



Report of the

Asia-Pacific Forum on the Progress Update
of the International Commission on the
Futures of Education

15 April 2021

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I. About the forum

Date of the forum: Thursday, 15 April 2021

Time: 13:00-15:00, Bangkok (GMT+7) / 14:00-16:00, Beijing (GMT+8) / 15:00-17:00, Tokyo (GMT+9)

Venue: Online

Organizers: Comparative Education Society of Asia (CESA) and UNESCO Bangkok

Background and objective

The aim of the forum was to solicit feedback from the Asia-Pacific region on the Progress Update of the International Commission on the Futures of Education. During the open forum, participants were invited to make short spoken comments for 2 minutes each. The inputs gathered during the forum will feed into the global report of the International Commission, which will be launched at the UNESCO General Conference in November 2021.

Link to the Progress Update:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375746/PDF/375746eng.pdf.multi>

Programme

- Introduction to the Progress Update by Sobhi Tawil, Director, Division of the Future of Learning and Innovation, UNESCO HQ
- Comments on the Progress Update: a panel
 - LIU Baocun (Beijing Normal University, China)
 - Ryoko TSUNEYOSHI (Bunkyo Gakuin University, Japan)
 - Chanita RUKSPOLLMUANG (Siam University, Thailand)
 - LEANG Un (Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia)
- Discussion with ZHANG Wei (East China Normal University, China) and Mark MACA (Central Luzon State University, Philippines) moderated by Edward VICKERS (Kyushu University, Japan)
- Open forum

II. Introduction to the Progress Update by Sobhi Tawil, Director, Division of the Future of Learning and Innovation, UNESCO Headquarters

- The Futures of Education initiative was launched over a year ago. It aims to catalyse public debate, policy dialogues, research and action on education in a long-term perspective and the future horizons.
- While the International Commission is preparing its report for release in November of this year, we have, from the beginning, initiated a broad conversation through many partners and networks and through a range of modalities e.g., focus group discussions, webinars, online consultation platforms, a call for think pieces from the global network of UNESCO Chairs, etc. This was the first phase of open conversation and consultation, and the aim was surfacing ideas about education and the future.
- The use of the ‘futures’ in the plural refers both to *probable* futures based on a projection of current trends, as well as *possible* futures in the sense of visioning the type of futures and the type of development that we would desire. In terms of education, it’s not only about adaptation to change as we look to the future, but it’s also education and its role in transformation and in helping shape the types of futures that we aspire to.
- In this second phase of consultation, this is now an opportunity to provide input into some of the ideas and some of the analysis that is taking shape within the Commission. This was the intention of this March Update from the International Commission.
- We have already received comments through the Secretariat on the basis of this Update. One input is that as much as there are plural futures, it’s also important that we bear in mind the plural presents and the diverse realities in terms of educational and developmental challenges and opportunities. We do have common challenges as we look to the future worldwide, but there are also specificities in the way that these play out in specific contexts.
- The framing as you’ll see is that we’re at a historical juncture, a turning point for education and development. While there’s been undeniable progress in human development over the past decades, there has also been recognition, as we see with the 2030 Agenda, of the unsustainable patterns of development—accelerated climate change and emerging challenges also in relation to rapid technological disruption—and that we must change course. Basically, the framing and the narrative of the report is that we must radically change course if we are to ensure socially, economically, environmentally just and sustainable futures. And changing course really begins by reframing what it means to be human in today’s world.
- For those of you who are familiar with the Delors Report from the mid-90s, one of the four pillars was learning to live together. It was very much a concern with social cohesion and accelerated globalization. But since then, there has been acknowledgement of the environmental crisis and in particular the climate crisis. So, beyond living with others, it’s also about how humans are living and relating to the environment. More recently, with the recent developments in technology, it is also about how we define ourselves and how we relate ethically and safely to technology.

