial responsibilities serves only to perpetuate a number of system dysfunctions. Article 171 of the CNEF, for example, refers to local authorities as partners of schools and expects them, to the extent possible, to support pre-school education, provide appropriate facilities for the generalization of primary school, and construct new school buildings and maintain their equipment and upkeep. In practice, however, local officials do not fully assume that role for two reasons: 1) local authorities often lack the budget to assume the responsibilities and the state does not give them the necessary financial support, and 2) local authorities have neither experience nor expertise in the management of pre-school education and receive no training in that field. Hence despite Morocco’s decentralization efforts, the fruits of this approach are slow to materialize.

Furthermore, while there is no question that new administrative structures are a necessary condition for the emergence of new models of governance, compliance at a local level depends on the resources available as well as the historical context and political climate surrounding the reforms. In Egypt, for example, research has highlighted the scepticism of school staff with regard to the real willingness of the authorities to decentralize education. The head teacher is generally perceived as a conveyor of decisions that come from above. Literature suggests the existence of certain cultural norms developed in the Egyptian education system through a long history of centralized control. This mindset leaves important decisions to those who have top positions in the hierarchy of the school administration. The culture of school governance is characterized by hesitation, lack of confidence, excessive focus on the implementation of administrative rules, the rejection of innovative ideas and satisfaction with the status quo (Hammad, 2010).

A similar pattern can be seen in Morocco, where despite major reforms, the impact of decentralized, devolved management of the education and training system has been overshadowed by the shortcomings that still affect this form of management. Issues include the slow pace at which powers are being transferred from central to regional administrations; the concentration of power within regional academies, which delegate little decision-making responsibility to provincial administrations and individual schools; the overcautiousness of local authorities when it comes to participating actively in reforms; the unsatisfactory functioning of school management committees, which have proved rather difficult to
establish; and the inadequacy of planning and management capabilities at the regional and local levels (El Mostafa, 2007). The literature consulted shows that Morocco is among the countries of Northern Africa with the most structures and mechanisms to improve school governance, yet in comparison with Tunisia and Algeria, which do not have comparable mechanisms, the performance of Moroccan secondary schools are poorer in terms of pupil access, completion and achievement rates. It is therefore important to highlight that governance reforms are unlikely, on their own, to improve the performance of an education system if no credible strategy is in place for implementing the reform.

Education decentralization in Southern Europe

In Southern Europe, the state establishes the organization and curricula of schools, the general organization of education and the legal status of school staff, thereby maintaining control over the general functions and policies of the education system. Yet the traditional state monopoly on the management of the education system has been challenged by a new form of state where the central government is being reduced, and more power and responsibilities are being distributed among local authorities at the regional, provincial and municipal levels. School administration has been divided into central bodies, regional education offices and administrative service centres. The schools obtain a legal personality and, in principle, organizational, educational, managerial and administrative autonomy.

For example, since 1997 the Italian education system has undergone numerous attempts to restructure schooling according to neo-managerial and neoliberal mantras. Global competitiveness has been increasingly used as a justification for a project to modernize the education field, focusing on three pillars: 1) the transition from a centralized system towards greater autonomy and decentralization; 2) the constitution of education professionals as ‘managerial’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ subjects; and 3) the establishment of new evaluation machinery to measure the results of the education system (Grimaldi and Serpieri, 2013). In 1999 schools were afforded increased autonomy by presidential decree, which put the task of organizing teaching and learning activities into the hands of each educational institution – individual school, primary school teaching circle, or network of schools – which can take the form of specific projects designed, for example, to fully respond to the needs of families. Each establishment determines its own calendar and timetable within the bounds of a national framework with a range of minimum and maximum limits. Schools can set timetables and design projects to respond to the specific needs and preferences of families (Maccarini, 2004).

The Italian regions are entrusted with educational programming and providing professional training. The provinces and municipalities must promote the streamlining of the schools network and organizational structures, and manage pupil flows. Three national-level organizations – the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System (INVALSI), the National Documentation Institute for Educational Innovation and Research (INDIRE), and the Regional Institutes for Educational Research (IRRE) – operate in each region and provide not only research but also services such as continuing education courses for the professional development of teachers. Other key players include educational networks, local social and economic partners, associations (family or other) and private foundations.
Privatization and marketization

Varying degrees of decentralization in the Mediterranean region during the past decade have cleared a path for greater privatization and marketization of education. The emergence of a strong private sector in urban areas and widespread hidden private tutoring reflect a new distribution of power in education in the region. This trend manifests itself in different ways depending on the subregion. Private schools are more common in Southern Europe than in Northern African countries, and enjoy strong support from public authorities. In contrast, public funding of private schools is limited and often non-existent in Northern Africa, but the extent of private tutoring is much greater than in Southern Europe. The following sections discuss the particular character of privatization in both of the subregions under review.

Education privatization in Northern Africa

In the Northern African countries reviewed, the state has lost its monopoly as the sole provider of educational services in the region. In Morocco and Tunisia, for example, the private sector now provides the majority of educational services at the pre-school level. Along with pre-school, secondary education is the sector where privatization is most developed throughout the region. In Egypt, education privatization is longstanding, whereas in Morocco and Tunisia it is a relatively new phenomenon driven by the demand of families and the desire of some countries and international organizations to diversify local education provision. However, state support does not extend to direct funding.

Education is being commoditized in Northern Africa through the development of private tutoring, which affects all countries without exception, including Algeria where privatization is otherwise fairly limited. In some cases, the state’s strict control over the opening of new private schools in the region increases demand for private tutoring, as parents try to help their children achieve academic excellence in low-quality public schools. The development of private tutoring in the region seems to go hand in hand with the expansion of public secondary school enrolment and the corresponding decline in the quality of education provided. Private tutoring may also be driven by low teacher salaries. In Morocco, for instance, a survey showed that 70% of upper secondary school teachers said that they were unable to cover the entire curriculum during regular school hours and that they offered private tutoring (Bray, 1999). This could lead to the conclusion that teachers might intentionally neglect important topics on the school curriculum in order to supplement their income with private tutoring.

Of all the Northern African countries under review, Egypt has most extensive system of private education, which includes state-sanctioned and regulated schools and universities, as well as a vast unregulated realm of private tutoring, ranging from private lessons (durūs al-ḵuṣūṣyān) and guided study groups to tutoring centres where pupils are regarded as customers in an expanding market of educational services. Whether it takes place at home or in a study group or centre, private tutoring constitutes a veritable shadow education system in Egypt. Up to one-third of the household income of Egyptian families is spent on educational costs, the majority for private tutoring (Herrera, 2008). Many teachers do not wish to participate in the management of their schools because they are busy with their own private tutoring businesses (Hammad, 2010).
In Morocco, the private education sector is a state partner in the promotion of education services, and the Education Emergency Plan provides for the continuation of measures that encourage development in this area. Enrolment in private schools, at all levels, has more than doubled in the past 15 years, with an average increase of about 6% per year during the last decade. The vast majority (81%) of students enrolled in the private sector are in primary school; the remaining 19% are in secondary school (8% in lower secondary and 11% in upper secondary). However, the ambitious targets set for the private sector – to enrol 20% of primary and secondary pupils by 2010 – are far from being achieved, as private sector enrolment currently represents only 5% of all primary and secondary school students.

Education privatization in Northern Africa is characterized by geographic and socio-economic disparities. Private education services are accessed primarily by middle and upper class families, and those living in cities and economically advantaged coastal regions. In Morocco, for example, the private sector – financed by private funds and for the sole aim of making a profit – only meets the demands of a very limited number of exclusively urban wealthy families. These families have the financial means to send their children – who have not obtained places at the highly reputed schools established by the French missionaries or at the American and Spanish schools – to fee-paying schools reserved for the more affluent. In the Greater Casablanca area – the country’s largest economic centre – 53% of primary schools are private, and 80% of the country’s private schools are located on the Casablanca–Kenitra axis (TelQuel, 2014). Similarly, in Tunisia more than 87% of pupils in private education are concentrated in just seven governorates (out of 24 governorates in the country). The Greater Tunis area has the majority, with 65% of all private schoolchildren. Three coastal governorates (Nabeul, Sousse and Monastir) account for over 22% of private schoolchildren. Primary school private education is completely absent in three governorates (Jendouba, Siliana and Tataouine) in the interior of the country, which are significantly less affluent than the urban and coastal regions (Journal Echourouk, 2014).

**Education privatization in Southern Europe**

In Southern Europe, the presence of the private sector is longstanding, and there has not been significant growth in the private provision of education in recent years, as seen in Northern Africa. Education governance is marked by a blurring of boundaries between public and private, as the government provides funding for private education, and the governance mechanisms inspired by the private sector deeply penetrate the public sector, particularly accountability and management focused on the learning outcomes of pupils. The government is involved to the same degree in the governance of the subsidized private sector as it is in the public sector. Nevertheless, both the public and private sectors are managed in a context characterized by deregulation.

In Italy, private schools are either religious or secular. The majority are secular and characterized by lower quality provision of education and greater laxity than public schools. There are a smaller number of religious private schools, but they have a greater capacity to put pressure on the political system because of their ties to interest groups and political parties affiliated with the Catholic Church. This political pressure has resulted in two policy shifts over the past decade. First, private schools were offered the opportunity to be fully integrated into the national school system, with the possibility of obtaining increased public funding. Second, the obligations imposed on them to obtain funding were reduced, through
During the past decade, the influence of international organizations upon education governance has been different in the two subregions discussed in this review. It is clear that the influence of international organizations is linked to the states' dependency (whether financial or political) on these organizations. In Northern Africa, there is a strong influence from the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the EU, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Through various programmes aiming at education systems, the World Bank has specifically pointed to three areas where Northern African countries can further improve their education systems: 1) an additional promotion of non-public provision of instruction and education related services; 2) greater autonomy and accountability of public education institutions; and 3) the professionalization of teachers (World Bank, 2009).

In the Spanish education system, the influence of international organizations is also significant. The Spanish education system is characterized by three types of schools in terms of their legal status and the way they are funded: traditional public schools, private for-profit schools, and publicly subsidized private schools. The recent reforms in Spain have aimed at increasing the autonomy of schools and the involvement of the private sector in education governance. The growing need for state subsidies has brought strong political pressure from the ecclesiastical hierarchy and Catholic movements on the affiliated parties in both the centre-left and centre-right coalitions (Barone, 2005). The Spanish education system is also influenced by the influence of international organizations, including UNICEF, UNESCO, the EU, and the OECD. Through various programmes aimed at improving education systems, these organizations have specifically pointed to three areas where Spanish countries can further improve their education systems: 1) an additional promotion of non-profit education; 2) greater autonomy and accountability of public education institutions; and 3) the professionalization of teachers (World Bank, 2009).
provision and quality, particularly at the compulsory levels. The European Union has also had some influence on education governance in Northern Africa, particularly through projects focusing on improving the quality of higher education.

In Egypt, the influence of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was also decisive to the extent that Egypt has been one of the main recipients of development assistance from the United States since the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978. Following the first Gulf War, this assistance to Egypt increased strongly, driven in particular by the desire of the United States to contain the Islamist fundamentalist movements perceived as a major strategic threat to Western interests in the region. The education sector in Egypt has attracted some of the aid from USAID and other organizations. The donor community has turned its attention towards building or rebuilding school facilities and improving the qualifications of teachers. The discourse on decentralization and community participation supported by donors such as UNICEF and USAID through their projects on the ground began to resonate in Egyptian politics with the launch in 2002 of the reform of the governance and management of the education system, assigning an increased role to the private sector and civil society (Ibrahim, 2010).

In the Southern European region, it is mainly the OECD – through the PISA comparative studies – that has had a real influence on the governance of secondary education. In the countries under review, the poorer PISA test results of Spanish and Italian pupils in comparison with the OECD average sparked a heated debate on the development of school autonomy, curricular reform and the establishment of a national assessment system for the evaluation of student learning through standardized tests. The EU has had a relatively minor influence on secondary education governance in Southern Europe.

**Increasing accountability and transparency**

Education is characterized by low accountability in Northern Africa and by emergent accountability in Southern Europe. In Northern African countries, efforts to maintain social peace with the relatively powerful teachers’ unions and the lack of local or national structures to ensure accountability means that the concept remains, for the time being, more of an intention than a reality. In Morocco, for example, the CNEF calls for reforming budget planning on the basis of teacher contractualization and performance evaluations, and revising selection procedures for those running educational establishments so that precedence is given to competitiveness, transparency and competence (El Mostafa, 2007). In practice, however, these reforms are slow to take hold.

In Italy and Spain, on the other hand, the neoliberal revolution driven by the governments of Berlusconi and Aznar and the private foundations has enabled the introduction of tools to encourage accountability in spite of resistance from some players in the field of education. In Italy, for example, a national institute for the evaluation of the education system (INVALSI) was established to oversee national standardized tests to evaluate pupil performance. The creation of this organization has been considered an essential step to support decision-making, identify problems in the education system and guide education policy development. INVALSI recently carried out a longitudinal analysis of the educational achievement of pupils across a nationwide sample of schools. Professional communities and unions expressed resistance against this numbers-based education offensive by boycotting the tests.
Yet despite such turbulence, the logic of a results-based education system seems to have partially succeeded in colonizing the secondary education field in Italy (Grimaldi and Serpieri, 2013). As the school autonomy reform has proven to be disappointing in terms of improving Italian schools, new voices have called for the need to completely rethink and redesign the Italian school system. In the years after 2001 and the rise of the second centre-right government led by Berlusconi, new principles and methods of public management were introduced, in particular concerning the accountability devices of ‘new’ professionals (head teachers and teachers) who are expected to be entrepreneurial and act as competitors in a quasi-market environment (Grimaldi and Serpieri, 2013). This movement has imported principles from the private sector into the education field, with an emphasis on increasing teacher accountability through results-based measures such as customer satisfaction, externally driven evaluations and ‘virtuous’ competition among professionals.

Reducing educational inequalities

Reducing educational inequality is a key issue in Northern Africa, where disparities in economic and employment opportunities were a trigger in the ‘Arab Spring’ revolutions of 2011. Many countries have been steadily increasing secondary school enrolment, which increases expectations for employment after graduation, yet unemployment is rampant in the region. Tunisia, for example, achieved a significant increase in secondary school enrolment between 1980 and 2010, but it also has the highest unemployment rate among secondary school graduates in the region. The issue is partly a supply problem: Northern Africa countries are not generating enough skilled jobs to absorb the increase in the educated labour force. The other side of the issue is a mismatch of skills learned in school and those needed in the job market. Research linking education to employment for Arab youth shows that one-third cannot do basic arithmetic, and two-thirds self-reported that they did not have the skills they needed to get a good job (Adams and Winthrop, 2011). This has led to the proliferation of ‘waithood’, which refers to the increasingly common period of time that Arab youth have to wait between graduation and getting their first job.

Young people are demanding jobs, economic justice, and fairness in economic opportunity and in the distribution of wealth between social groups and regions. They are ready to participate in creating a new development model, but in many countries their efforts to create active civil society organizations to promote grass-roots development have been thwarted by restrictive state regulations (Amin, 2012).

In Egypt, the distribution of various governance and management functions across school, district, governorate and national levels of the education system were disturbed by the revolutionary processes and by the short Islamic government period. The current government is trying to re-establish the state authority with a low focus on youth and civil society participation in education governance. However, it is crucial that the government still prioritize moving from hierarchical control to incentive-compatible contracts and civil society participation (World, Bank, 2008).

Outlook for the future

New models of school governance are unstable in the countries included in this review – more so in Northern African than in Southern Europe – due to political instability and
changing social and political movements, as well as a lack of strategic planning. Andrews (2008) criticizes the tendency to develop school governance instruments without the backing of a solid underlying theory clarifying the processes involved in governance. Referring to Egypt, Korany (2011) rightly suggests that education reform is not comparable to other societal reforms. Rather than seeking improvement strategies based on temporary solutions – addressing the symptoms and not the cause – those responsible for education should concern themselves with the philosophy of educational reform.

Education governance is both a political and technical issue, which raises questions about the ways in which education services are delivered to the public where they are most needed, the extent to which education is responsive to local needs, and the ways in which institutions become spaces for active and empowering citizen action and participation (Sayed, 2010).

Educational inequities still need to be addressed, particularly in Northern Africa, in order to move towards long-term progress. Focus should continue to be placed on expanding and improving secondary education, as it is the most strategic link to the labour market and higher education.

**Key findings and policy recommendations**

From this review, the following recommendations can be made regarding education governance in the Mediterranean countries:

1. **Support decentralization**

   Decentralization alone is not sufficient to improve the governance of education. Decentralized functions must also be financed, and strategies must be implemented to train and build the capacity of local actors in their new responsibilities, particularly in Northern Africa where decentralization is a relatively new concept. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that moving from service provision to quality control of the education system does not mean that the central educational authorities no longer have missions. In fact, they have the very complex task of ensuring that contracts are honoured, results are attained and quality is ensured. This requires establishing monitoring systems, evaluation capacity, and licensing and regulatory authorities (World Bank, 2008).

2. **Increase accountability**

   Educational accountability is an issue, to varying degrees, for all of the countries reviewed. Southern European countries have accountability mechanisms in place based on managerial rationale, while Northern African countries have some degree of bureaucratic accountability, controlled by inspectors and administrators. It would be useful to supplement these measures with more informative mechanisms based on the commitment of educational professionals, civil society and unions.

3. **Fund private education**

   Countries in Northern Africa must consider mechanisms for the public funding of private education, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Such a measure would allow
for the diversification of educational provision and would reduce the uncontrolled demand for hidden private tutoring. For Southern European countries, it would be useful to reflect on mechanisms for subsidizing private education, and to weigh public funding of private education (mainly religious-based) against the lack of resources in the public sector.

4. Include civil society

It is recommended that countries in Northern Africa widen their efforts to include civil society in the direction and management of education. Clearly this recommendation only stands a chance of being implemented if the societies in the region are engaged in the democratization of public life.

5. Improve research and information-sharing

Ideally, future research on education governance in the region should focus on how transnational influences and national policies are transformed into local policy cultures when they meet school boards and administration. In addition to encouraging more research, policy-makers also need to improve information-sharing within and across education systems. It is necessary for national, regional and local governance systems to establish clearly defined reporting relationships, so that all levels of the education hierarchy know what information should be sent to what other parties on what schedule (Glassman and Sullivan, 2006).

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Education governance in the BRICS countries

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Introduction

This review provides a critical overview of trends in education governance in the five major emerging and newly industrialized national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – collectively known as the BRICS countries. To facilitate a comparative perspective, the review focuses mainly on secondary education, which is expected to play a strategic role in the BRICS countries in the post-2015 international development agenda. The review looks at different governance models and their capacity to effectively manage resources, particularly expenditures in education, in order to improve access and quality in secondary education. It examines the nexus between centralization, decentralization and autonomy; analyses the impact of marketization and privatization on education governance; and discusses recent reforms. Finally, the review offers policy recommendations to address key issues and challenges for governance in secondary education.

Background and regional context

The BRICS countries are home to almost 3 billion people, or roughly 40% of the world’s population (Statista, 2014). Since 2009, the leaders of these countries have met at an annual summit to discuss common concerns and plan joint activities. The Fortaleza Declaration, agreed upon at the 2014 BRICS Summit, emphasized the centrality of education for all five countries and committed their governments to ‘accelerating progress in attaining the Education for All goals and education-related Millennium Development Goals by 2015’ (BRICS, 2014). The declaration highlights equity, inclusion, quality and lifelong learning as central issues for discussion and policy cooperation.

As in many other parts of the world, education governance is a key issue for BRICS countries, and often an illusive one to comprehend. The recent multiplication of stakeholders besides the government – including think tanks, private foundations, teacher unions and others – makes education governance multifaceted and difficult to fully grasp. To complicate matters further, perspectives on governance have changed over the last few decades, and it is not always easy to identify a single governance model operating in these countries, as different perspectives often overlap. Nevertheless, some general patterns have emerged.

Education in BRICS countries has traditionally been characterized by strong, top-down centralized governance, especially in Russia and China, and to a lesser extent in Brazil, India and South Africa. While some countries are moving towards more decentralization and privatization, the state generally still controls all sectors of education by means of funding, education laws and curricular documents. The growth of marketization in secondary education, together with the private tutoring industry, has produced a visible divide in the BRICS countries between government and private schools, and between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students. Meanwhile the pressures of globalization, in general,
and in particular the availability of internationally comparable performance indicators from the OECD’s PISA assessment, have led to education reforms targeting academic achievement, skills and standards. These standards-based reforms, along with movement towards a market-oriented education culture and the increasing popularity of parental choice, have resulted in a significant expansion of the monitoring of educational outcomes in the BRICS countries. Policy reforms are being driven by demands for accountability, with an emphasis on performance and output. At the same time, all five countries face broad challenges in education governance, including translating policy into practice at the local level; combating inequalities based on gender, socio-economic status and geographic location; improving quality, access and completion rates for secondary education; and increasing accountability and transparency.

Analysis and emerging trends

Recentralization

Education governance in Brazil and Russia has shifted over the past decade from decentralization towards a recent return to centralization, motivated in part by the emergence of global education governance measures and international performance indicators (Meyer and Benavot, 2013). The centralized education governance model in Brazil and Russia is driven by a demand for accountability, efficiency and standards-based measurement, with the goal of improving academic performance through state-defined testing. In both countries, the central government determines the curriculum, standards, skills and objectives, and expected performance outcomes for secondary education.

