

BROOKINGS

EDUCATION + DEVELOPMENT



« Previous | Next »

Allison Anderson and Lauren Greubel | June 3, 2013 10:58am

Great Expectations for Post-2015: An Analysis of the High-Level Panel Report



We recently outlined the post-2015 priorities voiced by many civil society and nongovernmental actors within the international education community:

1. Equitable access to education for *all* children (especially the poorest and most marginalized).
2. An emphasis on learning outcomes and quality of education in addition to access.
3. Learning across a continuum – from early childhood through to adolescents and the transition to work.

The U.N. High-Level Panel's (HLP) newly released report proposing an ambitious new international development agenda for the next two decades echoes these priorities and highlights education as key to eradicating extreme poverty and achieving sustainable development. In fact

the framing of education priorities, which are focused on access to equitable, quality education and learning across the life-cycle, has been repeated in three major reports on the post-2015 process released this month: the HLP's report: *New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*; the executive summary from the World We Want education consultation: *Envisioning Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*; and the U.N. Sustainable Development Solutions Network's report: *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development* (See Table).

Proposed Post-2015 Goals for the Education Sector

High-Level Panel report	Quality education and lifelong learning.
Executive summary for the World We Want education consultation	Equitable, quality, lifelong education and learning for all.
Sustainable Development Solutions Network report	Effective learning for all children and youth for life and livelihood.

This is a welcome focus on access *plus* learning. Moreover, the HLP's report specifically lists corresponding national targets for education:

- increasing the proportion of children able to access and complete preprimary education;
- ensuring that children can read, write and count well enough to meet minimum learning standards upon completion of primary education;
- having access to lower secondary education and increasing the proportion of adolescents who achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes; and
- increasing the number of young and adult women and men with the skills, including technical and vocational, needed for work.

Taken as a whole, the HLP report builds upon the lessons learned from the current Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) efforts to get all girls and boys into school, but also lays the groundwork to ensure that children stay in school and learn.

Moving Forward

The HLP report identifies crosscutting development challenges including gender discrimination, conflict and crisis-affected environments, broader social inequality and an overall lack of – and urgent need for – data and better measurement. The High-Level Panel's illustrative universal goals and national targets are not a prescriptive blueprint, but examples to frame continued debate. In order to achieve equitable learning for all, the education community cannot operate in a vacuum and will need to address gender, equity, conflict and other issues such as disability in the coming year as it seeks to refine its post-2015 agenda.

While the HLP report does not recommend a stand-alone goal for addressing inequality, it asserts at the outset that the transformative shift of leaving no person behind, regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status, is central to its vision. The report consistently reiterates the need to tackle inequality head-on in and across each of the universal goals they propose. In designing these illustrative universal goals “it would be a mistake to simply tear up the MDGs and start from scratch...new goals and targets need to be grounded in respect for universal human rights, and finish the job that the MDGs started.” For education this would include reaching the yet-to-be achieved MDG of universal access to primary education. The majority of the world's 61 million out-of-school children are living in poverty, conflict settings or are consistently discriminated against populations such as girls, children with disability and ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities.

It was also encouraging to see the HLP report underscore the importance of both data and measurement. Reflecting on the success and weaknesses of the MDGs, the HLP report argues that goals without quantitative targets and deadlines will fail to provide the motivation and accountability necessary for progress. The education community, through the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), has spent the last year tackling these same challenges in order to determine how best to measure learning outcomes. The recommendations of the LMTF on how to measure learning span across seven domains, ranging from literacy and numeracy to social-emotional

learning and the arts. Subsequent LMTF reports will provide concrete recommendations for countries at various levels of capacity so that governments and organizations can not only track how they are doing, but also target policy to address areas of need. The HLP report calls for exactly this type of data across all sectors by recommending that new goals be accompanied by an independent and rigorous monitoring system, with regular opportunities to report on progress and shortcomings at a high political level.

The High-Level Panel's optimism that the international community will succeed in eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 through a new global partnership that breaks with the outdated "high-income/low-income government-to-government concept of the MDGs" is encouraging. While the panel's recommendations are only the first stepping-stone in the longer-term process of developing the post-2015 agenda, we are encouraged by the holistic focus of the report as well as the specific education goal and associated national targets. As the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals ramps up its discussions, including a focus on education in June, we hope that the recommendations of the High-Level Panel, and the broader consultation forums represented by the World We Want Education Consultation and Sustainable Development Solutions Network reports, are consulted and integrated into their deliberations.

Allison Anderson

Nonresident Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Center for Universal Education

Allison Anderson is a nonresident fellow with the Center for Universal Education. Formerly the director of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), she focuses on how quality education can help mitigate the impact of disasters and climate change, promote conflict resolution, and build individual and societal resilience.

[More Posts from Allison >](#) | [View Expert Page >](#)

Lauren Greubel

Research Assistant, Center for Universal Education

Comments for this thread are now closed.



0 comments



Best ▾ **Community**

Share

No one has commented yet.