- So, it's about reframing what it means to be human in the sense of how we redefine our relationships with others (the social dimension), with the living planet (the environment), and with technology. Education has a key role to play in reshaping development and these sustainable futures. But we also know the shortcomings of education despite the progress made— shortcomings still in terms of inequitable, incomplete access; in terms of quality; in terms of relevance. If we look at global averages in completion of secondary education, for example, half of students in upper secondary do not complete the cycle. There's perhaps something to be asked about the model and the approaches that we have pursued over decades, and to rethink them if education is to deliver on past commitments and also to deliver on its promise and its potential to be transformative as we look to shape the futures.
- I very much look forward to hearing your thoughts. I think it was very wise of the International Commission to say that they would open the process and not work behind closed doors. It is important to get the perspectives and thoughts from different regions and constituencies.

III. Comments on the Progress Update: a panel

1. LIU Baocun, Beijing Normal University, China/President of CESA and the Chinese Comparative Education Society (CCES)

Below is the written version of his comments submitted after the Forum.

- 1) Why do we need a new research report?

UNESCO is an international organization that is good at putting forward ideas. Over the past decades, it has put forward many ideas, which have played a positive role in the educational research and development throughout the world. For example, education as a fundamental human right, equity in education, girls' education, human capital, lifelong education, learning society, education for all, inclusive education, education for sustainable development, education for international understanding, global citizenship education, etc.

These ideas are reflected in various reports of UNESCO. In the past few decades, UNESCO has published hundreds of reports, among which the most influential research reports are as follows: *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* (1972), *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1986), *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?* (2015). In addition, there is an action framework 'Education 2030 Framework for Action' in 2015. Most of the other reports have been forgotten.

The title of the new report is 'The Futures of Education', which looks quite different from 'Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?' in 2015. But in fact, they are very similar, because the core of the report is 'Regenerating Education' with the goal 'Towards a Global Common Good'. Therefore, if we apply the title format of 2015 report, the title of the new report will be 'Regenerating Education: Towards a Global Common Good'.

Why do we need such a new report six years later? Is 2015's report 'Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?' out of date? Or is education in 2021 facing totally different challenges and problems from that in 2015? Or because the Education 2030 Framework for Action in 2015 has achieved its goals? Or it has failed so we have to draft a new report to replace it?

When we publish a new report, should we summarize the development, problems and challenges of education since the previous report and explain clearly why we need to write a new research report?

- 2) What are the new ideas in the new research report?

Every research report should have its unique ideas and give people ideological enlightenment and practical guidance. For example:

- a. *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* in 1972 stressed that lifelong education is the cornerstone of a learning society, and suggested that all countries, including developed and developing countries, should take lifelong education as the basic principle of education reform and development;

- b. *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1986) emphasized that lifelong learning is the key to success in the future and put forward four pillars of education in the 21st century: Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to live together, and Learning to be.
- c. Adhering to the ideology of humanistic education and development, *Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?* in 2015 suggested that we take education and knowledge as global common good, so as to coordinate the purpose and organization of education as a social collective effort in a complex world.

The 2021 report emphasizes 'Regenerative Education for a Common Future', with two fundamental ideas: (a) Strengthening education as a global common good and (b) Reframing humanism for shared futures. The report also emphasizes the following pathways:

- a. Strengthening a common public education;
- b. Building inclusive educational ecosystems;
- c. Fostering knowledge co-construction and pedagogical commoning.

Is it enough for a new report?

3) Several issues to be clarified:

- a. The report emphasizes that 'radical change is needed in the design of education systems, the organization of schools and other educational institutions, and curriculum and pedagogical approaches.

The reform and development of education should be gradual, rather than revolutionary and disruptive. The term radical change gives us an impression of revolutionary and disruptive policies. Will it bring negative influences to the reform and development of education?

- b. The report emphasizes the key roles for higher education. Why does it emphasize key roles for higher education rather than other education sectors? In the process of regenerating education, education at all levels are very important and need to carry out comprehensive reforms.

In the process of regenerating education, especially when strengthening a common public education, we should highlight the key role of the governments, the global leadership and coordination role of UNESCO, and the joint participation of different stakeholders.

- c. The relationship between some concepts is not clear.

For example, 'Regenerative education for a common future' and 'Reframing humanism for shared futures'; Common future and shared futures; common good, the common and commoning.