In Brazil, the government has turned away from the trend of market-driven education in recent years, consolidating power within a three-tiered structure with the Ministry of Education (MoE) at the top, followed by state and municipal governments. Each of these levels is responsible for funding, management and resource distribution. The MoE defines the main principles of organization for educational programmes; oversees school textbook development, certification and production; and sets standards for teacher training programmes. The local governments are responsible for the establishment of state education programmes, following federal guidelines and using federal funding. The new Constitution assigns 25% of the state budget and 18% of federal and municipal taxes to education (Horta, 2012).

Russia’s education system is undergoing a similar return to strong centralized governance. Education is controlled by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), and regional authorities regulate education in their jurisdictions within the prevailing framework of federal laws. During the last ten years, the national government launched a series of policy documents to guide quality reforms and exercise greater control over education standards and outcomes. The most controversial reform is the countrywide implementation in 2009 of the state-controlled Unified State Examination (USE) for school graduation in Year 11.

Decentralization

In contrast, India, China and to some extent South Africa have all gravitated towards greater decentralization.
In India, education governance is a shared responsibility between the central and state governments. The Central Ministry of Human Resource Development is in charge of educational policy planning and is guided by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), which is composed of the education ministers of the different states. CABE plays a lead role in the evolution and monitoring of educational policies and programmes, which are announced at the national level periodically. The 29 states and 7 union territories that comprise India manage education largely at their own discretion, except in cases of disagreement when the national government steps in. Community-based organizations play a significant role in the local governance and functioning of schools. These organizations include School Management Committees (SMCs), established by the 2009 Right to Education Act, as well as other forms of local government called Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Although almost all states policies include SMCs, there are considerable variations in actual practices, posing enormous challenges to governance between states. Schools appear to be functioning better in places where communities are actively involved (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2010).

In China, the decentralization process is tightly controlled by the state. The education system is run and overseen by the MoE, which formulates and enforces policies, principles and laws concerning education and liaises with various local governmental agencies. Local communities are encouraged to participate in various aspects of school governance, and schools have been granted greater autonomy, though they are still accountable to the central government through monitoring and evaluation of performance indicators and teaching quality (Zajda, 2010). Effective decentralization policies have, to a certain extent, led to the successful participation of municipal and provincial stakeholders in education decision-making (UNESCO, 2011a). However, the huge number of educational laws that have been developed and implemented – more than 100 over the last 30 years – has created what Walker and Qian (2012, p. 175) call a ‘crowded educational reform environment’, which often hinders the process of putting policy into practice.

South Africa has also moved towards decentralization in recent years, through to a lesser degree than India and China. The government’s pursuit of democratization and economic growth has caused a policy shift from enforced racial and class-based education to a participatory and neo-liberal approach intended to address issues of equity, quality and social justice. The national administration is responsible for the ‘planning, provision, financing, staffing, co-ordination, management, governance, programmes, monitoring, evaluation and well-being of the education system’ (RSA, 1996). Provincial authorities are in charge of the systematic management and organization of schools in the nine provinces of the country (UNESCO, 2011b). Each of the 30,000 public and private schools (so-called ‘ordinary’ schools) of the country is run by Governing Bodies established by the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996. These bodies, elected every three years, represent the local community and are composed of parents, teachers, learners and community members. The main objective of the Governing Bodies is to address first and foremost issues of equity and quality in education, and to promote the best interests of the school. They also determine admissions policies, school fees and language policies; make recommendations on teaching and non-teaching appointments; and manage the financial aspects of the school.

Many observers have noted that, depending on the school, members of the Governing Bodies in South Africa often lack the necessary knowledge, skills and training to make proper
decisions. For example, one of the duties of the Governing Bodies is to find ways of supplementing state funding to improve the quality of education, but members may not have the financial or fundraising skills needed to fulfil this responsibility. Many members are unfamiliar with national and provincial policies and basic governance documents such as the South African Constitution and the SASA (Xaba, 2011). Provincial departments of education have provided some trainings, but their effectiveness has yet to be validated. School fees are also introduced by the Governing Bodies, which may lead to inequalities and the potential for corruption. Despite criticisms of these and other aspects of decentralization, public opinion seems to be in favour of local governance. A recent survey in the North West province shows strong support for greater local autonomy, including parental participation (Smit and Oosthuizen, 2011).

**Privatization and marketization**

Along with decentralization, many of the BRICS countries have seen a rise in the privatization and marketization of education. India has the largest percentage of secondary school students enrolled in private schools (close to 30%), which are growing increasingly popular – particularly those deemed ‘low-fee’ schools (ASER, 2014). China has seen the proliferation of private schools for wealthy Chinese students, including dozens of international schools designed to attract privileged families, sometimes by only accepting students who hold a foreign passport. Private supplementary tutoring is rampant in China, constituting a system of ‘shadow education’ that mirrors the public schooling system (Bray, 2007). In addition, curriculum development tends to be market-driven (Guo et al., 2013).

Privatization and market forces can also be seen in Brazil, despite recent efforts to reverse the trend. Public schools compete for students, as families have the right to choose among public schools and funding follows students when they leave for another school. Independent private schools are also permitted to compete for students, and about 13% of secondary students are enrolled in private schools (UNESCO, 2015). Tuition tax credits are available to help families offset the cost of private schooling.

In Russia, privatization is still a relatively new phenomenon, having first appeared in the 1990s. Public school closures and consolidations, caused by demographic factors and declining births, have led to increasing numbers of new specialized schools – both state-owned and private lyceums and gymnasia (grammar schools) – over the last two decades. In 2001 the MoES issued a law legitimizing four different types of secondary schools: lyceums, gymnasia, general schools and special schools with intensive courses of study (Zajda, 2008). Both lyceums and gymnasia aim to deliver excellence in educational outcomes by providing better resources, more and better-qualified staff, and high-quality educational services. They represent only 5% of the schools in Russia but enrol 13% of students (Nikolaev and Chugunov, 2012). This new trend towards elite schools is likely to contribute, as in other countries, to growing inequality in the education system. Private supplementary tutoring, including online tutoring, is also on the rise in Russia, particularly for those attending Grades 9–11.

In South Africa, privatization is an emergent trend, with the private sector slowly making inroads into education provision. Private schools – known as ‘independent schools’ – were recognized by the SASA in 1996, and they currently represent about 5% of total enrolments.
in South African schools (ISASA, 2014). Whereas public schools are run by the state, independent schools are privately governed but can receive state subsidies. Like state schools, private schools may not discriminate on the basis of race. They also charge registration fees which can in some cases be cheaper than those charged by state schools. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of enrolments in independent schools increased by 76%.

**Influence of international and regional organizations**

During the last decade, education governance in the BRICS countries has been strongly influenced by international organizations, most notably the World Bank, the European Union and the OECD (through PISA).

Russia offers a good example of how international organizations and the pressures of globalization have caused major shifts in education governance over the years. In the 1990s, the World Bank was very active in restructuring the education sector after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and in implementing strategies for decentralization and private sector participation in education governance. These strategies were designed to improve accountability, efficiency and quality in education. The EU had a powerful influence on the higher education sector, with a focus on improving the quality of tertiary education in Russia. The country joined the Bologna Process in 2003, prompting higher education reforms targeting standards, quality and skills in an effort to make Russian university graduates ‘more competitive and attractive within the European Union and elsewhere’ (Zajda, 2007, p. 6). Most recently, Russia’s disappointing PISA test results influenced the Minister of Education and Science to implement standards-based curricular reforms and high-stakes testing through the establishment of national examinations in the last year of secondary school.

Similarly in China, recent curricular reforms have been based on both domestic survey research and international comparative studies with other countries such as Australia, Japan, South Korea and the United States, as well as input and support from global organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank (UNESCO, 2011a).

**Improving the quality of teaching and learning**

Improving the quality of teaching and learning is a critical priority for the BRICS countries. Brazil has enacted several reforms to improve the quality of schooling and academic performance. The government’s Ceará Basic Education Quality Improvement Project, which ran from 2000–2008 and was supported by the World Bank, aimed to promote greater equity and quality of education services, both in terms of academic achievement and learning environments. The project implemented in-service and continuing teacher development programmes, and raised the academic qualifications of teachers at both state and municipal schools, introducing effective teaching practices. Additionally, it supported non-formal early childhood development programmes and accelerated programmes for over-age students; expanded access to education through televised educational programmes (TELENSINO); and increased accessibility for drop-outs, parents and young workers (aged 15–39 years).

In 2007 the Brazilian government implemented a major reform of the curriculum that set clear learning and teaching standards for each grade and subject at both the primary and secondary school levels. The reform spurred the development of high-quality learning
materials and resources for students and teachers. Between 2008 and 2010, education policy reforms addressing pay for performance and examinations of teacher content mastery resulted in motivational incentives for school improvement and a higher threshold for teacher quality across the secondary education system. In 2011, the government introduced its Education Development Plan 2011–2020, aimed at improving the quality of teaching through better pre-service teacher training and recruitment (Horta, 2012; Akkari, 2015).

The Fundescola III project – the third step in Brazil’s ten-year school improvement programme, first established in 2008 – was designed to help the MoE improve quality by assisting the states and municipalities in the poorest regions of the country to reduce the educational inequalities in their systems and increase the effectiveness of their schools, so that all children in these regions could successfully complete compulsory education through Grade 8 (World Bank, 2008). The project builds the capacity of local governments to support continuous improvements in schooling quality, and to promote the financial, administrative and managerial permanence of these reforms.

Examples of regional-level quality reforms in Brazil include the State of Pernambuco’s 2007 policy initiative known escolas de referência (reference schools), which established a partnership with a group of private companies to improve the quality of education. The programme began by converting 10 existing secondary schools into a new model of full-day schools with high-quality construction. By 2010, the programme had expanded to 60 full-day and 100 half-day secondary schools, and by 2011, it has reached a total of 174 schools (Bruns et al., 2012). At the local level, the Jovem de Futuro programme, supported by the Instituto Unibanco, was designed to improve quality and test scores in Brazil’s government-run secondary schools. Participating schools receive technical and financial support to design and implement their own school improvement strategies. The programme has been piloted in four states: Rio Grande do Sul, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

In 2007, the Russian government decreed that compulsory full-time education would last for 11 years, continuing up to the age of 17. In that same year, a national education project introduced new competence-based standards and established general requirements for learning outcomes and conditions, including the structure of educational programmes, limits to the number of hours of assigned homework (to avoid overloading students), and definitions of skills and key competences. Also in 2007 the Comprehensive Projects of Education Modernization (CPEM) policy initiative included performance-based salaries for teachers, per capita financing and public accountability measures, all intended to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the education sector. In 2011, the Federal Target Program for the Development of Education 2011–2015 was developed to offer access to quality education that meets the requirements of the market economy in Russia. The main goals of the programme are modernizing secondary education, bringing the content and structure of vocational education and training (VET) in line with labour market needs, and improving the quality of secondary education. In 2012, the government approved a new generation of federal standards for primary and secondary education, which include new school curricula for all subjects.

In India, core education problems affecting quality concern overwhelming teacher absenteeism (25% daily in some parts of India), lack of teacher motivation, and inadequate teaching materials and facilities, especially in rural parts of the country. An interesting
phenomenon in education governance in India’s secondary education system is the important role played by teacher unions and teacher politicians. The Constitution of India grants teachers at the secondary level of education guaranteed representation in the Upper House of the State legislature. Because of this teacher unions are very influential and tend to shape school governance, often by blocking certain reforms and policies that might address absenteeism and impose greater accountability measures on teachers.

In China, the concept of ‘education for quality’ (suzhi jiaoyu) is central to current reforms. Educational objectives in secondary school have been revised to reflect differentiation and individualization of teaching and learning (e.g. inquiry-based learning), although educators and local authorities are not always able to put these new pedagogical approaches into practice. For example, large class sizes in Chinese schools undermine the principle of differentiated instruction promoted by recent reforms. Continued parental and societal demands for standardized and norm-referenced tests also interfere with the implementation of recent reforms. Finally, principals (or school heads) often lack the strong leadership skills needed to enact reforms, yet they are increasingly accountable for the success of new policies, creating an unfair system in which school leaders are set up to fail (Walker and Qian, 2012). According to Chu and Cravens (2012), China has more than 1 million principals and deputy principals who need professional development and support in order to adapt their schools’ practices to China’s complex system of governance reforms.

Reducing educational inequalities

Reducing educational inequalities is an urgent policy issue worldwide. In the BRICS countries, education is characterized by inequitable access to quality learning opportunities due to socio-economic status and geographic location. Gender disparities also persist in BRICS countries; in India, for example, the overall male literacy rate was 81% in 2011, whereas the female literacy rate was around 65% (UN, 2013). In an effort to improve equity in the education system, many of the BRICS countries have increased public expenditures on education, but the inefficient allocation of funds often undermines the effectiveness of such reforms.

Brazil has dramatically increased its funding for all levels of education. Public spending on education rose from 3.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2000 to 6.1% in 2011, the largest rise of all OECD and G20 partner countries with available data in that period (OECD, 2014a). This number is higher than the OECD average of 5.6% of GDP, as well as that of other Latin American countries such as Chile (4.5%), Mexico (5.2%), and Colombia (4.5%). In fact, spending on educational institutions increased at a faster rate than GDP in the period from 2000 to 2011. However, when calculated per student, Brazil’s overall spending on education for all levels is still the second-lowest among all OECD and partner countries, in spite of the fact that per student spending for primary and upper secondary education increased by 121% between 2000 and 2008 (OECD, 2014a).

There are pronounced differences in Brazil between the private and public sectors in terms of quality and academic performance. Private schools are usually found in cities and large towns, and are attended by children from middle and upper-class families. Private schools are generally better equipped and organized than public schools, which are plagued by inadequate infrastructure and poorly trained and underpaid teachers. Regional inequities in
education funding further disadvantage students living in poor and rural areas. In an effort to reduce inequality in per student spending between different regions and schools, the government of Brazil introduced and expanded education finance equalization policies, first in 1996 (FUNDEF) and again in 2006 (FUNDEB) (Akkari, 2015). These policy initiatives were designed to equitably allocate funding in education across different regions.

To improve access to primary and post-primary education for low-income and rural families, the Brazilian government established the Bolsa Escola (School Grant) in 1995 and the Bolsa Família (Family Grant) in 2003. The Bolsa Escola, a grant that was conditional only on school attendance, was first implemented in the state of São Paulo and then spread to other states and municipalities. It became a federal grant in 2001 and benefited more than 5 million families before it was absorbed into the Bolsa Família grant in 2003. Bolsa Família is a social welfare programme that provides financial aid to poor Brazilian families, who must ensure that their children attend school and are vaccinated. The programme’s dual aims are 1) to reduce short-term poverty by direct cash aid, and 2) to fight long-term poverty by increasing educational and experiential skills among the poor through conditional cash grants (De Janvry et al., 2005). Bolsa Família is currently the largest conditional cash transfer programme in the world, covering 26% of the population of Brazil (Britto and Veras Soares, 2011).

In Russia, per pupil spending on education remains low, with an average of US$5,058 spent per student from primary through tertiary education – almost half of the OECD average of US$9,313, and one of the lowest levels among OECD and G20 countries (OECD, 2014b). When tertiary education is excluded, the disparity is even more extreme: expenditure per student for primary, secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) education was less than US$4,100 in 2010 – less than half the OECD average of US$8,550 (OECD, 2013). Unequal allocation of funds is another problem. Primary and secondary education is almost completely financed from regional budgets (99% in 2010). On average, Russian regions spend around RUR 62,000 (US$2,033) per student annually, but spending across regions varies widely.

Since the Russian government started implementing a policy of fiscal decentralization, the regions rich in natural resources have been enjoying substantially more funding per student while the less advantaged have suffered chronic financial shortages, putting already underserved communities at an even greater disadvantage. Data on educational expenditures demonstrate significant variations between Russian regions in their levels of total public expenditure as a share of gross regional product (GRP), ranging from 0.3% to 13.6% (Nikolaev and Chugunov, 2012). Government policies that provide more support to the best-performing schools based on national examination results will continue to have an adverse effect on education equity in those regions, especially since the USE exam is offered only in Russian, despite the fact that there are over 100 minority languages spoken in the country, including 35 official regional languages (BBC, 2012). Students sitting for the USE in some regions may be at a linguistic disadvantage as well as a socio-economic one.

In 2009, the central government of India passed the Right to Education Act guaranteeing free and compulsory education to all children aged 6–14 years, but the shift from centralized governance to privatization has left unresolved discrepancies in educational access and achievement according to gender, caste and social class. Several initiatives have been
implemented to promote more equitable access to education, especially for girls, disabled persons, and members of specific castes and tribes. Enrolment has improved as a result of community efforts, special enrolment drives and focused programmes for specific groups of children (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay, 2010). Additionally, since the 1980s the government’s programme of non-formal education has catered to learners who cannot attend formal school due to disability, geographic location or other reasons.

In China, disparities exist for ethnic minorities and rural students in terms of grades; graduation and drop-out rates; and access to education, resources and teachers (Guo et al., 2013). The proliferation of private schools since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001 and opened the educational market to foreign investors has not helped matters, as the approximately 70,000 for-profit schools in the country tend to cater exclusively to wealthy families and foreigners (UNESCO, 2011a). However, the idea that every child should participate in education has been gaining traction in recent years. The Compulsory Education Law (CEL), first established in 1986 and amended in 2006, states that state and local governments should:

…reasonably allocate the educational resources, promote balanced development of compulsory education, improve the conditions of weak schools, take measures to ensure implementation of the compulsory education policy in rural areas and areas inhabited by ethnic minority groups, and guarantee that school-age children and adolescents from families with financial difficulties and disabled school-age children and adolescents receive compulsory education. (China, 2006, Article 6)

The law also encourages economically developed areas in China to provide aid to economically underdeveloped areas in the service of the compulsory education policy. Further, the CEL stipulates that the state shall support the development of educational undertakings for disabled people and in ethnic minority regions, remote border areas and poverty-stricken areas.

In 2010 China’s MoE established guidelines for education reform and development for the next 10 years, based on consultations with the general public. The main objectives of those guidelines were to improve the literacy rate; to increase curricular choice by granting more autonomy in adapting curricula to local contexts; to promote education in rural areas and in Western China by addressing both physical facilities and teaching resources; and to provide education for about 14 million migrant children living in major Chinese cities, and whose parents work in construction, manufacturing, food services and domestic services. Some efforts have already been made to waive school fees for migrant pupils who are not registered in their local municipal system (Yu, 2014). Also noteworthy is the government’s investment in e-learning and distance education to offer learning opportunities to those who cannot physically attend schools. For example, providers such as ChinaEdu, eTian Tian and Huaxia Dadi have set up special educational kiosks in Western China where students can attend school online.

In South Africa, 1994 officially marked the end of a racially based system of education. The National Educational Policy Act of 1996 established free and compulsory basic education for all children irrespective of race, gender, colour, creed and sexual orientation. In the same year, the SASA established national schooling as well as democratic governance and equity, and equalized per capita spending per child. In addition, the Act established local school
governance boards intended to enable previously marginalized groups to become involved in decision-making at the local level.

In spite of these reforms, 15 years later the 2011 South African National Census showed that 76% of white and 62% of Indian and Asian citizens had completed secondary education versus only 35% and 33% of black and other minority students, respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Pampallis (2005) also notes the under-representation of the following groups in school Governing Bodies: women, black parents in formerly white schools, African parents in formerly Indian and Asian schools, illiterate parents and manual workers. One explanation for this failure is the lack of proper links between policy and practice at national, regional and local levels. Another problem relates to disparities in teacher education, professional development and accountability between schools (Naidu, 2005; Motile and Pampallis, 2005; Xaba, 2011).

**Increasing accountability and transparency**

Trends towards globalization and standards-based measurement in education have led to efforts to increase accountability and transparency in the BRICS countries. In Brazil, for example, both central and local education structures ensure some degree of accountability. In 1990, the government established the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira – INEP) as the assessment branch of the MoE. INEP is responsible for collecting, processing and analysing data on education in Brazil. National assessment of secondary education is conducted by two instruments: the National Assessment of Basic Education (Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Básica – SAEB) and the Prova Brasil (Test of Brazil). In 2007 the MoE introduced the Basic Education Development Index (Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica – IDEB) to monitor progress in basic education for the nation as a whole, and to measure education progress in schools, municipalities, states and regions. IDEB has two components: 1) school attendance, including graduation and drop-out rates; and 2) academic achievement as measured by standardized tests (Akkari, 2015). The results of IDEB studies are reported twice a year and receive media coverage. Based upon the findings, the federal government establishes targets for the improvement of primary and secondary education across schools.

