

**The Global Governance of Education and Training Policies:
NORRAG's vision for 2016-2017**



www.norrage.org

Introduction to NORRAG's Vision and the Geneva Conference Series

Trends, opportunities and challenges:

Over the last three decades, globalization has presented a new set of problems and opportunities for policy-makers and implementers in the fields of education and training. Education is understood here in its larger sense recognizing the blurring lines between education and training, and the sectoral difference between them. In brief, globalization has reshaped the priorities of the international community, and the mechanisms used to achieve its newly framed objectives.¹ In that context, the traditional governing role of the state has been gradually transformed, with the role of non-state national, regional and international actors revitalized and augmented. Studying this global environment where the borders between levels of analysis and intervention are blurred requires new frames of references.

The challenges and opportunities created by the ever-changing global environment should be reflected upon as they will influence the very nature of education and training policies – and consequently the governance arrangements that the concerned stakeholders put in place for these policies. These reflections are even more necessary as the primary international forums through which the field is governed remain largely formalistic, and essentially state-based. It is precisely for this reason that a fresh perspective is needed to offset these forums that generally employ a traditional and compartmentalized understanding of what knowledge, education and training are.

One example is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although the process of developing the SDGs made progress in including non-state actors during the consultation phase, the role of implementation and monitoring is largely left to states. Nevertheless, the successful implementation of the goals also requires including all relevant stakeholders in subsequent policy-making and implementation in all domains – from early childhood development to further education and training in a life-long learning perspective - and at all levels – from micro to global. Another key step is to assess the existing or potential interconnections among the 17 goals, and to what extent these facilitate or complicate the goals' implementation – especially when it comes to SDG 4 concerning education and TVET/TVSD.

Our view is that – as of today - the formal Education 2030 Agenda is far from being clear on how to include relevant stakeholders at various stages of the forthcoming planning and implementation processes. It also does not adequately recognize the interconnectedness between education and training specifically, and the transversal nature of education, which runs across all SDGs more generally. These shortcomings indicate that the SDGs could only be one formal international framing declaration for global governance, in spite of the high level of expectations they have created. It is very

¹ For NORRAG's take on these issues, please see our working paper entitled, "[Post-2015 and the Global Governance of Education and Training](#)"

likely that the situation of education and training in 2030 will depend only to a small extent on the SDGs and to a larger extent on the way the domain is governed.

Through its programmes of work, NORRAG aims to address concertedly the key questions of the governance and implementation of education and training policies. The rationale for our work in 2016 is to identify evident knowledge gaps and to foster policy dialogue for proposing innovative solutions.

Goals:

NORRAG aims to address how the links between knowledge, education and training are understood in today's context, and to unpack the evolving multi-actor and multi-level governance of the field. Its primary goals are as follows:

- To serve as a forum to discuss and inform today's education and training governance arrangements in the context of the rapidly changing and complex global economic, social and political environment, as well as of the diversifying knowledge production and dissemination processes at work.
- To stress the *horizontal* nature of education. The objective is to shape policy dialogue to explicitly connect education, training and skills development across (inter)national policies, given the transversal nature of education. In other words, to avoid the compartmentalization of these fields, as is the case with Education 2030 and SDGs 4 and 8.
- To promote the *vertical* aspects of the governance of education. This entails including relevant stakeholders operating at different levels and involved in different stages of policy-making and implementation. It is meant to ensure a truly inclusive and participatory approach to engage in a fruitful policy dialogue.
- To incorporate Southern actors who are not always fully taken into account in the global discussions and decisions. Our vision recognizes the need to further develop the encouraging steps taken during the preparation of the Incheon Declaration through various consultations with CSOs and NGOs to secure a good balance with the rising influence of the states in the SDGs' governance.
- To underline the necessity of inclusive policies which reach out to various categories of learners –illiterates, adults, handicapped, out of school, NEET (No in education, employment or training)– and socially and economically marginalized groups, both in urban and rural areas. The realisation of this goal is of the utmost importance due to deepening social inequalities and their consequences on development.
- To establish Geneva as a “hub” for discussion and formulation of policies for the global governance of education, as it is the place where the transversal nature of education and training can be truly observed in the works of various IOs, NGOs, foundations, and multinationals, among others. This would make it possible to disseminate knowledge and take stock of what is happening outside of the limited, formal processes by which the field of education is still governed. The support of the

Mission of Switzerland to the UN and of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies will be most welcome in helping to reach this objective.

- To convene a high-level working group, consisting of influential policy-makers and scholars in their respective domains. The aim is to meet regularly and contribute to critical policy dialogue and agenda-setting in the governance of education and training. This group could play a key role in the discussions around the new Global Education Monitoring Report.
- To reflect on how the global dimensions of the SDGs will influence the Swiss development actors' policies and practices and Switzerland's International Cooperation objective of furthering the connection between education and training for social and economic integration- especially for the youth.

Action Plan:

To those ends, NORRAG has started to implement a dual track strategy: 1) in-house knowledge production to increase NORRAG's authoritative standing in the field; and 2) a series of events that capitalize on our convening power to disseminate information and promote policy dialogue.

1) Knowledge production

On the one hand, we aim to meet the above objectives by producing research outputs, which includes research briefs, scoping studies, and policy notes. Our outputs for 2016 will include contributions to NORRAG News, the NORRAG Blog and working papers.

2) Geneva Conference Series

On the other hand, we propose a series of events commencing in 2016, which will seek to respond to the above-mentioned challenges while at the same time connecting governments, researchers, policy makers, practitioners and other types of non-state actors. Preceded by a broader inaugural umbrella event, we envision several events which will unfold over the next two years. The events will capitalize on NORRAG's thematic expertise and comparative advantage in convening the most authoritative actors, engaging in policy dialogue and disseminating knowledge products:

The Geneva Conference Series, 2016-2017:

1. Inaugural event: *The Governance of Education and Training: Agenda 2030 and Beyond*, June 22, 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland
2. *Learning from Learning Assessments*, June 23, 2016 in Geneva Switzerland
3. *The Global Governance of TVSD* (in collaboration with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Inter-Agency Group on TVSD) (Fall 2016, TBC)
4. *SDGs 4 & 8 for Youth Integration and Employment: Policy Design & Implementation by Swiss Development Actors* (Fall 2016, back to back with TVSD event above)
5. *Thematic Think Tank Summit on Education and the SDGs* (2017, TBC)