2. Ryoko TSUNEYOSHI, Bunkyo Gakuin University, Japan

- 1) I'm going to start by summarizing the flow of the argument of the Update as I understand it. I identified three messages from the Progress Update.

- a. The first one was that it was gloomy – if we don't do anything, our future will be like Scenario 1, which is:
- The ecosystem and the planet is in danger, there's climate change and mass biodiversity loss, and we have exhausted planet earth (p. 5).
 - There's the rise of new technology that may be good and used for good purposes but can also be abused. There is automation leading to mass unemployment and basic survival, distorting virtuality (p. 5). Section 1 page 8 mentions the right to data/information, and the protection of privacy, digitalization of education and the emergence of the hybrid school.
 - Changing societal conditions like ageing and increased movement of people across borders, which then leads to a rise of uncertainty. This is in Section 1, p. 8, on shifting demographics and human mobility, and the uncertain future of work.
 - Challenges to democracy, the widening of economic and social gaps and disparities, civic life which is at risk, 'democratic backsliding', exploitation, emphasis on both the degeneration of democratic elements in general, and in disparities (within and across societies). Section 1, pp. 9-10, discusses governance crisis and democratic backsliding, political authoritarianism, etc. Challenges to human rights rooted education, decolonization, "fake news", etc. Well-being appears here on page 9.
 - There's also short mentioning of irresponsible human activities (p. 5), which I think leads to Scenario 1, that is an unsustainable future.

So, you have some elements that bring together the Scenario 1 that we are headed to if we don't do anything. But all these elements do not necessarily come up in the later discussions; some parts do, and some parts don't. So, I wonder how central are these small pieces, like the environment, technology, and challenges to democracy?

- b. After this first message, there's the brighter future which says that human action can overturn Scenario 1 and set the world on the preferable course towards Scenario 2. The key term is 'common' education as a public good. Here you have:
- Human action that can be changed, acting together with a common global purpose, co-construction, solidarity, cooperation, and collectively transforming the future.
 - Scenario 2 is a more just and sustainable future, positive change, peace, sustainability for individuals, co-construction of societies and the planet (pp. 5–6).
- c. Then I think in the end, there's the message that the role of education is vital. And here, you have:
- Regenerative education (p. 6)—education that has a 'vast regenerative potential' to overturn the Scenario 1.

- Education as a global common good. 'Common' does not mean homogeneity but means diversity of cultural traditions (p. 6).
- 'Common' and 'commoning' intertwining with discussions of human rights, equality and quality education for all, peaceful world, interdependence with humans, planet, and technology (p.7), democracy, sustainability, diversity, equality, and well-being.
- Section 2 page 11 discusses that we are at the end of a historical cycle and things like that. A new 'social contract for education' is based on education as a public and common good', 'commons-centered education', 'school of cooperation and creation' based on diversity (p. 11).

2) In general, I found this flow and, overall, the general discussion very interesting, but I have some comments that I hope might add to the discussion.

- a. The Progress Update was very easy to follow for me. One reason is probably because it builds on and confirms messages which have been repeated by the UN and other international organizations. The report mentions that it is building on previous UN reports. For this upcoming report, I thought it might emphasize more what the unique contribution of this report is and why it is necessary.
- b. The key concepts might be clarified more, especially 'common' and 'commoning' that I think you used in a way that is usually not used. They are everyday words, so I think they're intuitively very appealing for those who read it. But, when you think about how they need to be terms that guide action or are analytical tools, I think it would help if the terms are clarified more. If you can't use existing terms, then there must be a reason for it, right? So, I think that might come out more.

'Commoning' and co-construction seem to be used interchangeably. If 'commoning' means simply to work together, co-construct, or to collaborate, what ensures that the process and result is democratic? Are there different dimensions to 'common'? What is the difference between being public, or being a governmental responsibility, or being a 'common' project?