In Russia, the MoES aimed to increase accountability by introducing federal standards and a national examination. The use of achievement data for accountability purposes is particularly high in Russia: close to 80% of students attend schools that publicly post achievement data, compared with the OECD average of 45% (PISA, 2013). At the local level, regular inspections of schools and teachers are conducted, and teachers are promoted according to inspectors’ reports. India and South Africa have also implemented accountability mechanisms locally, by offering greater governance responsibilities to community stakeholders, especially parents. In China, educational accountability measures have focused on reducing bribes, which are ubiquitous in both government and private schools, and are paid in exchange for admissions, good grades and teacher recommendations. Reining in corruption has been a main focus of the new Chinese president, Xi Jinping.
Outlook for the future

Education governance is fundamentally political and economic, being defined by dominant ideologies. Due to the global trend towards measurement and standardization, education policy and reforms in the BRICS countries have been strongly influenced by output-driven indicators. While such reforms have been effective in increasing performance, overall outcomes have been disappointing, as the reforms have not addressed inequity in access to quality education for all (UNESCO, 2009, 2014). Poverty reduction policy strategies have emerged as one of the key priorities for reforming governance in education. There is a need to enhance compensatory measures to increase equitable access to secondary education in the BRICS countries. Inequalities in academic achievement and performance targets between government schools and private schools also need to be addressed through governance reform. In some of the BRICS countries, further reforms are required to tackle discrepancies of access and quality between boys and girls, and between rural and urban students.

There is also an urgent need for education governance policy reforms to improve secondary education completion rates and raise the quality of teaching and learning. Brazil, for example, still has a secondary school completion rate of 60% – compared with an 80% average for OECD countries – despite huge increases in public spending on education (Bruns et al., 2012). Leadership training is essential to meet this objective and to be consistent with new policies and reforms. Teacher education and recruitment must be a target of reform, through policies that aim to attract people to the profession, provide high-quality training and continuous support through professional development, and offer incentives for good performance. In India, for example, teacher absenteeism and motivation appear to be real problems that affect the quality of learning at the secondary level.

Key findings and policy recommendations

Findings from this review indicate an urgent need to improve the effectiveness of education governance in the BRICS countries, in order to overcome the inequalities surrounding access, quality and completion rates in secondary school, and their corresponding implications for human rights and social justice. At the policy level, the most important recommendations are:

1. **Where decentralization is occurring, provide support through training and funding**
   The BRICS countries where education governance is being decentralized are India, China and South Africa. Models of decentralization vary considerably across these countries, particularly in terms of accountability, equity and effectiveness. In many cases, the gap between policy and practice is overwhelming. If decentralization is to improve education, it must be supported by in-service training for all local administrators and educational leaders; the necessary level of funding to support local efforts; and a general philosophy of openness to innovation and change.

2. **Where privatization is occurring, prevent inequity through public subsidy and oversight**
   Decentralization in education is often accompanied by some degree of privatization. In many cases, privatization can contribute to positive changes in education and society, and the involvement of private institutions in governance models should be increasingly considered. However, in many cases the trend towards privatization is producing a visible divide between socially advantaged and disadvantaged groups, particular in terms of
gender, socio-economic status and geographic location. Governments need to develop equitable models of public funding to ensure that education privatization is not left to market forces only. Government funding, accompanied by appropriate oversight and accountability measures, are needed to overcome serious inequities in privatized education that disadvantage poor students, women and girls, and those living in rural areas. Such a measure would also weaken private supplementary tutoring – known as ‘shadow education’ – which is an unregulated and often exploitative industry, and a key contributor to educational inequality in some of the BRICS countries (Bray and Lykins, 2012).

3. **Address regional inequities in funding for public schools**

In many cases, regional inequities in education funding have an adverse effect on equal access to education. Although the BRICS countries have increased education investments in general, more funding needs to be made available and resources need to be distributed for effectively and equitably. There is a critical need to address equity in funding across all schools, both urban and rural.

4. **Promote participation and decision-making at local levels**

Some of the BRICS countries have been moving towards more shared governance between different individuals and institutions involved in the education sector. Although many challenges remain before local communities can be fully integrated into education governance, countries should look to these and other successful models to encourage more participation at the local level. Because school leaders, parents and students are often not prepared to step into new roles, systematic and rigorous training should be organized to help these individuals profit fully from their rights and duties, and to build up trust between the government and the community.

5. **Increase civil society involvement in education**

It is strongly recommended that all BRICS countries implement policy reforms designed to improve civil society involvement in education. This is especially important for Russia and China, whose education systems are characterized by strong, top-down centralization. The successful implementation of this recommendation is contingent on authentic education policy reforms aiming at democratization of society. Community empowerment could allow more democratic, inclusive and equitable decision-making processes in education governance.

6. **Encourage research and knowledge-sharing**

The BRICS countries could benefit from sharing experiences and best practices relevant to common issues. Governments should discuss education governance policies and collaborate to draft strategies that can be adapted locally. India and China, for example, have implemented successful models of e-learning and distance education to provide quality learning opportunities to rural and disabled students, which could be replicated in other BRICS countries. In addition, governments should foster further research into the specific challenges facing BRICS countries. In particular, there is a need to analyse and evaluate the long-term impact of market-oriented culture – with its prevailing emphasis on accountability, efficiency, local and global competitiveness, and benchmark-driven performance – on emerging models of education governance in the BRICS countries.
References


Education governance in the fragile states of sub-Saharan Africa

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Introduction

This review focuses on four selected fragile states of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): the Democratic Republic of Congo (D. R. Congo) and Niger, representing the Francophone states; and Liberia and Somalia, representing the Anglophone states. These countries have similar experiences that include, among others, civil unrests and protracted political conflicts that have led to serious destruction of human lives as well as physical infrastructures of all the key sectors of society including education. Although these countries have diverse national profiles, the damaged educational infrastructure that each has had to grapple with over the past decade and the obvious negative impact it has had on their education delivery systems are similar. Weak institutional capacity coupled with very limited financial resources means that all four countries rely heavily on donor support and private sector financing to provide education to the citizenry, a situation which creates unique complexities in education governance and management. This review looks specifically at governance models, salient governance issues, and major policy initiatives and reforms within the education systems of these four countries, to draw conclusions and make recommendations for improving educational capacity in the region.

Background and regional context

Fragile states are defined as countries that lack the capacity to carry out basic governance functions and provide basic services to their citizens due to conflicts, wars and political instability (Kirk, 2007; OECD, 2013; Turrent, 2011). Globally, it is estimated that more than 500 million people live in the 35 states identified as fragile by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, and that these states will be home to more than half the world’s poor by 2018. With fragile states accounting for 37% of all out-of-school children, these are the countries that are furthest away from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals (UNESCO, 2008). Education needs to be at the centre of discussions of fragile states, as it is both a cause and effect of fragility, with the potential to present possible solutions or, without proper management, perpetuate the problem (Kirk, 2007).

Improving education in the fragile states of SSA is especially critical. In 2013, about 20% of SSA’s primary school-age children were not in school, and 30% of those entering first grade were not able to complete their primary education (UIS, 2015). Few SSA countries have higher than 60% enrolment in primary school, and many students drop out before they acquire minimal levels of literacy and numeracy. Adult literacy remains at about 60% in Africa, compared to 95% in Eastern Asia, and 92% in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2013 (UIS, 2015). Although making appreciable progress in education, SSA is faced with varied and enormous challenges in the provision of quality education to the citizenry, particularly among its fragile states.
The countries under review here are among the world’s poorest: Niger currently is currently the lowest-ranked country on the United Nations’ Human Development Index (HDI), followed by D. R. Congo; Liberia and Somalia also rank very low on the HDI (UNDP, 2015). All four countries have experienced extensive and prolonged political instability and civil conflict that have destroyed basic economic and social infrastructure and crippled the governments’ capacity to provide education for all children of school-going age. Not surprisingly, public education budgets in these countries plummeted during times of conflict. In D. R. Congo, for instance, from the 1980s until the early 2000s education spending declined from 7% of GDP and 25% of the national budget to 1% of GDP and 5% of the budget, creating a fall of 96% in spending per pupil per year in primary and secondary schools (from US$109 in 1980 to US$4 in 2002) (OSISA, 2009).

Most prominent among the educational challenges facing these countries are inequitable access to education; low-quality teaching and learning; teacher shortages and a lack of funding to support teacher training and professional development; low retention rates and high repetition rates among pupils; a lack of early childhood education for children aged 3–5 years; a mismatch between the education provided and the real needs of the labour market; and the need for remediation and lifelong learning for youth and adults who were deprived of education during the conflict years.

Enrolment, completion and literacy rates are particularly concerning in the countries under review (UNESCO, 2010). Over one-quarter of children aged 5–7 in D. R. Congo do not have access to education (UNICEF, 2013). In Niger less than two-thirds of children were attending primary school at the appropriate age in 2013, and only 17% of adolescents were attending lower secondary school (UIS, 2015). Limited data available from Somalia indicates that only 29% of Somalia’s children, regardless of their age, were enrolled in primary education in 2007. Literacy rates in these states are similarly dismal: Niger’s youth literacy rate, for example, was estimated at 24% in 2012, meaning that more than three-quarters of all young people aged 15–24 are not able to read and write. Moreover, the adult literacy rate (age 15 and older) was only 15% in 2012.

The second and third goals of the MDGs, together with the EFA goals, have provided impetus for SSA to set targets for improving education. The encouragement of global partnerships for development promoted by Goal 8 of the MDGs has created an enabling environment for SSA countries to work with international bodies on education objectives. In pursuit of goals for economic growth, democratization and equity, many countries in SSA have, in the past few decades, introduced reforms to the education system, mainly focusing on participatory decision-making processes, community participation and ownership, empowerment of citizens, and democratization (De Grauwe et al., 2005). Such reforms are intended to reduce corruption, enhance the overall delivery of education, and increase the government’s responsiveness, flexibility and innovation in responding to local demands (Gaynor, 2014; Kaplan, 2010; Turrent and Oketch, 2009). The realization of these goals requires an effective and efficient educational governance system.
Analysis and emerging trends

Decentralization

Historically, education in the fragile states of SSA has been organized under a highly centralized governance structure, with minimal or no local and institutional involvement in major educational decisions. A national agency – usually the Ministry of Education – sets policies for education, which are implemented by the various regions and educational districts in the country with very little delegated authority.

In the face of internal conflicts that have crippled central government capacity in all sectors, many of these countries have enacted education reforms that call for decentralization and increased autonomy for schools and local jurisdictions. However, weak human capacity in the fragile states of SSA poses a great challenge to decentralization, which requires sufficient capacity at all levels of education system. While policies may set out a plan for decentralized education governance, in practice local governments are not usually robust enough to fulfil newly assigned responsibilities. In Liberia, for example, the 2011 Education Reform Act specifically set a policy direction of decentralized governance to promote local community participation in decisions (Liberia MoFA, 2011). However, the absence of local government structures, which have a legal responsibility to provide education services, has created a form of decentralization characterized by deconcentration and school-based management. This process involves delegating some functions from the MoE to its regional offices, and to communities in financing and managing their own schools. This differs from the prescribed form of decentralization, called ‘devolution’, where education officials are meant to be accountable to elected local representatives.

Other steps towards decentralization and participation of local communities have been tentative and often nominal. In Somalia, for example, decentralization efforts involve limited participation in decision-making by a variety of stakeholders including community education committees, regional administrations, community-based organizations, and educational umbrella groups and networks. These various groups provide input, but power is still highly centralized. The education agenda is set at the national level and funding is primarily from the national budget. When local communities are tasked to finance education, they are unable to meet adequate standards for quality education. Similarly, in D. R. Congo, while regulatory mechanisms make provisions for local participation in education, decisions are primarily made at the national level. Instructions and directives are passed on to the local school districts through the regional and district officials, which act as intermediaries to the MoE.

Nevertheless, there are indications of gradual progress towards local capacity-building in support of decentralization. Liberia’s education reforms call for the establishment of county and district school boards, which are based on the tenet that local people are the best representatives of their own interests (including education, health and security). The MoE’s determination to allow counties to take ownership of the education system indicates that power is being devolved and delegated to the subnational level. In Somalia’s South Central Zone, for example, the recent establishment of 11 regional education offices is regarded as a first step to develop the capacities of local governance (Somalia MHDPS, 2013).
Privatization and marketization

In situations of state collapse, civil society organizations often step in to substitute for the state’s role as the provider (and, in many cases, regulator) of social services, including education. In addition to NGOs and community networks, civil society includes religious groups, which have a long history in the countries under review. Religious schools in the region may operate independently of the government, as in the case of Somalia, where the collapse of the formal education system in 1991 gave way to the proliferation of madrasas (Quranic schools). In other cases, religious schools work in collaboration with the government to form what is termed a ‘hybrid’ system of education, whereby the state maintains control of the education system while religious organizations are responsible for the day-to-day operation of schools. This system can be seen in D. R. Congo, where education is primarily managed by religious communities, and 75% of all primary school children attend public religious schools (Titeca and De Herdt, 2011). Similarly, in Liberia many mission or faith-based schools are run as public institutions and depend on the government for funding.

The for-profit sector is also a key player in education provision in the region. Privatization is a global trend in education worldwide, and SSA is no exception, especially in the fragile states where government infrastructure for education has completely broken down. In Somalia’s South Central Zone, for example, education is largely provided by private umbrella schools which operate outside of any government control. According to the information available, the monthly fees charged by these schools range from US$8 to US$10 per child for primary school and US$15 to US$25 per child for secondary school. These fees are prohibitive for poor families and in effect exclude them from the education system (Somalia MHDPS, 2013). In the rest of the country, privatization has primarily occurred at the tertiary education level, where it has had a positive impact on enrolment. The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2013) reports that shortly after the war, there was only one (public) university in Somalia, enrolling about 4,000 students; by 2013 privatization had resulted in close to 50 higher education institutions, enrolling over 50,000 students. However, the report also indicates that the quality of tertiary education has suffered considerably due to the absence of central regulatory mechanisms. This is to be expected, since profit motives drive most of the private providers in the country. Privatization brings market mechanisms into education and allows education to be treated as a commodity, which attracts profit-oriented investors. Negative impacts of education marketization may include a decline in quality, lack of standardization, monitoring challenges and inequities due to higher fees (Barry, 2009).

While educational equity and quality may suffer as a result of privatization, this is not always the case. A study conducted in Liberian schools in the Monrovia area reveals the importance of education privatization in increasing equity and providing disadvantaged students with the civic tools needed to access their rights (Quaynor, 2012). Students in private schools reported higher levels of civic engagement and more active conceptions of citizenship and civic trajectories than students in public schools. Based on an examination of the implemented curriculum in each school and interviews with teachers, the study concluded that private schools seemed to encourage such conceptions, whereas the public schools promoted citizenship through prioritizing moral values and family responsibilities. Overall, these results suggest that students in public and private schools are not being prepared equitably for civic
engagement, and that public schools may need to do more in order to foster participatory citizenship among students.

**Influence of international and regional organizations**

Education in the fragile states of SSA has been largely propped up by international and regional aid organizations, which assist governments in formulating and implementing policies, rebuilding infrastructure, providing education services, and collecting data to inform decisions. Notable among the international partners are UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID and the World Bank. The African Development Bank is also a major regional player. Areas of support include building institutional and human resource capacity; increasing educational access and quality; improving learning environments; training teachers; empowering women and youth; and providing inter-sectoral support.

Several internationally supported programmes have been directly related to education governance reform. In Liberia, for example, USAID’s basic education programme is helping to rebuild the curricula, teaching and management staff, instructional and learning resources, data systems, and policy environment essential to providing basic education services to all Liberians. UNESCO also collaborated with the Liberian government to implement the Rehabilitation Support to the Education Sector project, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). With a budget of US$1.3 million, the project was designed to strengthen the country’s national capacity in planning, supervising, monitoring and evaluating; to enhance training opportunities for educational personnel; and to produce new curricular materials (Dridi, 2001).

UNICEF has been particularly active in Liberia, which is one of 39 countries participating in the Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme, a US$201 million dollar partnership between UNICEF, the Government of the Netherlands and the European Union/European Community. The programme is designed to put education in EEPCT countries on a viable path of sustainable progress towards quality basic education for all (UNICEF, 2011a). Liberia received a total of US$24,180,000 between 2007 and 2010, making it the largest beneficiary of programme. Local projects supported by the EEPCT include capacity-building for district education offices; teacher training; accelerated learning programmes; school construction; purchase and distribution of learning materials; policy formulation; and monitoring and evaluation, including help with two national school censuses and the establishment of an Education Management Information System (EMIS).

In D. R. Congo, the World Bank has supported the government in implementing its Interim Education Plan, with three main objectives: 1) to increase access and equity in primary education, 2) to improve learning conditions in primary education, and 3) to strengthen sector management and promote greater accountability by introducing new management practices at local levels (World Bank, 2015a). Support from the African Development Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF helped set up a computerized EMIS within the Ministry of Education and enabled the planning section of the MoE to resume publication of its annual statistical review of the education system, for Bas Congo in 2004, Kinshasa in 2005, and for the whole country in 2007 (OSISA, 2009).
The World Bank’s Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Support to Quality Education Project for Niger, scheduled for 2014 to 2018, is aimed at improving access, retention, learning environments, and teaching and learning quality at the basic education level. The project is comprised of three sub-components: 1) capacity enhancement of the ministries in charge of basic education, 2) central and decentralized education system management, and 3) project management and coordination (World Bank, 2015b).

In Somalia, UNICEF supports a teacher incentive programme and is directly involved in the provision of learning materials, working with partners across the country to deliver an integrated package of school-based and non-formal activities to address educational needs. The assistance provided by regional and international players to the education systems of the fragile states of SSA has been remarkable. However, this involvement poses unique governance challenges. Different donors may have their own prescribed guidelines for the use of resources, and there can be overlapping efforts that require effective coordination in order to achieve meaningful outcomes. In addition, international donors may not stay involved for long enough to give success a chance (OECD-DAC, 2007). One reason for this is that countries emerging from conflict are thought to lack the governance systems to absorb large quantities of aid. This may be true immediately after a conflict, when security and the restoration of basic governance are an immediate priority – but once peace has taken root, there is often a potential benefit for increasing aid (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). Finally, if international actors lack knowledge and sound analysis, they may cause inadvertent harm. This is particularly serious in situations where international actors fail to grasp the complexity and fragility of a political settlement in a country, and unintentionally upset the balance of power between interest groups. There is little evidence that international actors have attempted to assess these risks on a systematic basis, or to consider the need for mitigating measures (OECD, 2010).

**Improving the quality of teaching and learning**

There is an urgent need in the fragile states to raise the quality of teaching and increase the number of qualified teachers, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Major policy reforms have focused on expanding and enhancing pre-service and in-service teacher training, as well as improving general classroom practice through the regular provision of materials and on-site professional support.

In Somalia, for example, the government plans to devote US$130,000 to studying options for pre-service and in-service teacher training, including the introduction of emergency teacher training programmes (Somalia MHDPS, 2013). In D. R. Congo, the MoE has prioritized teacher quality and effectiveness by improving internal efficiencies, re-evaluating the teacher function (to address issues such as recruitment, retention, deployment and training), supplying instructional materials, optimizing and updating curricula, and strengthening technical and professional education. The Congolese government has also stressed the importance of improving human resource management in education by establishing a career evaluation and promotion system for teachers (D. R. Congo MPSPE, 2012). The Education Sector Plan (2000–2010) of Liberia also includes a focus on training teachers.
In addition to teacher training and development, other measures are needed to increase the quality of learning in the fragile states of SSA. In D. R. Congo, for instance, the government has emphasized lifelong learning by rehabilitating infrastructure for adult learning centres, modernizing equipment, and revamping curricula to ensure alignment with the needs of the national economy and local job market (D. R. Congo MPSPE, 2012).

Reducing educational inequalities

A major feature of education in the fragile states is limited and unequal access to education, which is skewed heavily against the urban poor, those living in rural areas, destabilized populations, and women and girls. Guaranteeing equitable access to quality education, especially in marginalized areas, is one of the most important challenges faced by the countries under review, and a key target of reforms.

Liberia’s Education Sector Plan 2010–2020 clearly states its mission to provide all Liberians with the opportunity to access and complete affordable, quality education that meets their needs and those of the nation, with an emphasis on universal access and primary school completion. Efforts to achieve this goal have included increasing financial allocation to education from 14% of the national budget in 2010 to 18% in 2015.

In Somalia, the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013–2016 (South Central Zone) also emphasizes the importance of providing equal opportunities and access to quality education for all; specific objectives include increasing primary school enrolment by 60%. To implement this plan, the government established the Go-2-School: Educating for Resilience Initiative, a nationwide, government-led strategy to enrol one million children and youth – half in the South Central Zone – in basic quality education by 2016. So far the initiative has enrolled nearly 1,000 youth, over half of whom are female, into education programmes that emphasize life skills, peace education, numeracy and literacy, and skills training. A further 70 youth are working with the MoE in Somaliland to develop reading materials for children, and an additional 1,000 adolescents have been able to transition from the Alternative Education Programme into formal upper primary schools (UNICEF, 2014). The Go-2-School initiative also includes a UNICEF-supported teacher incentive scheme; social mobilization, including community and children’s participation in advocacy; school construction; and increased provision of learning materials by UNICEF and other education partners.

More generally, Somalia has enacted budget increases to support education equity goals, with education spending in Somaliland rising from 4.7% of the budget in 2010 to 10% in 2013, and in Puntland from 1.75% to 4% during the same time period (UNGA, 2013).

Increasing accountability and transparency

Transparency and accountability structures are weak in the fragile states of SSA, and corruption has plagued education in the region. In D. R. Congo, for example, an investigation carried by out an NGO in 2007–08 found that corruption was endemic in the tertiary and secondary schools studied. Types of corruption ranged widely and included the exchange of good grades for money or sexual favours; the use of funds for purposes other than those they were allocated to; stealing of funds from the institutions concerned; the allocation of UNESCO scholarship funds to personal associates; misuse of institutional property or...
vehicles for personal purposes; discriminatory hiring practices; and the use of students to carry out work for teaching staff on a personal basis (OSISA, 2009).

