Global Education Governance and Big Data:
A bureaucratic, technocratic or democratic relation with the regional level?

Prof. Michel Carton
NORRAG Executive Director
August 2014
NORRAG
The network for international policies and cooperation in education and training
Affiliated to the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
Geneva
1. **GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GGET) and BIG DATA**

A « thickening » process for one century

Based on presentations by Prof. Susan Robertson, Bristol University, and Stéphanie Langstaff, NORRAG
Some definitions

• **Governance** – “the activities of governments, but also includes the many other channels through which ‘commands’ flow in the form of goals framed, directives issued, and policies pursued” (Rosenau, 1995: 14).

• **Global governance** – shifting the location of authority and site of control in economic and social systems as well as political systems (Weiss, 2000: 806)
1920s-1980s: ‘Thin’ GGET via IOs

• Health, science, water... governance and diplomacy

• Before 1948: Colonial empires and churches education systems, League of Nations, Intellectual Cooperation Organisations, IBE

• 1948-1980s – ‘thin’ GGET exercised through international organisations such as ILO/UNESCO/World Bank/IEA (FIMS)...

• Key elements: ‘education’ as/for development; ‘norm setting’ with authority and rule located in national territorial states
Late 1980s onwards: Re/Building National States and their Education Sectors

• Realignment national economies/education sectors to be **globally-competitive via national and global** policies and **regulatory tools**.

• Access to (quality) education for all as a **human right/Global Public Good**

• Pressure on state education through trade negotiations to be opened as **services sector** to commercial actors/FDI/flows of labour and elite.
1990s: ‘thickening’ GGET-from international to global

- 1990-> **PIRLS** (Progress in International Reading Study)
- 1990-> **Education for All**: global campaign to secure access to education
- 1995-> **WTO/GATS negotiations** to include education & training (4 modes)
- 1995-> **TIMSS** (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study)
2000s: ‘further thickening’ of GGET

- OECD tools – PISA (2000 - every 3 years); EAG (yearly); TALIS (2008 - every 5 years); PIACC (2013 – 33 countries)...

- MDGs 2000 - UNESCO’s EFA Global Monitoring Report on specific policy and problem focus (i.e. 2009 governance/inequality)
2010s: ‘further thickening’ of global *meta*-governance (1)

- **The Learning Curve** launched in 2012 – Pearson’s Economist Intelligence Unit – draws on PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA and PIACC (39 countries) > the Global Index of Cognitive Skills (OECD tests) and Educational Attainment (literacy and graduation rates).

- **SABER-World Bank** (2011) - focuses on range of education policies, including teacher policy. Very strong privatisation/competitiveness agenda built into the Bank’s tools.
2010s: ‘further thickening’ of global *meta*-governance (2)

- **Brookings Learning Metrics Taskforce** established in 2013 – post 2015 education development agenda
  - steering group now includes Pearson Education
  - UIS and Brookings Institution are the **Secretariat**
- **GPE**: partnership with business, including for decision making
- **New** GGET stakeholders: international NGOs, CSOs, foundations (Gates...), WEF/multinationals, BRIC countries, business (CISCO, Hewlett, Visa), PPPs...
2. GGET and BIG DATA: what’s new?

• HLP « data revolution » not new: stat./State
• Numbers (governing by) reflect social convention/what can-may be quantified-> measured
• Big Data allow to pass to meta-global level ->: who is producing, analysing, controlling use of?
• Small epistemic community increasingly involved in Big Data use and setting the agenda and rules of the game around GGET
3. 100 YEARS OF EVOLUTION: bureaucracy, technocracy, democracy?

**FROM**.... Education as national development + Governance through state norm setting

**TO**....

- **Denationalisation**: states produce collective goods determined by the global players
- **Learning as individual development**, and Governance through Big Data based ‘Competitive Comparison’ on the world markets
WITH............

• Education sector increasingly being opened to **privatisation, monetarisation, commodification, standardisation**

• Emerging shortfall of input, output and **normative legitimacy** in some IOs
4. QUESTIONS

“thicker” GGET at regional/national level: diversification/innovation or bureaucracy/technocracy?
- Is education still a right, a global public good in the GGET perspective?
- Is the 2009 GMR (Inequalities/Governance) forgotten?
- Is democratic dimension of GGET expressed by CSOs “consultations”? 

→ More critical and constructive analysis!