In the discussion of 'pedagogical commoning', the examples seem to mix the unit of the activities (group vs. individual work) and pedagogy that is usually linked to developing thinking skills such as problem-based and project-based activities which do not necessarily have to be collaborative to attain their goals. Learning in groups does not ensure that the children are interacting positively. Teacher collaboration is the same. Again, a clear definition of 'common' and 'commoning' with some concrete examples would help greatly.

Examples of pedagogical commoning include transforming the "lesson" into common inquiry; adapting education to student - driven learning over teacher - delivered content; and promoting problem - based and project - based activities that require collaboration. Teacher collaboration both exemplifies and furthers pedagogical commoning (p. 15).

‘Regenerative education’ appears, after the Introduction, in Section 3 pp. 14-15, but the definition seems very detailed. I might have missed the actual definition, but if it is not there, it might be useful to add a compact definition.

In addition to traditional disciplines, the curriculum has to encompass the major themes and problems of the world and develop itself through research and learner-driven projects. In addition to traditional skills, the curriculum must also integrate critical thinking and all that is needed to support citizenship and democratic participation on local and global scales. The principle of reciprocity is central. Empathy, as the ability to put ourselves in another’s place with full affective openness, is a fundamental element of education (pp. 14-15).

Clarity of the key concepts/terms would probably help the readers understand what is unique about the message the Futures of Education is trying to send out.

c. Who does this progress update address?

From pp. 14-15, when the discussion deals with school education, the message seems sometimes to be directed toward teachers as an audience. In other places, the discussion seems to be targeting a more general audience. In higher education, the discussion is not directed at the educators (in this case, the professors), in the same way as it was in school education. Parents and children are not targeted.

New inclusive educational eco-systems will not appear spontaneously. Teachers, with their professional knowledge and experience, have an essential role to play in creating them. Fortunately, all over the world, tens if not hundreds of thousands of teachers have advanced in these directions (p. 14).

d. Issues of accessibility

The following may help the Futures of Education become more accessible to a wider audience: visual presentations such as charts and pictures; data which can be quoted elsewhere; translation into other languages, and examples from other cultures.

3. Chanita RUKSPOLLMUANG, Siam University, Thailand

Link to the presentation: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/A-P%20Forum%20on%20the%20Progress%20Update%20-%20Chanita%20presentation.pdf>

Below is the written version of her comments submitted after the forum.

1) General Overview

The title of the report is well-stated, and it provokes our curiosity to find out what the Commission means by ‘Regenerative Education’ and ‘Common Future’. I find the explanation of a regenerative education—education which heals, repairs, repurposes, and renews to set the worlds on paths of more just and sustainable futures for all—very interesting. The Commission intends not to build another ‘futuristic’ exercise or to present ‘future scenarios’, and I agree that there are many reports and papers on what would/should be in 2050. Thus, it will be great if this report focuses on the action part—what must/should be done. For this reason, the part on ‘A Manifesto for Public Action’ should be elaborated and directive (something like the 17 SDGs or

the Delors' pillars of learning) so that we can be assured that education will regenerate, shape desirable futures, and repair past injustices. In addition, with consideration to the rapid changes in this VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world, 30 years might be too long to envision the scenario.

In commenting on this report, I will select a few points to discuss.

2) Strengthening Education as a Global Common Good: Commons-centered Education

I find the part on 'The Worlds of Education – Today and Tomorrow' very thought-provoking. It is a critical part of the challenges that education must face starting from now. Yet, I wish to see more on the links or thoughts on how these radical changes will affect the structure, form, and process of education.

A planet transformed by human activity; dilemma of man vs. machine, proper ethical governance and a new understanding of humanism; digitalization of education and the emergence of the 'hybrid' school; shifting demographics and human mobility; the rise of 'gig' economies and the uncertain future of the world of work; radical uncertainty about governance and democratic participation; and intellectual decolonization and epistemic diversity area well presented. I totally agree that these trends and disruptions underline the urgency of rethinking the ways in which we understand and organize education. And, that education cannot do it alone.