The education sector lacks systems for adequate programme monitoring and evaluation, which makes it very difficult to detect abuses and failures, or alternatively to record and learn from successes. Local school boards, when charged with the responsibility to monitor, supervise and oversee operations, do not have adequate capacity to ensure increased transparency and accountability, or to promote participation in the decision-making process at the local level. EMISs are very weak, and no comprehensive household income and expenditure surveys have been conducted for a very long time. The dearth of baseline and performance data seriously hampers planning and implementation efforts and thwarts attempts to monitor progress towards MDGs and other goals.

Assistance from international organizations has enhanced transparency in government to some extent, by involving various stakeholders in policy formulation and establishing systems for monitoring progress. Niger’s ten-year education plan (2001–2011), developed with assistance from the World Bank, the French government and Canada’s international aid agency, is a good example. A partnership agreement signed in 2003 between the government and donors laid out how Niger’s education reforms would be implemented. The MoE prepared annual implementation plans that included actions for the following year, and donors were invited to support in specific areas under this plan. The government kept the programme on track by preparing implementation reviews every year, which showed progress in education. Donors also organized joint missions to evaluate progress (World Bank, 2004).

**Outlook for the future**

Given the context of the fragile states of SSA, the educational governance models currently operating appear to show resilience in a number of ways. There seems to be some level of reliability in the overall guidance of the education sector, with evidence of social dialogue with both local and international partners in educational provision. The increased role of local communities and the private sector in providing education, as well as the establishment of legal frameworks governing the partnership between public authorities and the private sector, all point to long-term stability. Local councils and local boards of education play an active leadership role in human resource management and in the monitoring and evaluation of programmes, giving them a sense of ownership and partnership. The entire process allows for stakeholders to hold each other accountable through periodic evaluation of the various stages of implementation to provide valuable feedback. The revitalization of EMISs in some countries is also an indicator of stability.

**Key findings and policy recommendations**

Lessons learned from this review can be translated into the following recommendations for guiding education governance and policy initiatives in the fragile states of SSA.

1. Build governmental capacity to support educational governance
The need for the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to develop education governance structures cannot be overemphasized. Governments should focus on building their capacity in terms of structures and personnel at all levels of the education system. Good governance structures and highly skilled personnel are required to ensure effective resource mobilization and allocation, and monitoring and evaluation systems must be in place to support continuous improvement. Effective professional development plans need to be implemented at the national, state and district levels to guide the eligibility and selection of staff for professional development opportunities. This will result in increased transparency and help eliminate the reports of discrimination and corruption sometimes associated with this process.

Investing in EMISs will also provide reliable and relevant educational statistics for improving the overall performance of the education system. One of the goals of the EMIS exercise is the production of regular issues of annual reports, which give MoEs dependable information on progress towards the targets set for all levels of the education system, disaggregated into district and school levels and by gender.

2. Adopt a more decentralized governance model for education

Contemporary trends in education governance favour a move towards more decentralized models which increase institutional autonomy and accountability (Bell and Bush, 2005; Glatter, 2005). These models tend to empower local and institutional stakeholders and make them more responsible for supporting the government’s efforts to improve educational quality.

Many countries in SSA, including the fragile states, have introduced decentralized education governance through the inclusion of local councils, school management committees, parent–teacher associations (PTAs), religious organizations and traditional councils (De Grauwe et al., 2005). However, education leaders are often very accustomed to centralized governance structures, making it difficult to successfully implement decentralization (Transparency International, 2009).

Avowed determination and political will are needed to ensure a successful break from the entanglements of past traditions that hamper progress. Exemplary leadership, in which leaders follow through with promises and serve as role models, is very crucial. Leaders must embrace shared governance and delegation of power to give meaning to decentralization at the district and local levels. Benchmarking must be used to replicate best practices of decentralization in the subregion.

3. Increase budget allocation to education

Quality education represents a key solution to the vulnerability of fragile states, but unfortunately budget allocation to the education sector is not encouraging (Kirk, 2007; Turrent, 2011). Government and donor funding to education in the fragile states of SSA needs to be increased to support the rebuilding of collapsed governance structures and human capacities brought about by prolonged conflicts and instability.

Educational leaders, administrators and managers must demonstrate transparency and accountability in the utilization of resources in order to earn public confidence, trust and
support in their demand for increased budgetary allocation to education. This public trust is also a necessary condition to attract private sector and civil society funding of education.

Local and district councils must be encouraged and motivated to support governments’ budgetary allocations to education. The school system belongs to the community, and financial support from community members will increase their sense of ownership. In areas where this is feasible, individual schools may need to embark on internally generated income ventures to support their expenditures. Minor school supplies such as sports materials, first aid supplies and toiletries could be purchased with internally generated income.

4. Encourage private participation in education provision and funding

Governments in the fragile states of SSA need to initiate more effective policies to promote the participation of the private sector in quality education provision. There is a need to create a socio-economic environment that will motivate and attract private sector support for education. The introduction of policies aimed at increasing private sector participation and funding of education – such as tax exemptions or reductions, and low interest rates on loans – are highly recommended. It is equally important that mechanisms are put in place to ensure that funding from the private sector and elsewhere is used efficiently and in accordance with the principles of accountability. The application, registration and accreditation processes for private educational institutions need to be simple, transparent and devoid of the unnecessary bureaucracy that often frustrates potential investors.

5. Effectively coordinate international interventions and donor support

This review has shown that many international agencies are implementing various intervention projects aimed at improving education in the fragile states of SSA. Sometimes their activities are not effectively coordinated to maximize the use of resources. Better national frameworks for improving education need to be developed to coordinate all donor intervention programmes and ensure they meet the overall interests and aspirations of the people. Additionally, international interventions must dovetail with the overall educational plans of the fragile states of SSA and take into consideration the cultural values of the subregion.

Fragmentation of funding is also a problem. Countries with lower institutional capacity are found to have higher aid fragmentation, with negative implications for aid quality through higher transaction costs and a smaller donor stake in country outcomes. Measures to address excessive fragmentation – possibly through donors limiting their focus countries, providing larger funds, adopting more efficient vehicles (including through multilateral channels), or committing to delegate authority to lead donors – could help reduce transaction costs and improve aid effectiveness (IMF and World Bank, 2007).

Finally, it is important to emphasize that international interventions are provided to augment rather than substitute for local initiatives. It is therefore crucial that the countries themselves institute intervention measures of their own, which must be sustainable.

6. Strengthen data collection efforts and monitoring and evaluation systems
Governments of the fragile states of SSA need to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within the education sector. The successful implementation of all education sector plans and programmes will depend on the establishment of an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy. Governments must bolster the relevant capacities for the collection, analysis, storage and use of educational data by EMISs, to ensure the availability and credibility of statistical information for effective educational planning.

Improvements to data collection and analysis will help administrations gauge the extent to which set targets are being achieved, identify and address problems as they arise, and adjust plans and targets in a timely fashion. It will be necessary to hold regular consultations to review progress with civil society and other stakeholders. In addition, national quality assurance mechanisms must be established to ensure improvements in education quality in both public and private institutions. Higher education institutions should be required to submit to rigorous institutional and programme accreditation and quality audits.

Mentoring systems should be put in place so that new institutions are mentored by well-established ones over a period of time in order to build sufficient internal capacity for quality assurance before they are allowed to operate as autonomous institutions. In the face of limited capacity for mentorship within the country, external mentorship could be sought. This arrangement will not only ensure quality but also provide legitimacy to the institutions in the eyes of the public.

References


Education governance in East Asia

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Introduction

Many of the issues of governance faced by educational authorities in East Asia resemble those in other world regions, including the balance of centralization and decentralization in administrative hierarchies, and the nature of school-based management. These themes are outlined in the first part of this review. The main body of the review then turns to an issue that has particular prominence in East Asia: situated marketization and the supplementary tutoring industry, which has become increasingly visible in the last decade and is arguably the most pressing issue affecting educational equity and quality in the region. The review looks at supplementary education, primarily at the general secondary school level, in ten countries and jurisdictions of East Asia: Cambodia, China, Hong Kong (China), Japan, Macao (China), Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan Province of China, and Vietnam.

The review focuses on patterns of supplementary education insofar as they have implications for the authority and scope of educational governance and policies. It begins with a brief discussion of the regional context and background, including an overview of salient education governance issues as well as trends in supplementary education industry in the region. Next, it provides an analysis of education governance in the region over the last decade – including models of governance, issues and challenges, and policy initiatives and reforms – vis-à-vis supplementary education. Finally, the paper summarizes key findings and offers policy recommendations for approaching the issues surrounding the supplementary education industry in East Asia.

Background and regional context

Within East Asia, there is a large degree of diversity in terms of population size and economic development, as well as in educational instruction methods and governance models. Degrees of centralization and decentralization vary significantly across different countries and jurisdictions. In the Republic of Korea, for example, the Ministry of Education is responsible for all levels of education including schooling, universities and lifelong education. In Vietnam, by contrast, the Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for both schooling and higher education, but vocational education is administered by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. Malaysia, too, has multiple ministries involved in education: the Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for primary and secondary schooling and vocational education, whereas the Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for post-secondary education. Such an arrangement permits some specialization and dedicated political leadership, but may also increase the challenges of coordination.

Similar diversity can found across different jurisdictions within the same territory. Mainland China, for example, has for decades had a remarkably uniform centralized education system (Cheng, 1991). By contrast, Macao (China) has for many decades had a very loose collection
of education systems operating in parallel to each other, and only in recent times have the authorities found ways to move the loose collection towards a more integrated system (Bray and Jiang, 2014).

Diversity can also be seen in the respective roles of non-government actors. For instance, in the Republic of Korea the government is overwhelmingly the dominant actor in the education sector, and from the middle to near the end of the twentieth century similar remarks were applicable to China and Vietnam as well. By contrast, the Hong Kong (China) authorities have always operated in partnership with churches and other community bodies. NGOs, mostly operating on a non-profit basis, also play a major role in Cambodia. In addition, many countries have varying proportions of for-profit private schools operating alongside government ones.

A different type of non-governmental activity concerns commercial activities aligned with schooling but not taking the form of schools per se. These activities are the main focus of the remainder of the review, because they are especially obvious in East Asia but have not received adequate analytical attention. Analysts in other parts of the world might find it useful to study patterns in East Asia because they could be a forerunner to the types of patterns likely to develop elsewhere. This review is especially concerned with supplementary education (also called supplementary tutoring, private tutoring and private tuition), defined as extra lessons in academic subjects provided on a one-to-one basis, in small groups, or in large classes, and offered outside of school hours in exchange for a fee.

Among the East Asian countries and jurisdictions under review, some have an extensive history of supplementary education while others have only experienced it relatively recently. Taken as a whole, the region has very high rates of private tutoring, with a majority of secondary school students receiving some kind of private instruction in nearly all of the countries and jurisdictions surveyed.

Most of the countries and jurisdictions reviewed have supplementary education rates between 46% and 72% for secondary students, with a tendency towards slightly higher rates for upper secondary students than for lower secondary (Breihm et al., 2012; Xue and Ding, 2009; Bray, 2013; Japan, 2015; KOSIS, 2015; Dang, 2013). In Vietnam, for example, 46% of lower secondary and almost 63% of upper secondary students received supplementary tutoring in 2006 (Dang, 2013). In 2011, a study of Grade 9 students in Cambodia found that 68.4% attended at least one supplementary education class, while a Hong Kong study of Grade 12 students found that 71.8% had receive private tutoring during the previous 12 months (Breihm et al., 2012; Bray, 2013).

The highest rates for secondary education can be found in Taiwan Province of China, where as early as 2001 nearly 73% of Grade 7 students were receiving tutoring for an average of more than 6 hours per week (Liu, 2012). At the primary level, the highest rates are seen in the Republic of Korea and Singapore, where approximately 80% of primary school students receive some form of private tutoring (KOSIS, 2015; Teng, 2015).

The countries and jurisdictions with the lowest reported rates are Macao (China) (between 8% and 25% for upper and lower secondary students, respectively) and Malaysia (3.2% for all students, both primary and secondary) (Ho et al., 2008; Ministry of Education, 2013, cited
in Kenayathulla, 2014). However, these data apply to registered tutoring enterprises only; the actual rates may be much higher when informal tutoring is taken into account.

While supplementary education is seen at high levels across the region, there are differences between urban and rural areas and between wealthy and poor households. These differences can have a significant impact on educational equity and learning outcomes, as poor and rural students may not have the same access to supplementary services (UNESCO, 2014).

Analysis and emerging trends

Decentralization

During the last decade, education governance in East Asia has been characterized by varying degrees of decentralization. In China, for instance, the national government has decreased its control over the education sector, placing more power in the hands of local governments and leading to the emergence of increasing numbers of minban (people-run) schools (Mok et al., 2009). In Singapore, scholars have described the governance system as ‘centralized decentralization’, which maintains the government’s control over policy formation while decreasing its involvement in policy implementation (Ng and Chan, 2008). The government sets overall goals and system parameters, but leaves the management of schools to principals, who are encouraged ‘manage their schools like companies with their own vision statements and innovative plans specific to the needs of their schools’ (Tan and Ng, 2007).

Similarly, Japan exercises strong centralized control of education policy, but much of the implementation is left to local governments (Ikawa, 2008). Education governance in Macao (China) would perhaps be better described as uncentralized rather than decentralized: schools (or groups of schools) have long traditions of autonomy, following different curricula, salary scales and admission procedures (Tang and Bray, 2000; Morrison, 2009). The twenty-first century has brought an increased government role, but it remains modest compared with the other jurisdictions considered in this paper.

Decentralization can pave the way for marketization. In many cases, the supplementary education industry in East Asia has expanded into the space left when government involvement, capacity or funding has contracted. In China, for example, the retreat of the central state from the education sphere ‘provided space for local governments as well as non-state actors to assume more responsibilities for education provision, financing and regulation’ (Mok et al., 2009).

In Japan, the education governance style has been one of incrementalism, in which local authorities implement national policies through ‘small, incremental steps that allow decision makers to adjust policies as they learn from their successes and failures’ (Birkland, 2011). As new policies have been implemented slowly, the supplementary education industry has stepped in to absorb unmet demand (Dawson, 2010). Japan’s ‘cram schools’ (called juku) have been operating since the 1960s, the recent reforms of ‘relaxed education’ (yutori kyoiku) in the early twenty-first century, which closed schools on Saturdays and reduced the curriculum, provided increased opportunities for the industry. Roesgaard (2006) quoted one juku owner as saying, ‘we knew we would be given a business opportunity … [to] fill the holes left by the public system’. When governments
relinquish much of their control over education without building up the capacities of local authorities, market forces are often left to distribute funds, people and functions.

**Privatization and marketization**

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the increased pervasiveness of marketization has brought a major shift in the governance of education in many parts of the world including East Asia. In many settings, marketization is a top-down process favoured by national governments as an instrument to shape local practices. In other settings it can be understood as a bottom-up process, wherein market forces operate despite rather than because of national policies. In this sense, bottom-up processes can be considered practices of situated marketization – practices that occur in specific spaces at certain times, and which are formed through local histories. Situated marketization is rarely directed by governments either on their own or with the guidance of supranational actors; it is more commonly directed to governments by their citizens. Unlike top-down marketization reforms that work on and through the state, situated marketization works around the state and can at times have a backwash effect on it.

The supplementary education industry in East Asia exemplifies this type of situated marketization (Bray and Lykins, 2012; Aurini et al., 2013; Bray and Kwo, 2014). The industry is dominated by private tutoring – widely known as ‘shadow education’, because it mimics regular schooling (Bray, 2009; Bray and Lykins, 2012). When the curriculum in regular schooling changes, so it changes in the shadow; when regular schooling expands or contracts, so does the shadow. Other supplemental services include non-academic activities, such as sports, art, music, study skills and leadership development, that go beyond those provided by regular schooling.

In some cases, the marketization of education reflects a lack of government capacity – when governments are unable to provide the necessary resources or services demanded by families in domains that are usually considered spheres of government responsibility. Walford (1991) called this the ‘reluctant private sector’, while Tooley and Dixon (2006) labelled it ‘*de facto* privatization’. This occurs when parents and students demand better education than mainstream schooling can offer. Teachers may also offer outside tutoring to their students as a way of supplementing their income. This practice is especially likely when governments do not pay teachers a liveable wage.

In Cambodia, for example, the state was largely destroyed during the 1975–79 Khmer Rouge era and has remained weak in the various periods since that time. Many schools are run by NGOs that operate largely independently of each other. The supplementary education industry fills the gap in government service provision, which is marked by short school days and crowded classrooms. Teachers’ salaries in both government and NGO schools are low, and the authorities permit teachers to undertake supplementary tutoring as a way to boost their incomes.

The expansion of supplementary education has an impact on the functioning of the public body of formal, mainstream education, by adding a significant non-public component to national school systems without the production of full-scale private schooling. This has the potential to change the governance structure of education by introducing private services to a
The actors in the supplementary education industry are diverse in their objectives, structures, and modes of operation. Some tutoring providers operate transnationally through the internet or franchises, while others serve narrowly circumscribed neighbourhoods. The enterprises and providers may be categorized as formal, informal or hybrid.

Formal enterprises are for-profit institutions that generally operate separately from mainstream schooling. They focus on particular goals, such as passing academic examinations, remedial tutoring, or non-academic activities such as swimming and music. ‘Cram schools’ are common in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Taiwan Province of China. These institutions commonly offer a variety of services beyond examination preparation. In Japan, for example, the juku system includes at least five distinct types of services: juku for exam preparation, juku for remedial study, juku for drop-outs, juku for drill work, and juku that combine the previous four into one comprehensive class (Dawson, 2010).

Formal enterprises may be large or small. At the large end of the spectrum, Kwo and Bray (2011) noted that in Hong Kong companies advertise in streets and on the back of buses, and that their ‘star tutors’ simultaneously teach hundreds of students through video in multiple classrooms separated by glass walls. Alongside these operators are companies serving their immediate localities and employing only a few tutors. Such diversity is also found elsewhere in the region.

Informal operators may also be diverse. University students commonly provide tutoring as a way to earn extra pocket money. They are usually paid in cash, and rarely declare their incomes for taxation. Similar remarks apply to stay-at-home parents and others who operate informally. Governments commonly recognize the existence of such operations but choose not to intervene. In Macao, for instance, tutors who serve less than 7 students at a time or less than 21 people per day are not required to register with the government (Li and Choi, 2014).

Rarely do systems for quality assurance come into play with informal enterprises. Tutoring is commonly provided in the privacy of the homes of either the tutors or the students, and the arrangements may not even have written contracts. Limits to the powers of government intervention are also evident with internet tutoring. Such provision may be organized by companies and have written contracts, but again is usually received in the privacy of the students’ homes. Further, the internet providers may operate across international borders. In such circumstances the governments in the countries in which the providers are based may feel less pressure to regulate those providers, while the governments in the countries of the clients may find it impossible.

Hybrid enterprises include operations in which government teachers, sometimes organized by school authorities, tutor their own students after school hours. In Cambodia, this is the most common type of supplementary education. It is called ‘regular private tutoring’ (rien kuo theoumda), i.e. fee-based tutoring classes taught by mainstream schoolteachers. It is considered ‘regular’ because it focuses on the mainstream curriculum and resembles the mainstream classes in size and orientation. A similar type of tutoring is found in Vietnam...
(called di hoc them). The tutoring is organized by the school, and one survey found that over 70% of tutees attended extra classes in school rather than outside (Dang, 2013).

**Influence of international and regional organizations**

International and regional organizations can influence supplementary education through their support, opposition or neglect of the industry. Support can be provided through proclamations that additional tutoring is a positive component of student learning, and NGOs may provide funds for students to receive extra lessons. Alternatively, international and regional organizations may oppose supplementary education by insisting that it exacerbates social inequalities. This is most often the case when the industry is linked to overall trends towards educational privatization, which has been recognized as a human rights concern (Singh, 2015). Some large international NGOs, such as the Open Society Foundations (OSF) through its Privatization in Education Research Initiative, have publicized the negative dimensions of the supplementary education industry in this regard.

International and regional bodies may also simply neglect or ignore the phenomenon. This has been the general case to date: international organizations have usually not had the supplementary tutoring industry on their radar. Yet although the influence of international organizations has generally been limited, awareness has increased. For example, UNESCO’s 2013/14 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* includes a short section on shadow education (UNESCO, 2014), and the theme was echoed in UNESCO’s 2015 report entitled *Rethinking Education* (UNESCO, 2015).

**Education spending and equity issues**

Although the logic of marketization may imply a reduction in government expenditures, the supplementary education industry in East Asia shows a different picture. Household costs for education have increased throughout the region, but in most jurisdictions government expenditures on education have also increased. Despite extra education funding from the government, the supplementary education industry has remained vigorous and perhaps become even more active over the last ten years. It appears that government expenditures on education and the supplementary education industry are not connected by a simple causal function; rather, their complex relationships highlight an area where the discourse and logic of marketization diverge with situated practices. The following sections examine trends in both public education spending and household expenditures in order to shed light on the complexity of this relationship and its implications for equity.

**Public spending**

The countries and jurisdictions under review have varied levels of public spending on education, which includes spending on educational institutions, education administration and subsidies for private entities. In some countries, such as Vietnam in 2010 and Malaysia in 2009 and 2011, government education expenditures have accounted for 6% or more of GDP. Other jurisdictions have spent much less: public expenditures on education in Cambodia formed only 1.7% of GDP in 2005, and 2.6% of GDP in Macao (China) in 2009. Regionally,
the average portion of GDP spent on education in East Asia was 3.8% in 2012, which was lower than the global average of 4.8% (Edwards, 2012). In general, though, the trend has been towards increased spending. Eight of the ten jurisdictions under review enlarged their education budgets during the last decade, albeit some more so than others. Malaysia, for instance, increased its budget for education by 1.4 percentage points between 2006 and 2011, while Japan only did so by 0.4 percentage points (World Bank, n.d.).

These figures, however, do not tell the whole story of government funding. In some settings it is illuminating to review recurrent and capital expenditures separately. In Cambodia, for example, recurrent public expenditures on education have moved in the opposite direction from total expenditures as a percentage of GDP. Despite the increase in educational expenditures as a percentage of GDP, recurrent expenditures generally decreased between 2005 and 2014 (Cambodia, 2014; Brehm et al., 2012). This is significant, as such reductions in recurrent spending may create gaps that families feel have to be bridged with household resources.

**Household expenditures**

All of the countries and jurisdictions surveyed have significant household expenditures on education. The Republic of Korea has the highest expenditures by far, with households estimated to have spent 3% of GDP on supplementary education in 2010 (Lee, 2013). Households in other countries have spent far less as a percentage of GDP: Japan, for instance, spent 925 billion yen (US$12 billion) in 2010 on juku, which accounted for roughly 0.2% of GDP (Japan, 2013). Similarly, Singaporean households spent S$1.1 billion (US$850 million) on supplementary education in 2012/13, which was equivalent to roughly 0.3% of GDP (Tan, 2014a).

Even poor countries in the region have experienced significant household costs for education. In Cambodia, the NGO Education Partnership reported in 2007 that households spent between US$48 (in rural areas) and US$158 (in urban areas) per child on education each year (NEP, 2007). Among those surveyed, 38% of all household expenditures were for education fees, which included supplementary education. Similarly, a survey has suggested that in Chinese households with children aged 18 or below, 25% of total expenditures were devoted to education (Mok et al., 2009).

Household spending on education can have a large range within countries and jurisdictions. In Macao (China), for example, expenditures on supplementary education ranged from 6.7% to 30% of total household expenditures during 2007/08 (Kwok, 2010). The differences usually disadvantage poor families, who typically devote larger shares of household income to education. In the Republic of Korea, Kim and Lee (2010) found that ‘lower-income households spend a higher percentage of their income on private tutoring than do high-income households’. The situation is similar in Hong Kong (China), where survey respondents from the lowest income bands indicated that they allocated over 30% of their household incomes to private supplementary tutoring, whereas the overall average, according to 2010 household income data, was only 8.7% of household expenditures spent on one child (Bray et al., 2014). Comparable disparities have been found in Vietnam. Vu (2012), reporting data from a 2006 survey of 9,189 households, stated that the poorest households devoted 24.4% of total household expenditures to education while the richest households allocated only 6.1%. Vu suggested that this supported ‘the common argument that poorer households
view investment in human capital as the principal route out of poverty’. Household expenditures on education are related not only to class but also to ethnicity. In Malaysia, a 2004/05 survey reported by Kenayathulla (2012) showed that Chinese and Indian households spent more on supplementary education than did Malay and indigenous households. These disparities are of serious concern, as they indicate that supplementary education reinforces inequalities and widens the gap between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students.

Private tutoring enterprises may further exacerbate these inequities in pursuit of profits. The largest organizations in the supplementary education industry include companies that are publicly listed, in some cases in international rather than domestic markets. Such companies have an obligation to enrich their shareholders, sometimes at the expense of their teaching and learning goals. In China, for example, the after-school tutoring industry was predicted to expand from US$19.4 billion to US$32.5 billion in just five years from 2009 to 2014 (Chen et al., 2012).

Many private education businesses attempt to create more demand for their services artificially, by exploiting families’ fears about their children’s future in the knowledge economy. Marketing ploys are designed to portray regular schooling as inadequate and raise anxieties among parents and adolescents in order to offer solutions (Innes, 2014). These practices tend to disproportionately impact poorer families. Usury and rent-seeking activities are commonly found in the supplementary education industry, especially in Cambodia, Vietnam and China, where some poor families take out loans in order to afford private supplementary classes, and myriad services are designed to extract additional money from households in novel ways (e.g. selling examination papers to students in Cambodia).

**Addressing quality through regulation**

Over the past ten years, the fast-growing supplementary education industry in East Asia has usurped power over the rules, policies and functioning of education that was traditionally monopolized by states. Non-state actors now provide valued educational services to consumers, and this has caught many governments by surprise. The responses by governments to the supplementary industry have generally been reactive rather than proactive. As the industry has grown into an accepted reality for the educational lives of the majority of students in the region, governments have responded either by endeavouring to protect consumers of education (i.e. through commercial regulations) or by seeking to regulate pedagogical practices (i.e. through educational regulations).

The Republic of Korea is at one end of the spectrum, with a dedicated department responsible for shadow education within the MoE, strong machinery for devising and implementing regulations, and general acceptance by stakeholders that regulation is both desirable and necessary. At the other end of the spectrum, Cambodia has weaker infrastructure and less demand for the government to take a strong regulatory role. In some countries, the general lack of regulation by national governments has given rise to self-regulation movements within the supplementary education industry itself. The following sections discuss examples of commercial regulation, educational regulation and self-regulation of the supplementary education industry in East Asia over the past ten years.
Commercial regulations

Efforts to protect consumers through commercial regulations include safety mandates, taxation laws and price regulations. These regulations vary in the jurisdictions under review, but their general function is to bring educational businesses into line with the government’s treatment of other private companies.

For example, the Government of Malaysia requires all tutoring centres to register and meet standards of safety, while the Government of Macao (China) requires enterprises above a specific size to register, ensure the safety of the premises and pay taxes (Macao, 2002). In Taiwan Province of China, decentralized governance bodies responsible for special municipalities, counties and country-level cities approve and regulate ‘short-term learning centres’ (Taiwan, 2004). Tutoring enterprises in Singapore are subject to commercial regulations, and the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore targets tutors and tuition centres who under-declare income (Tan, 2014b). In Hong Kong (China), a 2001 document prepared for the Legislative Council concerning tutorial institutions highlighted the need for compliance on safety, sanitation, and charging of fees (Hong Kong, 2001). The government in the Republic of Korea has set a ceiling on fees charged by supplementary education centres, and has set up a phone hotline for parents or students to complain if centres overcharge (Kim, 2013). In China’s Chongqing province, prices charged by tutorial centres must be approved by authorities and posted publicly. Tutoring institutions in China are subject to commercial regulations, but the degree of enforcement varies in different provinces and localities.

Educational regulations

Another approach to regulation focuses on educational dimensions. Regulations in this domain have been both reactive and limited. Some countries, such as Cambodia and the Republic of Korea, have tried unsuccessfully to ban private supplementary tutoring outright (Dawson, 2009). Governments generally respond to the rise of supplementary tutoring through the establishment or enforcement of teacher codes of conduct (after tutoring has been discovered), or through restrictions on who can be a tutor.

Many jurisdictions, including the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China, prohibit teachers from providing private supplementary tutoring (Korea, 2013; Zhan, 2014). In Hong Kong (China), the Code for the Education Profession, though not explicitly referring to supplementary education, states that teachers should not privately gain from professional relationships with students (Hong Kong, 1995). In China, the 2008 Rules of Professional Ethics of Teachers state that teachers should not gain personal profit, but do not explicitly identify private tutoring as a prohibited activity (China, 2008, 2013). In Guangzhou, Xinjiang, Tianjin, Jiangsu, and Shandong provinces, provincial and local governments have prohibited teachers from providing tutoring and have identified penalties, but enforcement varies in different parts of the country (Kwok, 2010; Bray and Kwo, 2014). Some countries have restrictions that are weakly enforced: in Cambodia, for example, the 2008 code of teachers’ professional ethics states: ‘Teachers shall not raise money or collect informal fees or run any business inside the class’ (Cambodia, 2008). However, supplementary education continues with little accountability (Brehm et al., 2012). Teachers in Japan are prohibited from profit-making activities (Japan, 2006), but supplementary education enterprises are entirely unregulated as educational institutions (Dierkes, 2010).
Some countries allow teachers to conduct private tutoring under certain conditions. In Vietnam, for example, the government has prohibited teachers from tutoring students in primary schools and whole-day secondary schools but permits tutoring of students in half-day schools (Vietnam, 2012; Dang, 2013). Teachers may not themselves organize private tutoring in schools, but principals may organize tutoring in schools for which teachers may be remunerated, or approve private tutoring outside of school. In Singapore, teachers are permitted to provide tutoring if it does not detract from school duties. The MoE states that such work should not exceed six hours per week, and school principals have the authority to manage requests from teachers to undertake outside part-time employment (Lu, 2004). The government of Malaysia permits teachers to undertake supplementary tutoring if certain requirements are met, including advance approval from the government and limits on the number of hours the teacher can tutor per week (Malaysia, 2006). Macao (China) is the only jurisdiction reviewed that has no regulations that restrict or guide teachers in public schools who wish to undertake supplementary private tutoring.

Other educational regulations tend to be concerned with class size and tutor qualifications. For example the Hong Kong Education Bureau has issued orders about tutors’ qualifications, maximum class sizes, management organization and operational timelines for tutorial institutions (Hong Kong, 2007, 2012; Bray and Kwo, 2014). In the Republic of Korea, tutorial centres are required to close by certain times in the evening set by local education bureaus (Choi, 2013). No governments surveyed have regulations in place that address curricular materials or teaching quality within the supplementary education industry.

Self-regulation

As the supplementary education industry grows, it tends to become more proactive in implementing policies regarding pedagogical practices, as businesses realize that their long-term health depends on consumer confidence, and that companies that demonstrate standards of quality may be able to squeeze out competitors that do not. In some of the jurisdictions reviewed, educational entrepreneurs have developed regulations in the form of professional associations that encourage the adoption of voluntary standards and codes of conduct. Examples include the China Education Training Union, the Japan Juku Association, the Korea Association of Hakwon, the Malaysia Tutor Association, and the Great Taichung Supplementary Education Association in Taiwan Province of China. This self-regulatory strategy is only seen in formal enterprises, as a way to preserve autonomy and enhance consumer confidence; similar practices are not found among informal supplementary education enterprises. Though it may benefit consumers, the trend towards self-regulation is a clear example of the loss of power by national governments in regards to situated forms of marketization.

Outlook for the future

It is clear that after decades of privatization processes in education, supplementary education is an enduring feature in all the countries and jurisdictions reviewed, and is unlikely to go away by itself or through government regulation. The expansion and diversification of the industry has greatly increased the number of spaces and actors in the provision of education, which poses challenges for governments in the management, regulation and control of the education sector as a whole.
The nature of the supplementary education industry in a given country or jurisdiction depends on the historical context and the form of decentralization enacted. Governance mechanisms will need to be tailored to local conditions instead of being normatively applied regionally or worldwide. Also, since market forces tend to adapt more quickly than governments, regulations must be designed in ways that limit unintended consequences. Tight regulations may strangle the industry, whereas loose restrictions may leave policy loopholes that education businesses can exploit.

**Key findings and policy recommendations**

Governments in the countries and jurisdictions reviewed have regulated the supplementary education industry differently and with varying levels of success. Outright bans of private tutoring do not appear to work, and codes of ethics often do not include the necessary accountability mechanisms to prohibit teachers from tutoring their own students. Treating the industry like a business provides a way for governments to regulate some activities, but pedagogical regulations appear to be difficult to create and implement. The following policy recommendations highlight ways in which governments and international organizations can move towards addressing some of these challenges.

1. **Strengthen educational regulations**

Effectively governing the supplementary education industry requires a focus on both commercial and educational regulations. None of the jurisdictions reviewed have robust regulations in both areas, and the majority of regulations are commercial rather than educational. It is arguably time for the educational regulations to catch up. Strengthening educational regulations for this industry is an emerging need in education governance in the region, and international organizations including UNESCO have the opportunity to lead the way.

2. **Emphasize consumer education**

Some spaces in the supplementary education industry, such as informal tutoring and in particular internet tutoring, are likely beyond the reach of government regulation. In these cases, the best way for governments to regulate the market is through consumer education. With the help of the media, community bodies and other partners, governments can assist families in determining whether supplementary education is needed at all, and in evaluating aspects of provision such as safety, quality, efficacy and value. Families might gain insights into the different possible styles of tutoring and learning, the qualities to expect in tutors, and the relative costs and benefits. Awareness-raising may also extend to issues of child abuse when tutors are alone with children in the privacy of homes, and of cyber-bullying when students are accessing tutoring via the internet.

3. **Address inequities**

Supplementary education can create or worsen educational inequities, and governments must take steps to mitigate this effect. For formal tutoring, governments can require individuals and businesses to register and attempt to regulate fees. For informal tutoring, governments can promote consumer education with the express purpose of helping parents and students
decide whether private services are necessary and/or offer good value for their money. In particular, steps should be taken to educate poorer families about their options and rights when it comes to educational services, to prevent them from being manipulated by profit-seeking enterprises.

4. Encourage further research

Constantly evolving and changing, the supplementary education industry in East Asia has generally evaded comprehension by researchers and policy-makers. The data presented here attest to the difficulty of understanding the phenomenon: no country has robust reporting on the complex and multifaceted nature of supplementary education, although the Republic of Korea is in the vanguard. In addition, the influence of international organizations has been limited, though awareness has increased in recent years.

To address this knowledge gap, national governments and international organizations should undertake and encourage research studies on the scale, scope, nature and impact of supplementary education. It is vital for policy-makers to know who receives what types of supplementary education and at what cost. Especially desirable are case studies to show the types of marketization that flourish (or are obstructed) in different societies at different points in time. Such case studies may focus on individuals, families and communities as well as on institutions and wider populations. Further domains for investigation concern the impact of the supplementary education industry on regular schooling.

Because this is in most cases a private industry, governments may need to put laws in place that require supplementary education providers to allow universities and other official organizations to conduct research into their practices and business models. Research on pedagogical practices and learning implications may complement the business research already being conducted by some companies. International organizations can lead the way in this field by building on the work of UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (Bray, 2009; Dang and Rogers, 2008; Bray and Lykins, 2012).

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Introduction

Historically, the South Caucasus has been a troubled region, surrounded by the strong regional powers of Iran, Russia and Turkey, and plagued by still unresolved ethno-political conflicts and lingering economic crisis. As of 2015, the region still faces major challenges, namely protracted poverty, sluggish economic reforms, considerable populations of refugees and internally displaced persons, significant environmental problems, insufficient human rights protection and rule of law, and widespread corruption.

This review focuses on the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. During the last two decades, these three countries have made significant efforts to reform their education systems. They have implemented a wide range of reforms targeted at improving the quality of education. One of the primary objectives was to move away from the Soviet education system towards one that is more consistent with respective national development goals and a rapidly changing global environment characterized by increased international competition. This review examines the most salient of these reforms to education governance and offers policy recommendations for moving forward.

Background and regional context

The countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia gained independence in the early 1990s in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. As a result of the dissolution of the previous regime, the newly independent states witnessed a sharp decrease in living standards. In 1994 the hyperinflation rate was 6,000% in Georgia, 4,000% in Armenia and 2,000% in Azerbaijan (Isayeva, 2012). Quality standards and financing schemes in both healthcare and education eroded quickly. Georgia’s state budget for education in 1996, for example, was only 5% in real terms of what it was in 1989 (Sharvashidze, 2003). In 1999 Armenia’s per capita spending on health and education was US$7 and US$19, respectively; these figures were US$6 and US$24 in Azerbaijan, and US$5 and US$11 in Georgia (Becker, 2013).

The early 2000s saw some improvements in economic development, with per capita GDP increasing by around 10% to 20% annually (World Bank, n.d.). This progress was impaired by the global financial crisis of 2008, which led to a sharp decrease in GDP per capita in all three countries. Except for Azerbaijan, which is rich in oil and gas resources, the region saw an increase in unemployment rates and a rise in the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line. The effects of the economic downturn were most dramatic in Armenia, where overall output in the country contracted by 14%, and roughly one-third of the population was unemployed and/or living under the poverty line (World Bank, 2014a–b).

While all three countries declared their commitment to democratic principles in state governance following independence, what they have achieved so far could be at best labelled a semi-democratic governance model, with Azerbaijan lagging further behind its two
neighbours in this regard. With all of the good intentions to build democratic and fair societies, the states of the South Caucasus, upon acquiring independence, almost immediately plunged into recessive practices of widespread corruption. The former ‘Soviet-period’ mentality, converging with the newly introduced rules of ‘wild’ capitalism, provoked the exponential growth of corrupt practices, fuelled by the behavioural patterns of both the beneficiaries and providers of services.

In the mid-2000s the paths of the three South Caucasus states diverged in combating corruption. While corruption continued at high levels in Azerbaijan and Armenia, in Georgia the country’s leadership declared an irreconcilable war on corruption. The top-down approach, further echoed by the rapid rise of strong voices in civil society, and supported by cross-sectoral legislation, massively slashed corruption in the country. By 2012, Georgia ranked 51 on the global Corruption Perception Index, while the rankings of Armenia and Azerbaijan were 105 and 139 respectively (Transparency International, 2012). In recent years, however, corruption in Armenia and Azerbaijan seems to be improving gradually but steadily. By 2013, Armenia had climbed 9 points up on the Index, while Azerbaijan’s ranking had improved by 12 points (Transparency International, 2013).

During the first years of independence in the South Caucasus, the absence of proper regulatory mechanisms and dramatically decreased financing left educational institutions operating in legislative chaos for several years. It was not until the late 1990s that the countries started introducing new education laws, followed by national curricula and other regulatory documents and mechanisms regarding educational standards and structure, licensing and accreditation, teacher qualification, and textbook development, among other things.

The countries’ Constitutions all guarantee free access to compulsory education through primary and lower secondary school, and enrolment rates are relatively high, especially at compulsory education levels (UNICEF, 2010a–c; World Bank, n.d.). At the same time, each country has issues related to access to education. Georgia, for instance, saw a decrease in net enrolment rates of up to 12% at the transition point from primary to lower secondary school, during the period from 2008 to 2014 (World Bank, 2014c). High drop-out rates are worrisome, particularly in Armenia where the drop-out rate grew by about 250% annually between 2002 and 2005 (UNICEF, 2010a).

Literacy in the region is similarly complicated. The legacy of the Soviet education system means that literacy rates have traditionally been extremely high (above 99%) (UIS, 2013). However functional literacy – defined as the reading, writing and calculation skills needed to fully function in the particular community in which an individual lives – is a growing problem. The 2009 PISA results indicated that only a small percentage of 15-year-olds – 30% to 40% in Georgia, depending on the subject, and 28% to 50% in Azerbaijan – scored a level 2 or above, which is the threshold usually referred to as functional literacy (OECD, 2009). These results are a very important warning sign for the education systems as a whole, since they mean that over 60% of the 15-year-old in-school population would be considered functionally illiterate by international standards.

In general, governments in the region have failed to mobilize adequate financing for the education sector, and schools in all three countries remain underfunded. Education spending in the South Caucasus is below the global average as well as the averages for lower-middle-
income and OECD countries. The discrepancies are even more telling when compared in terms of total government spending. Countries with the same level of government expenditures spend, on average, almost twice as much of their GDP on education than Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (World Bank, n.d.)

Analysis and emerging trends

Decentralization and school-based management

Beginning in the 1990s, central governments delegated some of their powers to newly created educational agencies operating directly under government or ministry supervision. These agencies assumed responsibility for activities formerly performed by the Ministry of Education, such as curriculum development, exam administration for teachers and students, teacher professional development, school licensing and accreditation, data collection, and infrastructure development. However, the most fundamental shift towards education decentralization in the region was the adoption of the school-based management (SBM) model.

In Georgia, the 2005 Law on Education introduced SBM. Public schools were transformed into independent legal entities of public law, and a board of trustees – including representatives of teachers, parents and students – was elected for every public school in the country. School boards were given responsibility for electing (and dismissing) the school principal, approving the school’s development strategy and budget, and monitoring the school’s expenditures. Education Resource Centres were established to act as intermediaries between the MoE and schools, and regional and district education departments were removed from the decision-making hierarchy.

Armenia also implemented an SBM system, beginning as a pilot project in 1999 and adopted throughout the country by 2005. School boards were granted power to elect school principals and define the terms of their salaries; confirm internal disciplinary rules; approve the school’s annual budget, reports and staffing plans; and decide on the basic use and distribution of school revenues. School principals are accountable to the school boards and responsible for carrying out their decisions.

Unlike Georgia, Armenia’s school boards include representatives from regional and local administrative bodies. These administrative bodies are responsible for ensuring the implementation of state education policy in the regions. They supervise the performance of educational institutions to ensure compliance with regulatory norms; coordinate and supervise the registration of school-age children and ensure they are enrolled in educational institutions; oversee the construction, use and maintenance of school buildings; carry out the certification of school principals and teachers; and assist in assessments to evaluate the knowledge of learners and graduates. The MoE is also involved in school principal selection: candidates take standardized examinations and are interviewed by a selection committee established by the MoE prior to being elected by the respective school boards.

Azerbaijan took a more cautious approach to decentralization, limiting SBM to small-scale pilot projects. Schools are largely managed by local and regional governments: teachers are allocated by the local administrative unit, utilities are paid directly by the rayon (region), and
other material resources are allocated by the *rayon*, given the latter has sufficient funds (Bush et al., 2010).

While the SBM model represents progress towards decentralized education governance, the governments’ propensity for micromanaging schools has been a major obstacle. Although on paper schools in all three countries have autonomy in developing their staffing plans, in practice most schools negotiate these plans with the MoEs. Informal regulations are specific about how many support staff, for instance, a school with a certain number of school buildings and student population size should hire. It is also common practice for the MoEs to unofficially instruct schools not to spend their surplus money.

Georgia’s MoE has gone even further in undermining SBM. Between 2010 and 2012 the MoE made several changes that limited schools’ organizational autonomy and oriented education governance back towards centralization. Although the main principles of the school boards have not changed much, the MoE now has the right to interfere in schools’ internal decision-making processes by, for example, appointing a ministry representative to the school board, dismissing school boards, and dismissing or appointing school principals in certain circumstances. Amendments to the education law made in 2011 contradict the initial concept of decentralization by creating specific barriers to the effective functioning of the SBM model.

**Privatization and marketization**

Education provision has been privatized to varying degrees in the South Caucasus, with the private sector making the largest inroads in Georgia. During the first years of education reform, Georgia established strong public–private partnerships (PPPs) for education provision and extended public financing to private schools through a voucher system. In Azerbaijan, private schools are required to apply for a state license, which is normally granted for five years. The government makes recommendations and stipulates management procedures for private schools, but does not provide any funding for students.

The proliferation of private schools has been most pronounced at the tertiary level. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, there were no legal provisions in place to regulate the process of establishing private institutions, and the number of private universities grew exponentially. In just two years, from 1991 to 1992, the MoE in Georgia issued over 200 licenses to private higher educational institutions (Sharvashidze, 2005). With a few exceptions, these private universities were very small institutions of dubious quality often referred to as ‘diploma mills’. As a reaction to this issue, the Georgian education reform agenda included as a top priority the establishment and enforcement of minimum quality requirements for tertiary educational institutions, both public and private. The MoE introduced a mandatory accreditation process (currently known as ‘university authorization’) for all higher education institutions in 2005. Universities can only operate if they receive authorization from the state. The authorization process evaluates the institution’s academic programmes as well as its material and human resources, according to the National Authorization Standard. Authorization determines the degree programmes – undergraduate, master’s or doctoral – that a university can offer, as well as its admissions procedures and criteria. Universities’ individual study programmes are evaluated through a separate accreditation procedure laid out by the National Qualification Framework, and participation is voluntary.
Privatization has been less notable at the primary and secondary education levels. Georgia has shown the largest increase in private enrolment in pre-tertiary education, from 1.7% of all students in the 2000/01 academic year to 9% in 2014/15 (Geostat, 2016). In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the share of students enrolled in private schools remains below 2% (World Bank, n.d.). This difference is mainly due to public financing: in Georgia, state money follows the student, regardless of whether he or she attends public or private school. In the initial version of this funding system, private and public schools received the same amount per student. The financing regime has since been modified, so that the per capita allocation is lower for private schools than for public schools.

The ‘money follows student’ voucher system, along with school choice, introduced elements of marketization into the education sector as part of the reform agenda in Georgia. Policy-makers expected that schools would respond by competing for students, which would in turn improve the quality of the educational services provided by schools. They also anticipated efficiency improvements, as ‘bad’ schools would gradually lose students to ‘good’ schools and be forced to shut down, leading to fewer schools and better use of resources. The policy is predicated on the assumptions that parents are able to easily acquire information on the quality of schools, and that the more popular schools will also be the ones delivering high-quality education. However, because of a lack of information about how the policy has affected parents’ decisions and schools’ behaviours, it is difficult to gauge its impact. In the best-case scenario, impact is limited to schools in urban areas, because parents in rural areas do not have many choices. According to the 2009 PISA results, 26% of 15-year-old students do not have more than one choice of schools to attend.

In Georgia, teacher professional development was also briefly outsourced to private providers – mostly NGOs – who had to be accredited by the relevant government agency. Teachers were given vouchers to attend trainings offered by the providers of their choice, based on their preferences. After two years, however, the MoE cancelled the voucher scheme, and currently the government only finances trainings offered by the state-run National Teacher Professional Development Centre.

Private supplementary tutoring is also widespread in the South Caucasus. It is seen at all levels of education but is particularly endemic at the secondary level. Studies conducted in Azerbaijan and Georgia show that the percentage of secondary school students receiving private tutoring has increased over the last two decades. This growth has been attributed to various factors, including the perceived low quality of education in mainstream institutions and inadequate teacher compensation. Parents react to the poor quality of teaching in schools by hiring private tutors for their children. At the same time, many teachers seek to supplement their low incomes by offering after-school tutoring to their students. This situation drains teachers’ time and energy away from classroom teaching, and creates a financial incentive for teachers to fail to cover the entire curriculum in class, so that students who want to pass exams are forced to pay for private sessions. Georgia’s Teachers’ Professional Code, approved in 2010, attempts to address this issue by prohibiting teachers from tutoring their own students, but it is largely unenforced.

Overall, private tutoring substantially weakens the mainstream schooling system by diverting both human and financial resources away from schools. It also exacerbates educational inequities, as students from poorer families are unable to afford tutoring and are consequently
less competitive in university entrance examinations. Private tutoring widens the already large gap in academic performance and corresponding life opportunities between poor and affluent students. It also undermines SBM by decreasing parental involvement in school boards and education decision-making. In the SBM model, parents are supposed to be important players at the school level: they should approve and plan school budgets, elect school principals, and monitor school activities. Private tutoring, however, is far more responsive to parents’ needs and demands than schools, with significantly less effort required from the parents, making them less likely to take on leadership roles in school improvement.

**Influence of international and regional organizations**

During the last decade, several key international organizations have been active in developing education in the region. The Open Society Foundations were perhaps the pioneer in promoting education reforms in the South Caucasus as well as in many other post-Soviet countries. Created by philanthropist George Soros in the 1980s and formerly known as the Soros Foundations and then the Open Society Institute (OSI), OSF began with ‘demonstration projects’ aimed at modelling best practices at the school level. During the second phase of these projects, OSF shifted focus to ensuring sustainability and increasing the systemic impact of its education initiatives. In the third phase, OSF made concentrated efforts to get involved with national education policy-making, in order to influence reforms on a larger scale. Unlike most donor agencies, OSF gives national foundations considerable autonomy in setting priorities within some broadly defined policy goals.

The World Bank has been an extremely influential actor in the region, supporting the implementation of the most radical educational reforms. Starting in the late 1990s, the World Bank assisted the South Caucasus countries by identifying areas for reform, developing strategies and programmes, and providing financial support through grants and loans. All three countries benefited from the World Bank’s assistance in capacity-building, infrastructure development, curriculum development, and assessment reform (World Bank, 1997, 2006). The organization also provided support for teacher professional development in Azerbaijan and Georgia; SBM and school financing reform in Armenia and Georgia; textbook development in Armenia; and teacher certification in Georgia.

Another major component of reforms supported by the World Bank has been the development of Education Management Information Systems. Georgia in particular has made important progress in EMIS development; according to the World Bank’s Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) study, results from Georgia’s assessments are regularly and widely disseminated (World Bank, 2011). However, the information produced is still not sufficient to enable effective decision-making or improvements in strategic management. Part of the problem is that donor agencies, rather than the MoE itself, fund and conduct most of the key analytical studies, which does not help the MoE develop the technical capacity and institutional knowledge needed to produce and utilize EMIS data and sustain these practices in the long term.

This pattern is symptomatic of a larger issue of donor dependency in the region, as countries still tend to rely heavily on the World Bank and other agencies to provide technical support and policy guidance. For instance, in 2013 the MoE of Georgia asked the World Bank to provide policy review and recommendations for the country’s new education strategy. The
recommendations proposed by the World Bank have been acknowledged in the main reform areas outlined in the National Vision for the Education Sector. It is difficult to know, however, if the MoE’s rationale for involving the World Bank was related to a desire to achieve more legitimacy for their vision and actions in the eyes of the government and the citizenry, rather than a true lack of strategic and policy development capacity.

USAID has also played an important role in some aspects of education governance reform, particularly in Georgia. With support from USAID and help from a team of professionals at the University of California, Los Angeles, a Georgian university has developed a two-year graduate-level programme in education administration. Graduates of the programme are gradually moving up to positions in school leadership, holding managerial positions at the MoE and its auxiliary agencies. USAID also provided technical support to the Georgian government in revising its per capita school financing formula.

Since the mid-2000s, the South Caucasus countries have begun to participate in international benchmarking initiatives and assessments, such as the OECD’s PISA assessment, and the TIMSS and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) established by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). However, it is hard to argue that these assessments have influenced policy-making in these countries. Online media in Georgia have started covering the country’s benchmarking results, and national TV stations in both Georgia and Armenia recently covered the international assessment results as well. Yet in general, the results have not been given much consideration by the wider public, and political discussion around the data is limited at best. Furthermore, some governments see the assessments as a threat, despite their low political impact. For example, after Georgia’s 2009 PISA results were made public and shared by a local online newspaper, the MoE decided to cancel the country’s participation in PISA 2012. The declared rationale behind the decision was distrust of the study’s validity, though it seems likely that the MoE was more concerned that the comparative results would negatively impact perceptions of the ministry’s effectiveness.

**Improving the quality of teaching and learning**

Another endemic educational issue is low-quality teaching, mainly due to low levels of qualifications, motivation and accountability. In all three South Caucasus countries, there has been an influx of teachers in recent years, particularly of younger teachers with low qualifications, leading to an oversupply problem. In Armenia, for example, surveys indicate that only 77% of teachers in primary schools received full-scale professional training (UNICEF, n.d.). Inadequate training and extremely low pay result in profoundly low levels of motivation and morale within the teaching profession (World Bank, 2014a–c). In Georgia, for instance, teacher salaries are almost half the national salary average (World Bank, 2014c; UNICEF, 2010c), and similar discrepancies can be seen in the other countries in the region. Comprehensive teacher evaluation systems are largely absent, making teacher performance difficult to assess and improve (World Bank, 2014c). Where quality assurance mechanisms do exist, they are often undermined by insufficient capacities at the administrative level.

Efforts to improve teaching quality have varied across the region but are mainly focused on certification and training. Armenia and Georgia have introduced teacher certification to
address issues of both quality and oversupply, yet the certification schemes are quite different in the two countries.

Georgia introduced teacher certification in 2010. Standards were developed by the Teacher Professional Development Centre, while tests were developed and administered by the National Assessment and Examination Centre. From 2010 to 2014, certification was voluntary; starting in 2015 teachers who failed certification exams would lose their teaching positions. In 2014 only 17.5% of teachers successfully passed their examinations (Ellena, 2014). The Teachers’ Professional Union actively advocated against teacher certifications, but the MoE did not change its position on teacher certification. In 2012, the MoE fired the head of the National Assessment and Examination Centre.

Armenia’s approach to teacher certification, implemented in 2011, is radically different from that of Georgia. According to the Law on Education (Article 26), instead of taking exams teachers are certified by a commission that awards ranks to teachers based on ‘professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, efficiency of research, analytical and innovative capabilities, seniority, and other relevant indicators, such as received promotions and encouragement, involvement in professional contests, and self-imposed professional training’. The school principal also plays a role in the certification process, by preparing a list of teachers who are to be reviewed for certification each year. The list is submitted to the certification commission, and teachers are notified at least three months in advance of their upcoming review.

Teacher training reform has been similarly varied. Azerbaijan’s Quality Basic Education Standards, introduced in 2010, aimed to address the issue of underqualification, yet the question of whether teacher training should be delivered through a decentralized or centralized model is still unresolved. In Armenia, teacher training is regulated by law: teachers who undergo certification are required to pass pre-certification training financed by the school, in accordance with procedures established by the authorized state body on education. Pre-certification requirements call for 80 hours of training, broken down into 3 categories: 60 hours of subject content and pedagogy training, 12 hours of information and communication technology (ICT) training, and 8 hours of training in education law.

In Georgia, the Law on General Education sets minimum formal qualifications for entering the teaching profession, describes routes for progressing in the teaching career, and dictates minimum salaries for public school teachers with different qualifications (e.g. certification, years of experience and educational credentials). There are currently plans to develop in-service and pre-service teacher training programmes based on professional standards established by the National Teacher Professional Development Centre. Programmes will be accredited by the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement as a pre-requisite for students to receive state scholarships, which are awarded to students enrolled in both public and private teacher education programmes. The government defines tuition fees for pre-service teacher training programmes and funds participation in professional development programmes for in-service teachers. In-service training is largely demand-driven: teachers choose the courses they want to attend, and the training courses are not developed for the purpose of preparing the teachers for certification but rather improving their competencies in general.
There has been some effort to improve leadership among teachers, as well as school administrators, in both Armenia and Georgia. In Armenia, new school governance frameworks aim to increase teachers’ motivation and empowerment by encouraging their participation in decision-making and school boards in particular (TEMPUS, 2014). In Georgia there is wide recognition of the need to nurture stronger leadership skills, particularly among school principals, and to seek out candidates for principal positions who possess such skills. This approach will likely be linked to new formulas for calculating salaries (World Bank, 2014c).

The low quality of materials and curricula is also an issue in all three countries. After establishing independence, each country was tasked with developing a new national curriculum for the education system. Because the Soviet regime defined curricula and syllabi at the central government level, the South Caucasus countries had little to no capacity to properly identify learning objectives, translate them into national curricula, and communicate the respective objectives to educational institutions. Despite support from donor agencies, the development of national curricula has proven a major challenge. The current curricula in place in the region’s schools – especially at the upper secondary level – has been widely recognized as rigid and unresponsive to the needs and aspirations of students. Graduates are not prepared to meet the demands of labour markets, and youth unemployment is on the rise: 35% of young people aged 15–24 are unemployed in Armenia, 33% in Georgia and 14% in Azerbaijan (Eurostat, 2014). Governments, especially in Armenia and Georgia, have announced intentions to better prepare the younger labour force for the knowledge-based global economy. Yet this is unlikely to be achieved without an overhaul of the curriculum, in conjunction with critical improvements in teacher’s capacities to implement the changes.

Not surprisingly, irrelevant curricula and underqualified and underpaid teachers do not foster motivation among students. In an attempt to mitigate this problem, in 2008 Georgia introduced a reward system that awarded gold and silver medals to secondary students with high grade point averages (GPAs), and gifted personal computers to ninth-grade graduates with perfect GPAs. As policy-makers explained, the rationale behind introducing the new rewards system was to motivate students to excel and to fight gang culture in schools. Initially the programme seemed to be effective, as the number of medal and computer recipients tripled over the next three years. However, the school-leaving examinations introduced in 2010 showed that the students with perfect GPAs received very low scores on the exams, and some gold-medal recipients failed to meet the minimum university admissions requirements.

Reducing educational inequities

Equity in education is a persistent problem in the region. While gender equity in school enrolment is relatively high, differences in access exist among various groups, and those most vulnerable may be excluded from the educational process. In Armenia, for example, gross enrolment in secondary school is 1.3 times higher in the richest income quintile than in the poorest (UNICEF, 2010a). In Georgia, the proportion of children of secondary school age who are still attending primary school is significantly higher in rural areas, among children from poorer households, and among ethnic minorities (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). Educational opportunities in Azerbaijan are severely limited for children with disabilities: according to a UNICEF report, only 29% of children aged 10 to 15 years attend regular secondary schools,
whereas 44% attend special boarding schools, 17% receive education at home, and 10% do not study at all (McCabe, 2011).

The region also has considerable discrepancies in student performance based on socio-economic status and geographic location. In Georgia, for example, results from the 2009 PISA showed that students living in the capital city of Tbilisi outperformed their peers in rural areas by 35 to 49 points (World Bank, 2014). Results from the TIMSS assessment showed that Georgian students whose parents had high levels of education – typically associated with higher socio-economic status – improved their performance by 45 points in science and 79 points in mathematics between 2007 and 2011. The opposite was true for students whose parents had only basic education: their performance declined during the same years by 16 points in science and 25 points in math. Reading achievement results from the PIRLS indicated that students with higher parental education improved their performance by 24 points.

In Armenia and Georgia, education financing has been the main target of reforms to address regional inequities. Prior to these reforms, local municipalities financed schools, which caused significant variations in per student expenditures across regions. Research found that per student allocation in one region of Georgia, for example, was three times higher than in a poorer region of the country (Herczyński, 2002). The central government in Georgia provided subsidies to poorer regions to equalize education expenditures, but due to a lack of clear criteria and transparency, this process did not result in more equitable spending. Inequalities were further exacerbated by misallocations of funds at the local level. Local governments were responsible for developing school budgets based on the information provided by schools, but no clear criteria existed for determining the validity of the data, so whether the local government accepted the figures submitted by the school was a matter of arbitrary decision-making (UNESCO, 2008).

In an effort to address these issues and increase equity as well as transparency and efficiency in school funding, both Armenia and Georgia introduced the ‘money follows student’ principle, such that schools receive per capita grants based on the number of students enrolled. Armenia started by piloting the new financing model in 1997 and completed the transition process in 2005. Georgia began in 2005 and transformed the financing model in just over a year. In both countries, the rationale behind introducing per capita funding was to enhance school autonomy, encourage school consolidation and reduce teacher redundancy. However, the simple per student allocation formula, while accounting for school location, could not accommodate the special needs of small rural schools. By 2009, more than 50% of Georgian schools had budget deficits, thus creating negative implications for equity in resource allocation (USAID, 2012).

In response to this situation, both countries had to make changes to their respective allocation formulas. In Georgia, for example, new regulations introduced in 2011 call for varying per capita allocations according to grade level and the number of students. Public schools are grouped into five categories according to the size of their student population. Each size group is assigned one coefficient for per capita funding for students in Grades 1–8, and a higher coefficient for Grades 9–12. The coefficient is used to calculate per capita funding for each student in the school.
Although Azerbaijan has not implemented school financing reforms, it has made an effort to increase equity in access to tertiary education, being the first among the South Caucasus countries to establish a national body to provide a fair and valid admissions process for higher education institutions. Launched in 1992, the State Commission for Student Admission (SSAC) develops and administers entrance exams, collects applications, creates databases and processes information. Since 2005 it has also been responsible for the enrolment of students in postgraduate courses. Unlike the similar agencies established in Georgia and Armenia, the SSAC is not accountable to the MoE but instead operates directly under the authority of the President.

**Increasing accountability and transparency**

Accountability frameworks for education in the South Caucasus countries have changed little throughout the reform period and tend to be unclear. In Georgia and Armenia, school principals are technically accountable to school boards, which are supposed to be responsible for monitoring school expenditures and operations. In practice, however, school boards have not assumed that responsibility. Instead, inspectorates under the auspices of the MoEs are responsible for school oversight, and some quality assurance responsibilities are also delegated to regional education departments. In general, the MoEs do not have instruments in place for holding schools accountable for their results.

In addition, educational corruption is a chronic condition for the entire region. In Armenia, for example, education is one of the most corrupt sectors in society (Aleksanyan, 2012). Some of the manifestations of latent corruption may be traced to the interplay between the formal autonomy of educational institutions and the de facto intervention of the state in the management structures of the schools. This has especially been the case at the tertiary education level. Some research suggests that the state has never abandoned its interest in retaining control over higher education institutions. Georgia and Armenia have seen a common practice of top university leadership appointments being directly influenced by central government, in some cases even by the countries’ presidents themselves (Dobbins and Khachatryan, 2014). This practice may be further impairing already weak accountability frameworks in the education sector.

Political corruption in education is particularly problematic. Increased political party membership of school principals has led school communities and education experts to express concern over the politicization of schools. Specifically, governments in the region use their power over school principals to manipulate presidential, parliamentary or even local election processes, by forcing school principals to advertise the ruling party among teachers and parents, and in some cases to assist the party in falsifying election results, as polling stations are normally located on school premises. Research suggests this practice is rife throughout the region, with one study conducted in Armenia in 2012 suggesting that party membership is a prerequisite for becoming a school principal.

Nevertheless, some efforts to combat corruption and improve accountability and transparency can be seen in the region. Georgia has taken steps towards solving the problem of educational corruption through its anti-corruption campaigns, and Armenia recently developed
unprecedented academic honesty frameworks that indicate a strong positive trend (Dobbins and Khachatryan, 2014; Armutlieva, 2014). In addition, all three countries introduced national school-leaving examinations, with the goal of using student assessment to improve accountability and quality in education.

In both Azerbaijan and Georgia, student examination results and school evaluations have been used to bring aspects of market accountability to schools. For example, in 2011 Georgia launched the ‘School Branding’ programme, through which the MoE awards stars to schools based on a set of criteria and indicators that includes student test results as well as measures for teacher qualification, school safety, the quality of teaching and learning, and the status of school infrastructure. Participation in the programme is mandatory for public schools and voluntary for private schools, and evaluative information is made available to the public.

Although the impact of Georgia’s School Branding programme has not yet been evaluated, there are indications that the evaluation criteria are not very informative of a school’s progress. For instance, school safety was only based on the presence of physical safety mechanisms, such as school police, surveillance cameras and fences, which provide an incomplete picture of safety in schools. Also, criteria such as student performance on university admission exams and national Olympiads tend to reflect the composition of the student population rather than provide any measure of effective teaching. Schools located in wealthier neighbourhoods score higher, and the ten schools that were identified and publicized as top schools were all in urban areas.

Because of the imprecision of evaluation instruments, market accountability mechanisms may be misleading for parents and demotivating for teachers and school leadership. In some cases, market accountability in secondary schools has also led to increased drop-out rates, as school started to identify students who would score low on national exams and urged them to leave the schools (for instance by pressuring parents to transfer their children to vocational training institutions). Moreover, these mechanisms can be unfair to schools, as results depend heavily on students’ socio-economic background rather than objective indicators of school quality or school environment.

**Outlook for the future**

The education governance reforms implemented in the South Caucasus during the last two decades aimed at improving the efficiency and quality of the education system. Unfortunately, the reforms have not produced the expected results. In spite of many advances in decentralization, the countries are still struggling with the remnants of Soviet central planning. Reforms have suffered from a considerable lack of long-term vision, key limitations in the school accountability strategies, inconsistencies between the declared policies and implemented strategies, and varied capacity among schools in assuming the powers delegated to them.

The back-and-forth implementation of radical reform measures has generated instability and eroded the credibility of policy-makers and institutions. The MoEs navigate blindly in many areas, as they fail to collect and use the data that would be necessary to appropriately manage the education administration process. As evidence from international assessments shows, the
countries are not making significant progress in improving students’ learning outcomes, and the gap in learning outcomes between poor and rich students has been widening.

The countries of the South Caucasus are still in need of guidance, advice, technical support and funding from donor agencies in order to enact effective education governance reform. National and local stakeholders do not yet have enough leverage to influence policy-making and hold state bodies accountable for their actions. Empowering independent think tanks or other educational research units may ultimately bring some watchdog functions into play, but this will require a long time to happen.

Also important is the countries’ further integration into international assessment frameworks, which play a particularly vital role in stirring and facilitating a much-needed debate on the future of the education sector in each of the three countries. Some special effort may be required to offset any attempts to politicize international assessments and link them to potential political risks, thus downgrading their value. Similarly, positive media coverage would only help promote the reputation of international assessment frameworks and sensitize the broader population accordingly.

Key findings and policy recommendations

As illustrated in the previous sections, the three South Caucasus countries have implemented their education sector governance reforms at varied paces and scopes. These countries also differ in terms of the progress made towards establishing rule of law and democratic, corruption-free societies. Therefore future interventions in education governance will have different impacts on the degree of change. With this caveat in mind, the governments in all three countries can consider the following broad policy options for proceeding with education governance reform.

1. Provide schools with more autonomy

Despite decentralization reforms implemented in Georgia and Armenia, neither country has been able to abandon the legacy of Soviet-style central planning in education. Schools and school boards have been granted autonomy on paper, but in practice the government’s relinquishment of control has been inconsistent at best. Consequently, school leaders are not adequately prepared to assume new powers. Policy-makers should consider granting schools greater decision-making authority over operations and budgets, as well as relaxing certain formal or informal regulations. Diversifying the degree of autonomy based on school performance and/or demonstrated leadership capacity is also an option.

2. Develop school leadership capacity

Governments should consider investing in the development of school leadership programmes and comprehensive systems for recruiting, training and evaluating school principals. Evaluation mechanisms should be fair, transparent and effective, based on criteria that are directly linked to school improvement. Furthermore, performance-based management should be considered a temporary solution for transitioning the governance systems away from a micromanagement culture to one that allows school leaders and teachers to exercise a high
degree of autonomy. Governments should also consider creating a sustainable mechanism for developing the capacity of school boards, rather than costly and sporadic one-time trainings.

3. Invest in teachers

Long-term, sustainable education reform depends on transforming the quality of teachers and school leaders. Governments must invest in teacher salaries to ensure that teachers are paid adequately, and improve teacher preparation programmes and in-service professional development models. Particular attention should be paid to developing teachers’ ‘social capital’, both at school and in broader settings. MoEs should create an environment in which teachers work collaboratively and form networks within and across schools. Governments should invest in interventions and create incentives that stimulate teachers to form professional school-based teams to address common methodological issues. Such a strategy would help teams slowly take on broader responsibilities, thus increasing the feasibility of school autonomy reforms. Building social capital at a more systemic level would translate into professional associations that advocate for the teaching profession and thus gradually overhaul professional accountability mechanisms.

4. Create effective accountability and support systems

Governments should consider developing new school performance review and support systems that focus on helping schools identify challenges and develop improvement plans. Such systems should be part of broader school improvement and development policies, and should be tightly aligned with other components such as teacher professional development and teacher appraisal and evaluation. The system will also require specialized professionals who provide expert advice to schools.

When introducing new school accountability instruments, it is essential to take into consideration three main principles:

1) Accountability mechanisms should be designed to evaluate schools (including principals and teachers) and help them improve. Hence punitive measures, both explicit and implicit, should be avoided except in extraordinary situations.

2) School performance reviews should include diverse assessment measures and should not rely only on standardized tests for measuring school performance, as tests can only measure part of students’ learning.

3) Different schools face different challenges. For example, a school with a majority of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds faces challenges that are very different from a school whose students are primarily from wealthier families.

Furthermore, market accountability mechanisms should be avoided, as they are usually unfair to schools and misleading for parents.

5. Place greater focus on capacity-building in planning and policy-making

To develop the policy-making and planning capacity of MoEs, focus should be placed on improving regulatory instruments (such as national curricula and teacher standards);
improving data collection, management and application; and supporting key strategic management functions. Governments need to ensure that roles and responsibilities among the central government agencies, local government bodies, and schools are clearly delineated and do not overlap. If Azerbaijan and Armenia are to maintain local governments as intermediary decision-making bodies between the MoEs and the schools, considerable effort should be made in developing their capacity.

Capacity-building in this area is further complicated in some cases by high staff turnover due to political shifts, which means that ministerial staff training cannot ensure the needed sustainability of the investment. A more long-term and sustainable solution is to invest in:

1) empowering other players, such as think tanks, educational research units within universities, and teacher associations;

2) creating formal instruments for stakeholder participation; and

3) ensuring broad coverage of education issues through the media.

Local capacity-building efforts also need to be diversified. For instance, focusing just on training parents for school board participation might not be the best solution, as parents tend to leave the school boards after their children graduate. Governments should consider more sustainable mechanisms for community-level capacity-building, such as the development of online resources for school board members and the inclusion of local government representatives on school boards.

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Chapter 3. Global synthesis

Main findings

The previous chapters have shown regional perspectives on the recent evolution of governance of education. Disparities in this domain among regions are wide due to historical, contextual and political reasons. Yet, it also emerges from this series of reviews a common thread: our global approaches to governance in education are at stake and do not seem to fully take into account the fundamental challenges and the corresponding responses that countries are facing.

With this in mind, this section reviews emerging challenges and issues in education governance essentially drawing on the Analytical Framework presented earlier and on the main findings from the five regional reviews. In responding to these challenges major governance reforms and initiatives have emerged over the last two decades and a couple of them can be classified as “emerging trends” and will be presented as opposed to a traditional governance model.

Further, it looks at the following dimensions: what types of governance reforms and initiatives have emerged in diverse contexts and jurisdictions essentially drawing on the five regional reviews and what is their particular focus on education provision? Who has been involved in other words, who are the main actors in these processes? Are the main actors stable over the last twenty years or do they keep changing?

As a conclusion, it also explores emerging parameters and approaches towards education governance, leading eventually to effective governance reforms. A simplified diagram below demonstrates how the discussion flows and also evolves in the following direction.

Emerging challenges and issues around education governance

Following the definition of the four salient governance issues set out in the Analytical Framework, notably: 1) multiplication of stakeholders and providers, 2) influence of international or regional players, 3) marketization and/or privatization, and 4) lack of government capacity, the regional reviews made an attempt to examine them thoroughly in their respective contexts and jurisdictions. Although the relative importance of an issue varies from one region to another, the reviews confirmed that these four issues indeed carry a very significant weight when reviewing and categorizing a wide range of issues and challenges.

Further, the analysis would like to pursue where they derive from. Do they stimulate evolution and transformation of governance? Or rather contrary, do they hinder evolution of governance? The section aims to identify what stimulates or hinders development and transition in education governance.
Multiple stakeholders and providers

Education governance is characterized by the proliferation and the diversification of actors both from the public and private sectors. Consequently, as the regional reviews claim, a steering role in policy development and policy dialogue processes that are traditionally led by the central/state education authorities is being challenged by the emerging education stakeholders. As a new trend, policy choices are largely being determined by the emerging landscapes.

Some emerging stakeholders are considered to be even counter-productive by means of concurring with the public provision, as they do not contribute to enhance the capacity of the state to manage and govern education.

Multiple stakeholders and providers have led to a complex landscape of education governance. Governing and managing education itself is already a complex duty for education authorities. It has become even more difficult to manage when involving multiple stakeholders and providers. A question is also raised as to who will eventually steer, manage and coordinate an education system.

When a steering role in policy development and coordination by the central/state education authorities is being challenged, they need to exert more efforts in coordination and consultation with much less political leverage. Education authorities are confronted with a dilemma to provide a good degree of authorities to the private sector and other emerging stakeholders, while fully ensuring accountability and transparency in governance.

Impact of international and regional bodies on country-level governance

Although the regional reviews did not explore in details as to exactly what kind of impact was brought by the international and regional bodies on national governance, their policy implications are somewhat evident in some contexts.

A so-called PISA “shock” pushed further a result-based governance reform. Examples from the Southern Europe, BRICS and Caucasus regions suggest that subsequent result-based governance reforms, which pursued cost efficiency in education have discouraged promoting equity in education in many contexts.

Issues related to aid dependency illustrate another type of impact deriving from the international and regional bodies on country-level governance. It is even more difficult to steer an education system, if an aid dependency persists through an education agenda led by bilateral or multilateral donors.

Overall, consequence of international and regional bodies on country-level governance is considered as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has been able to urge and pressure various governance reforms at country level and on the other hand, it did not encourage promoting national ownership in education, as the international education agenda has dominated the national ones.
Marketization and/or privatization of education

In reality, marketization and privatization of education continue to expand in many contexts, as the research findings demonstrated. The reviews also suggest that the rise of marketization leads to promoting cost sharing in financing education, shuffling existing governance structures, ownership, and regulatory frameworks.

A new approach to acknowledge that marketization will continue to exist through “a situated practice” is a case in point. According to Brehm and Bray (2014 and others), “a situated practice” or “situated marketization” is defined as follows.

While marketization of education may offer more choices and competitions in education provision as well as promote cost sharing in financing education, it may also pressure and disturb existing governance landscapes and structures. Promoting equity in education is certainly not its priority over promoting excellency in education provision. Further, marketization of education dares to shuffle a very fundamental principle that education should be perceived as a public good (Brehm and Bray, 2015).

Despite these constraints, as the regional examples clearly illustrated, marketization of education will continue to grow and challenge national education authorities, their steering power and national ownership under diverse contexts.

Government capacity to effectively manage and mobilize resources

The regional reviews acknowledge that there is a huge demand for a greater efficiency for education provision with limited financial resources, while education needs to ensure an equity dimension: government capacities are in need to steer education reforms. It is even more challenging in the context of decentralization, where technical support to decentralized authorities is increasingly on demand.

A system with a limited state capacity to effectively manage and mobilize resources would prompt more easily potential corruption risks compared to the most highly performing education systems, which are capable of effectively managing and mobilizing resources. Further, a limited state capacity would rather discourage to develop a shared national vision for education or strong national ownership.

Do they stimulate evolution and transformation of governance? Or rather contrary, do they hinder evolution of governance?

The basic principle of public sector management reform to pursue efficiency and effectiveness of education systems, if a strategic choice is made properly, can be considered being a rather positive factor to stimulate evolution and transformation of governance through pursuing viable and solid governance goals and implementation. Similarly, “structural governance” through evidence-based policy drives the demand to extend and develop data infrastructure, hence also triggers and stimulates transformation of governance.
On the other hand, the absence of governance capacities or limited capacities in managing and governing education systems would certainly hinder pursuing governance goals and implementation. It is even more critical in the context of decentralization, where technical support to decentralized authorities is increasingly on demand. A limited state capacity to effectively manage and mobilize resources would also invite potential corruption risks in managing education.

**Major governance reforms and initiatives**

**Review of governance reforms and initiatives carried out in the last two decades**

1. Mediterranean countries

The review summarizes the main trends in education governance observed over the past decade in the Mediterranean region, specifically focusing on Algeria, Egypt, Italy, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia. Education systems in these countries have been affected by strong pressure to increase efficiency, quality and results. Attempts at education governance reform have focused mainly on implementing decentralization policies and improving educational accountability. This has been accompanied by the emergence of a lucrative private education sector, mainly seen through private schools in Southern Europe and through an opaque market of private tutoring in Northern Africa. In the Northern Africa countries, emphasis has also been placed on reducing educational inequalities in the wake of mass social unrest. In both Northern Africa and Southern Europe, new models of school governance have proven relatively unstable and difficult to implement fully, due to political upheavals and changing social and political movements.

2. BRICS countries

The review provides a critical overview of trends in education governance in the five major emerging and newly industrialized national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – collectively known as the BRICS countries. To facilitate a comparative perspective, the review focuses mainly on secondary education, which is expected to play a strategic role in the BRICS countries in the post-2015 international development agenda. The review looks at different governance models and their capacity to effectively manage resources, particularly expenditures in education, in order to improve access and quality in secondary education. It examines the nexus between centralization, decentralization and autonomy; analyses the impact of marketization and privatization on education governance; and discusses recent reforms.

3. Fragile states of the Sub-Saharan Africa

The review focuses on four selected fragile states of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): the Democratic Republic of Congo (D. R. Congo) and Niger, representing the Francophone states; and Liberia and Somalia, representing the Anglophone states. These countries have similar experiences that include, among others, civil unstabilities and protracted political conflicts that have led to serious destruction of human lives as well as physical infrastructures of all the key sectors of society including education. Although these countries have diverse national
profiles, the damaged educational infrastructure that each has had to grapple with over the past decade and the obvious negative impact it has had on their education delivery systems are similar. Weak institutional capacity coupled with very limited financial resources means that all four countries rely heavily on donor support and private sector financing to provide education to the citizenry, a situation which creates unique complexities in education governance and management.

4. East Asia

Many of the issues of governance faced by educational authorities in East Asia resemble those in other world regions, including the balance of centralization and decentralization in administrative hierarchies, and the nature of school-based management. Yet an issue that has particular prominence in East Asia: situated marketization and the supplementary tutoring industry, which has become increasingly visible in the last decade and is arguably the most pressing issue affecting educational equity and quality in the region.

The review focuses on patterns of supplementary education insofar as they have implications for the authority and scope of educational governance and policies in ten countries and jurisdictions of East Asia: Cambodia, China, Hong Kong (China), Japan, Macao (China), Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan Province of China, and Vietnam.

5. South Caucasus

Historically, the South Caucasus has been a troubled region, surrounded by the strong regional powers of Iran, Russia and Turkey, and plagued by still unresolved ethno-political conflicts and lingering economic crisis. As of 2015, the region still faces major challenges, namely protracted poverty, sluggish economic reforms, considerable populations of refugees and internally displaced persons, significant environmental problems, insufficient human rights protection and rule of law, and widespread corruption.

The review focuses on the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. During the last two decades, these three countries have made significant efforts to reform their education systems. They have implemented a wide range of reforms targeted at improving the quality of education. One of the primary objectives was to move away from the Soviet education system towards one that is more consistent with respective national development goals and a rapidly changing global environment characterized by increased international competition.

Analysis on the major trends in governance reforms

As demonstrated in the previous section a number of governance reforms and initiatives have been carried out in different contexts and jurisdictions. Just to name a few, privatization, liberalization, decentralization and marketizations of education could be categorized as the most recent governance initiatives. Recent reform focused particularly on the two aspects: decentralization and liberalization to respond to emerging governance challenges largely caused by demand-side pressures on education provisions.

To draw key policy trends, three different forms of pressures, which have driven and motivated governance reforms need to be looked at. Notably, 1) demand-side pressure: parents and students express their so-called excess demand for education due to the fact that
public education does not sufficiently respond to their demand, 2) supply-side pressure: funds for education provision may be diverted to alternative public sector investments such as health, social welfare, which would result in a decline in per-pupil funding, and 3) effects of globalization: result-based management led by globalization and more specifically market liberalization. Typically, a concept that education is being treated as “a global market” can be at the extreme right-end of the spectrum, as opposed to a concept that education being considered as “public good”. All kinds of pressures stem evidently from socio-economic and political motives and rationales.

**Marketization and/or privatization of education**

In view of different levels of the state’s power and control in education governance in the BRICS countries, there are marked differences in the private sector responsible for private schools. Privatization/marketization in education demonstrates a shift in power in the BRICS countries, but in different ways. Privatization and decentralization in the secondary sector have been growing in Brazil, India, China and South Africa during the last decade, with the largest growth in India, where 30% (compared with 15% in Brazil) of students are enrolled in private schools. In Brazil, private schools are competitive in attracting students. Families choose between public schools and private schools. In the Russian Federation (RF), the privatization of education is a relatively new phenomenon, having first appeared in the 1990s. Private schools, and the rise of supplementary tutoring courses for secondary students, represent a new dimension of differentiated schooling in the Russian Federation (RF) (Dervin and Zajda, 2014).

The private sector’s share in the education systems of Spain and Italy is much larger than that of the countries of the MENA region, where the extent of private tutoring is much greater. In terms of funding, there is strong support from the public authorities in Spain and Italy. In contrast, public funding of the private sector is limited and often non-existent in countries south of the Mediterranean. Privatization in countries of the MENA region is characterized by the fact that it is concentrated in certain areas and for certain sectors of the public: middle and upper class families, cities and economically advantaged coastal regions. In the Southern European region, the presence of the private sector is longstanding and there is not a significant transfer of pupils from public to private as in the Maghreb (Akkari, 2014).

Marketization of the general education sector was part of the reform agenda in Georgia, and some marketization-oriented elements have also been detected in Azerbaijan. In Georgia, the introduction of school choice and the “money follows student” principal in general education has been justified by their potential impact on the competition among schools. It was expected that schools would respond by competing for students, and, competition by itself would improve the quality of the educational services provided by schools. Therefore parents are now free to enroll students in any school of their choice and the per-capita funding would follow the student to the school (Andguladze, and Mkrtchyan, 2014).

**Towards quasi-market approaches**

Private sector represents one of the emerging types of engagement in education provision, which has resulted in establishing new types of governance arrangements.
Quasi-market has several features that blend the public sector and the private sector: a) providers are in competition with each other, although they are not profit-making, b) entry into and exit from the schooling market is regulated and the government also maintains an important role in terms of accountability for educational standards, and c) demand by parents and students is partially expressed through an educational voucher and allocated funds (IIEP, 2002).

Privatization policies fall into one of the above three forms by either a) increasing the number and proportion of private providers, b) raising the amount of funds by students and families, and lowering the amount on subsidies or c) enhancing monitoring of schools and school choice over governmental rules and regulations (IIEP, 2002).

Each of these approaches may be taken simultaneously, but they can also be balanced against each other. In other circumstances, privatization may occur in just one of these forms. While many of these forms are independent, some are clearly complementary: one example is in allowing more private schools to enter a market at the same time as giving students more choice regarding enrolment in these schools. Other forms may be substitutes: e.g. offering vouchers to attend private schools, or offering parents tax credits to offset against private school fees. In many cases, particularly in Europe, privatization is mainly seen to be offering more choice between government schools, rather than encouraging a private sector (IIEP, 2002).

BRICS examples have demonstrated that drastic governance reforms destabilize existing governance arrangements and consequently resulted in promoting inequity in education provisions.

Education governance in the BRICS countries had experienced major changes in policy shifts. Brazil, like the RF, has demonstrated a shift from over-privatization/marketization, and market economy-driven education to stronger centralized governance.

India and China, have demonstrated a policy change from shift from over-centralization to marketization, decentralization and market economy-driven education (Dervin and Zajda 2014).

Education governance models, characterized by centralized governance or decentralization in the BRICS countries often do not consider their ultimate impact on the most disadvantaged populations and regions. Privatisation/marketization reforms led to rising inequity in the availability of funds among local education/regional authorities, as a result of differentiated economic and social differences between rich and poor regions. Regional inequalities in educational funding have an adverse effect on access to quality education. Some poorer rural regions are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged, with little access to high-quality education. Current government policy of supporting best-performing schools, based on National examination results in secondary schools, will continue to have an adverse effect on access to quality education for all in those regions.

An equity dimension deserves more attention as being a neglected aspect, since promoting effectiveness and efficiency as well as pursuing competitiveness in education have become a mainstream policy priority in many contexts.
Additionally, the case of Egypt illustrates the need for administrative structures of education to cope with emerging governance models.

In Egypt, the establishment of school councils in 2005 was an important milestone in the reform of school governance. Although these councils dated back to 1993, they were given new responsibilities such as budget allocation: each council has 15 members, including the head teacher, five parents, five members of the community, three teachers and a social worker, and the decisions should be taken by a majority vote with the head teacher retaining the ultimate authority to approve decisions (Hammad, 2010).

In Mediterranean countries examined, secondary school governance reform is often achieved through new laws and the establishment of a new organization of the administrative structure of education. There is no question that this structure is a necessary condition for the emergence of new models of governance. However, compliance with these new models of governance at a local level depends on the resources available and the political dialogue on this matter (Akkari, 2014).

Towards shared governance through involvement of multiple stakeholders

In order to mitigate excess-demand for education provision as well as to respond to emerging governance challenges, probably shared governance through involving diverse stakeholders will continue to gain its legitimacy. A couple of examples from emerging economies suggest a way forward. Shared governance has been clearly stipulated by a legal framework in India and South Africa so as to effectively ensure institutionalization and implementation of shared governance.

Towards local governance in the context of decentralization

Decentralization promoted to increase participation of local actors and reinforced their capacities in policy reform in Morocco in early-2000, and this was followed by various legal and financial implications. As observed in Morocco, governance is central to the concerns about education reform. Specifically, these changes have been reflected in the reinforcement of local management of education. Decentralization and deconcentration of services are at the heart of the reform in the education and training system recommended by the national education and training charter. Measures to achieve more effective local management were taken.

In East Asia, one of the main logics and discourses of marketization has been the concept of decentralization. Broadly conceived, decentralization is the process of redistributing power away from a centralized authority (Bray 2013b; Zajda 2006). Decentralization converges with the logic of marketization insofar as market forces are left to distribute funds, people, and functions rather than the government. In this way, marketization as a process is believed by some actors to fit the goals of decentralization. Nevertheless, decentralization is a multifaceted concept. It permits myriad formations of authority and power that converge with situated marketization in different ways.
Emerging governance reform models

As governance has become more complex in the recent past, governance models evolve more rapidly than ever. As a consequence, the so-called traditionally well-established models do not seem to hold any longer. The traditional models do not capture well enough the evolving and progressing nature of governance, as they are rather presented as “static” in nature. They are no longer able to explain the complexities of today’s governance in the education sector, in particular in developing countries. Therefore, new models seem to emerge and what follows is an account of the basic elements that they have, drawing on the regional analyses.

How governance models in education have been evolving over the last twenty years

The first fundamental finding emerging from the regional reviews is that the landscape of governance in education is not as perfectly delineated as it could have been just twenty years ago. In other words, that the usual approaches to governance models and their evolution that were commonly accepted just two decades ago can no longer pass a reality check. The practice of governance in the education sector has become a much more complex and blurring domain. In light of this fundamental finding, this chapter begins by presenting the traditional and well-established governance models that used to be helpful to understand the universe of opportunities and constraints in which education policies have to be formulated and implemented. Then the chapter discusses the two major reasons why this traditional typology is no longer suited to reflect the current status quo, namely 1) governance is evolving, and 2) it is no longer able to explain complexities of today’s governance. Finally, the chapter analyzes what is happening in the light of the regional reviews and why, while discussing at the same time the evolving nature of education governance.

Do clear-cut models of governance still apply? The limits of traditional approaches to educational governance

The way in which governance models unfold in different countries depends on diverse institutional contexts – notably legal, socio-political, environmental, historical and cultural contexts. Therefore, to understand how they are operated, they should be defined and well situated within their corresponding specific contexts. Despite this obvious consideration, traditional governance models have been equated with organizational and administrative models. Certainly, they can be instrumental in determining 1) who participates in governance and 2) respective roles of multiple stakeholders. These models of government rather than of governance continue to be widely used in the education policy literature, particularly when discussing the involvement of central authorities in education.

It should be also noted that governance in one country rarely represents a totally pure model, but rather is a mixture or combination of different models. Hence, even a relatively highly centralized system can be also associated with some trend towards decentralization. In such context, “the governance framework will therefore be a mix of centralization with some trend of de-concentration. Overall, this will depend on the level and kind of actors considered to be the best placed in each country to make specific decisions in the field of education, and overall in the context of each country” (UNESCO/IIEP, 2012).

Yet the point here is, as noted in the analytical framework, that the shift from government to governance possibly makes these organizationally-oriented models of governance not useful
anymore to understand the challenges that countries are facing in the area of governance. A new approach is needed.

In the growing academic work on governance there is a redirection of its definition. Rather than government, governance signifies “a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing: or a changed condition of ordered rule: or the new method by which society is governed” (Rhodes, 1996, pp. 652-3). Too many things for just one word which, in fact, reflect the shift from the emphasis from government to governance. What is interesting is how governance is used in a range of settings in an attempt to capture a shift in thinking and ways of working.

Clearly, there is nowadays a baseline agreement among political analysts that governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred. The essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government. “The governance concept points to the creation of a structure or an order which cannot be externally imposed but is the result of the interaction of a multiplicity of governing and each other influencing actors” (Kooiman, 2003).

Indeed, governments have experienced a vast array of reforms associated with marketization, contracting out, new management fads, joining up, and partnerships. As a result present-day governance increasingly involves private- and voluntary-sector organizations working alongside public ones. Complex packages of organizations deliver most public services today. The resulting fragmentation means that the state increasingly depends on other organizations to implement its policies and secure its intentions. Further, the state has swapped direct for indirect controls. Central departments are no longer invariably the fulcrums of policy networks. The state sometimes may set limits to network actions, but it has increased its dependence on other actors. State power is dispersed among spatially and functionally distinct networks (Weller, Rhodes, & Bakvis, 1997).

While the term government refers to a very specific state-centered mode of social and political organization, governance is defined as a multitude of formal or informal steering and coordination mechanisms to make demands, frame goals, issue directives, pursue policies and generate compliance whether by public or private actors (Benz, Lutz, Schimank, & Simonis, 2007). Under this new paradigm, governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs of governance are not therefore different from those of government. It is rather a matter of a difference in processes. Governance is thus associated not just with greater sensitivity to networks as a type of social organization but also to the spread of networks in a new politics, partly as a result of neoliberal reforms of the public sector (Stoker, 1998).

**Emerging models of governance**

As governance has become more complex in the recent past, governance models evolve more rapidly than ever. As a consequence, the so-called traditionally well-established models do not seem to hold any longer. The reason is that traditional models do not capture well enough the evolving and progressing nature of governance, as they are rather presented as “static” in nature. They are no longer able to explain the complexities of today’s governance in the education sector, in particular in developing countries. Therefore, new models seem to
emerge and what follows is an account of the basic elements that they have, drawing on the regional analyses.

**Analysis: lines of transformation of governance models and their challenges**

Drawing on the regional reviews, the analysis of the evolution and transformation of governance in education in developing countries and emerging economies clearly points to four main shared elements. First, although regulatory frameworks/mechanisms tend to remain highly centralized in developing countries and emerging economies, they have increasingly become a moving target over the last twenty years – in the light of different developments they have to be reassessed and readjusted. Second, the growing complexity of governance demands a participatory approach that takes into account the diverse interests and resources of an increasing number of stakeholders ranging from international organizations to local communities in seek of a quality provision of education. Third, as a result, the distribution of power is a contentious issue everywhere and becomes even more so when governance models are in transition. Finally, increasingly complex governance systems prompt an issue of accountability and require the development of equally complex accountability mechanisms.

**Central regulatory frameworks and mechanisms are challenged and often reassessed**

In most of the cases reviewed here the regulatory mechanisms for the education sector essentially remain highly centralized and often guided by centrally led bureaucratic principles. This can be clearly observed in the Maghreb, BRICS (China and Russia), and the Caucasus regions and to a lesser degree also in India, Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. As a result, they have increasingly become a moving target over the last twenty years. Moving target are indeed closely associated with historical and political evolutions of the education systems over the last twenty-years. Participation in education provision has evolved substantially in terms of their involvement of different players and their respective roles, hence constantly reassessing and readapting accountability mechanisms.

**Growing complexity of governance demands a participatory approach**

The diverse interests and resources of an increasing number of stakeholders in education ranging from international organizations to local communities in seek of a quality provision of education require a participatory approach. This is particularly the case where the state capacities are weak or in crisis, as in some developing countries or countries with regime transitions. A participatory approach to governance requires iterative policy dialogues, participation, determination, as well as a solid vision with demonstrated leadership. A governance system that has gone successfully through such an iterative process can be perceived as “a well-established and solid stage of governance” as the experience in the Nordic countries in particular demonstrates, drawing on policy debates in the recent OECD Conference on education governance in Tallinn in Estonia in February 2015 (OECD, 2015).

The question is therefore who should be involved in governing education. A degree of involvement in governance by various stakeholders in education, including emerging players, largely determines the nature of governance. Education stakeholders are diverse and vary from one system to another: from education authorities, line ministries, civil society
organizations, to higher education and research institutions, teacher unions, parents, private sector, and development partners, just to mention a few. Likewise, a degree of their involvement varies from one context to another and it is even more complex for emerging economies and developing countries, where a paradigm shift in the action of governments is particularly challenging.

Under such complex dynamics, engaging in education governance is considered to be the most important building blocks to determining a level of national ownership to education governance, as research evidence proves in various contexts, including fragile states in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The distribution of power remains a contentious issue

Regional reviews extensively explored various country examples showing that the distribution of power is a contentious issue everywhere and becomes even more so when governance models are in transition. This re-distribution of power can take different avenues, including decentralization, deregulation or, contrarily, re-centralization.

First, it can take the form of a power shift from central to decentralized authorities. Several examples from BRICS countries are a case in point. In South Africa, education governance is characterized by a policy shift from centrally-controlled system to a participatory/democratic approach, with a growing privatization sector (Dervin and Zajda, 2014). But this often creates an unstable scenario where several new issues may appear, as in the case of India. There, a shift in a governance mode, from centralized governance to privatization, has resulted in numerous unresolved issues: discrepancies in terms of gender, caste, and social classes.

Second, this power shift may go beyond decentralization and involve some deregulation or privatization of the education provision. In China, a shift from over-centralization to marketization, decentralization and market economy-driven education in education governance, is an example of a state-controlled decentralization process.

Third, it can be the other way around, that is, with the state recentralizing responsibilities in education. The analysis of the distribution of power in the governance of education in Brazil demonstrates a policy shift from over-privatization/marketization, and market economy driven education to stronger centralized governance. The governments in the Caucasus region have also delegated some of their powers to emerging agencies operating under the central authorities. In the Middle East and Maghreb region, although a power shift has been rather slow, two examples can be drawn. In Southern Europe, emerging players have emerged in the recent discourse on education governance.

Increasingly complex governance systems prompt an issue of accountability and require equally complex mechanisms of accountability

The regional reviews demonstrate that having clearly defined roles with clearly established accountability mechanisms for each stakeholder in governing education is indeed a challenging task for education authorities. The involvement of diverse stakeholders in governing education will often prompt an issue of accountability. Such an issue is even more complex if an education system functions and operates under a federal or decentralized
system, where governance structures are multi-layered and fragile, and when it has a large and growing population.

**Governance models are constantly evolving and becoming increasingly complex**

So-called well-established traditional models do not capture the evolving and progressing nature of governance, and they are rather taken as “static” by nature. They are no longer able to manage complexities of governance, which resulted in generating emerging models. Governance models are constantly evolving, closely in line with the evolution of the national development goals and priorities and will be dictated by various stages of socio-economic development.

**Policy implications**

**Steering policy reform requires a delicate balance**

Reform in education governance often requires a balance or a so-called trade-off between two or more policy options, which may be occasionally contradictory from one another. Education systems shall find an appropriate balance between privatization and state-control; trust and accountability; and equity and efficiency. Steering policy reform requires a delicate balancing act by the education authorities and its corresponding capacity.

**Governance is fluid and hence its landscape is constantly evolving**

As extensively discussed in the Analytical Framework, the surging interest worldwide on governance it is more than a vogue, but rather an indication that the way in which governments have exerted their action of governing is, if not challenged, at least evolving towards increasing complexity even if hierarchy remains the most common form of public organization. Therefore, from this perspective governance is less about what a government does and more about how policies are formulated, implemented and evaluated in the context of the interplay of a multiplicity of stakeholders –including also governments. It involves thus a paradigm shift in the action of governments, which is particularly challenging in the context of developing countries.

Governance is no longer static, nor a mere discourse around decentralization and centralization. It has increasingly become a dynamic concept that encompasses evolving interactions among stakeholders in education. A paradigm shift in governance is happening and therefore, governments may have to reinforce their capacities to find their role in a more complex landscape.

**A greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation constitutes an indispensable building block for effective governance**

Education provision over the last twenty-five years has shifted towards decentralization in particular through much greater school autonomy, hence offering wider choices of education provision for parents, including an extensive range of curricula options. On the other hand, this trend also has put an emphasis on promoting monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in education provision. A so-called “post-bureaucratic model of governance” has been driven by the two principles: a culture of evaluation and a quasi-market mode of governance (Soguel
and Jaccard, 2008). It has also encouraged education systems to become more performance and output driven through benchmarking, accountable, transparent, participatory and decentralized and competitive systems.

**A shared vision and strategy leads to effective governance**

Research evidence proves that the most highly performing education systems have a shared vision and strategy to govern and manage education systems. They also align and coordinate policies and programmes across various entities. They are coherent and consistent in setting priorities, implementing new policies and strategies to achieve a shared goal and policy objectives through steering and consultation. The most highly performing systems are therefore capable of optimizing the existing government structures to achieve shared goals motivated by strong national ownership. The research results further prove that the role of education authorities at central level stays crucial in steering and ensuring overall alignment and coordination of the education sector. Even in the most decentralized systems, the national or state level remains important in triggering and steering education reform, and providing a strategic vision (OECD, 2015).

**The efficiency of governance models depends on setting up an enabling environments**

Research evidence proves that all types of governance structures and arrangements – be it centralized or different stages of a decentralization process, namely 1) de-concentration, 2) delegation, 3) devolution – could function properly under the appropriate enabling environments. What is more relevant is to recognize the importance of a process dimension and an evolution of governance, including constant interactions with a wide range of education stakeholders across different levels.

**Setting up an appropriate governance mechanism in response to evolving governance structures**

While a number of commercial regulations already exist, educational regulations are largely absent to ensure quality in view of the new role of emerging stakeholders in many education systems. An appropriate governance mechanism needs to be put in place that is fully contextualized and responding to local conditions. Such a mechanism also requires confidence in responding to the new targets, strategies and new policy objectives.
Policy recommendations

The regional reviews demonstrated that a wide range of diversities exists in terms of education systems and governance structures and arrangements and most importantly, education governance is a complex theme, being faced with various internal dilemmas, as mentioned earlier. Yet, this research initiative concludes that the usefulness, effectiveness and relevance of the policy lessons will be widely recognized in order to trigger policy debates around education governance in diverse settings and conditions.

This section aims to consolidate those key policy lessons and draw a set of policy recommendations for education stakeholders. To make them operational and feasible to implement, prioritization exercise has been carried out in due consideration of the key five functions and mandates of the Education Sector of UNESCO.

A set of policy recommendations is essentially addressed to: 1) education authorities, 2) UNESCO and 3) development partners. Each recommendation is accompanied with a key strategy so that it does not remain as a mere policy statement but rather it targets effective policy implementation. It is noted that in some cases some policy recommendations are addressed to more than one category of stakeholders so as to make them more relevant and effective.

Policy recommendation 1: To reinforce legal and regulatory frameworks to enhance professional accountability and transparency in education governance

While it is observed that commercial regulations widely exist, there is a noticeable gap in the domain of the educational regulations, in particular for the supplementary education industry. It is imperative to reinforce regulatory frameworks in support of enhancing accountability and fighting against corruptions, while acknowledging their limitations.

How? Through:

- Mapping out and reviewing existing codes of conduct and regulatory frameworks
- Stimulating a policy debate/exchange on regulatory frameworks (based on an agreed criteria, contexts and assessment)

Policy recommendation 2: To empower local authorities to participate in governing and managing education

The regional reviews confirm that substantial capacity gaps have been observed in local authorities to fully engage in education governance. Without capacity, no opportunity is given to them. This vicious cycle can be avoided by empowering the local authorities.

How? Through:

- Engaging and mobilizing local authorities in a policy and sector dialogue process and mechanism(s)
- Provision of capacity development programme(s) to target local authorities based on a
thorough assessment of their needs and current capacities

Policy recommendation 3: Reappraising evolution and transformation of education governance over the last twenty years

As the policy finding confirms, evolution and transformation of education governance has been an unavoidable phenomenon over the last twenty years. This has been a pathway for every education system, although its degree and extent will be determined by individual contexts.

As governance systems have become complex in the recent past, and they evolve more rapidly than ever, so-called traditionally well-established models do not seem to hold any longer. They are no longer able to manage complexities of governance. To better capture this complex reality it is necessary to analyze and assess transformation of governance over the last twenty years.

How? Through:

- Carrying out a systematic analysis to revisit existing approaches to and understanding of governance based on an agreed criteria and methodology.
- Investigating types of evolution and transformation of education governance, which education authorities have gone through over the last twenty years.

Policy recommendation 4: Promoting a national discourse on education governance

Research evidence proves that there is no single set of prescription or a governance model, which can be mechanically adapted to an individual context. Rather it is important to promote and steer national discourse on education governance with the aim at stocktaking various evidence on how governance is actually being organized at all levels.

And perhaps this approach would be an only viable solution to tackle complex issues around education governance with enriched evidence. A national discourse on governance would be the first step to set a strategic direction on governance in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

How? Through:

- Initiating a national discourse through stocktaking various governance issues for an education system at all levels.
- Institutionalizing governance by establishing a policy framework and setting targets and strategic objectives.
Concluding remarks and a programme of work for UNESCO on governance

As the research evidence proves, education governance is a highly complex theme both in terms of its conceptualization, definition as well as its actual implementation. There is no one single set of definition or a single model that could fit into all contexts and education systems. It is even more so when education stakeholders become more diverse and demanding against education providers, and making their inter-relations increasingly complex in different contexts. Given the global ambition of this analysis, the range of issues to be considered is potentially endless.

Over the last twenty-five years its direction has been largely inspired by other sectors and services, such as healthcare, ecology and business corporate models, as they provide a more robust and resilient policy response, thus capable of adapting to a changing environment (OECD, 2013, 2015).

The research also demonstrated that education governance is being challenged by the situation, where a difficult trade-off has to be made between two or more policy options, which are occasionally contradictory from one another. Education systems shall find an appropriate balance between “trust and accountability”, “innovation and state-control”, “national coherence and value for choice” by decentralized authorities, and “equity and efficiency”.

The research proves that all types of governance structures and arrangements – be it centralized or different stages of a decentralization process, namely 1) de-concentration, 2) delegation, 3) devolution – could function properly under the enabling environments. What is more relevant is to focus on a process dimension and an evolution of governance, including constant interactions with various education stakeholders across different levels.

In the context of the Education 2030 Agenda it is timely to interrogate what are the most appropriate approaches to governance? To answer this question, it is necessary to unpack existing approaches to governance prior to translating any governance goals reflected in the new education agenda.

This reflection also suggests recognizing constant evolution and transformation of governance in diverse contexts over the last twenty years. Reflecting current governance approaches, relevance of governance quality and goals in diverse contexts is the first step to translate governance goals in the new development agenda.

Institutionalizing governance goals by establishing a viable policy framework to set targets and a strategic direction will be yet another challenge for national authorities and will highlight the crucial importance of state capacity. Education authorities require capacity to steer education reforms and develop a strategic and shared vision.

This research initiative strived to provide a strategic response to emerging issues on education governance. It is hoped that the research findings can be applied in different contexts and may stimulate debates around education governance. As even in the most decentralized systems, the national or state level remains important in triggering and steering
education reform, and providing strategic vision, the research results hopefully will boost determination and will of national authorities to steer and govern respective education systems with a strong foundation of confidence.

Based on the key strategic functions which the Education Sector is ought to pursue the proposed work is focused around policy advice, policy debate, and knowledge production on education governance. The following three strands of policy work are proposed for UNESCO in the next biennium 2016-2017.

Proposal 1: Policy advice to Member States

Drawing lessons learnt from this comparative study on education, providing policy advice to Member States could be the most immediate step forward. The regional reviews also confirm that UNESCO being an honest broker shall engage them in a policy dialogue process to share lessons and challenges in education governance.

How? Through:

- Providing policy frameworks / options to better address a governance reform based on evidence and existing coordination mechanism(s)
- Designing a roadmap and a master plan to implement an adopted policy option

Proposal 2: Knowledge production and dissemination on education governance

It has been proven that education governance is clearly an under-researched area unlike other domains and needs to be further investigated also through learning and getting inspired from other relevant fields in ecology, healthcare and business administration. To complement this research gap, the reviews encourage UNESCO to pursue one of the key functions of UNESCO, namely, a “clearing house” to promote successful educational practices and document and disseminate best practices.

How? Through:

- Promoting research in governance and documenting hands-on experience on governance reforms worldwide, including an impact study on “marketization of education and reform around the state”
- Disseminating resulting publications and promoting a discourse on a new mode of governance

Proposal 3: Policy debates around education governance

More than ever it is observed that decision and policy-making is increasingly shared among different stakeholders. Education authorities require capacities to steer governance reform through taking a balanced approach to both technical and political dimensions on governance.

Capitalizing on this research initiative, as an international catalyst, UNESCO shall initiate and promote a policy debate around “the role of state in education governance” among educational leaders and stakeholders.
How? Through:

- Organizing a policy forum to invite policy and decisions makers and discuss “the future role of state in education governance”
- Production and dissemination of a synthesis report resulting from the policy forum
References

UNESCO regional reviews


OECD


Academic research papers