Among all parts, 'strengthening education as a global common good' has interestingly pointed out the new meaning of the concept of 'global common good' — 'common' as a noun and 'commoning' as an action. The Commission explains that 'common' as a noun refers to what we build in common and how we govern, and 'commoning' as an action refers to the ways in which we build and co-construct. Hence, these are common goal points to collective access and stewardship, to a common goal defined through and sustaining a diversity of cultural traditions. One of the most important aspects of the futures of education is to break with uniform, homogenizing and colonialist traditions (i.e., 'intellectual colonization'). It should be a world where education is a common good and is a place where bottom-up, local initiatives blossom and self-organized governance can also succeed on a large scale.

This is a crucial point. Education has been 'provided' under the Westernized 'Modernization' paradigm which advocates economic growth and classifies local culture as backwards for a long time. Much of the research and literature on the world in 2050 affirms that there will be a shift from 'Modernization' to 'Sustainability' or 'Balanced Growth', from 'Globalization' to 'Localization'. Some papers predict that the 'Silk Highway' will emerge as a new global geopolitical-economic power and Asia will reaffirm its position at the center of global economic power (Stephen Hajkowitz, 2015). It is also predicted that cultural diversity will be more appreciated, and values will be given to local, indigenous culture.

Nevertheless, there are questions on this commons-centered education. How can we identify 'common goals'? Whose 'commons goals' are we aiming for? How can we convince society members to believe in and act upon 'common goals'? And how can we achieve them? Somehow, this issue reminds me of the work of the founder of the Sociology of Education, Émile Durkheim, who advocates 'social facts', 'moral forces' 'value consensus and structural

consensus’ and explains how collective consciousness, based on value consensus or the ‘core values’, binds individuals together, creates social integration, and forms group minds in modern society. As such, common goals can be nurtured from generation to generation. However, we might need to rearrange the 3Hs from ‘Head, Hand, Heart’ to ‘Heart, Head, Hand’—meaning nurturing the human with the heart and soul (moral and public-minded person) should be the first priority of education.

In the same way, ‘commoning’ of knowledge and pedagogical modes, which foreground the relational and collective aspects of teaching and learning, can be co-constructed. This practice is now seen, in some way, on the initiation of ‘All for Education’ and a life-design learning approach, for instance. However, the question remains: who are/should be the co-designers of education, curriculum and learning? Who should be involved at national, institutional, class levels—policy-makers, administrators, teachers, learners, etc.? ‘Commoning’ as an action is thus a good idea, but it will require a lot of effort in practice.

Another remark on this issue is that, in the old days, ‘commons’ can be easily identified, and they changed slowly. But in the VUCA world and the future of 2050, drastic and rapid changes can be foreseen. Hence, what we learn has to be flexible and this situation will affect the planning and implementing curriculum and instruction, learning evaluation, assessment, quality assurance, etc. There will not be one rule that fits all.

3) Rethinking Education towards 2050

Many pieces of evidence affirm that we have reached the end of a historical cycle of a ‘social contract for education’, and that new educational patterns and a new ‘contract’ with a different vision and purpose for education have begun to form. One part of the historic ‘social contract for education’ mainly emphasizes formal schooling. In reality, a similar ‘social contract’ also happens in non-formal education. In 2050, not only formal schooling should be redesigned in response to the needs of individuals to learn, relearn, and unlearn, but the role of lifelong education to skill, reskill, and upskill should be revised and enhanced.

I also find that the Commission has pointed out a very important point about the nature of commons-centered education. Certainly, it must be built on defending and expanding the inherited legacy of public education and the teaching profession. I totally agree that to innovate is not only to discover "new things" and that the new can be a renewal of heritage that is tried and true.

In addition, the role of teachers should be emphasized in the future digital world. Teachers cannot and must not be replaced by machine/robot teachers or coaches or tutors. Teaching is more than coaching. Humans need to learn from humans. As Albert Einstein once said, *‘I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots’*.

The Commission goes on with three proposals; namely, (a) the place of education in wider society: strengthening a common public education, (b) the organization and governance of education: building inclusive educational ecosystems, and (c) the content and methods of teaching and learning: fostering knowledge co-construction and pedagogical communing. It is interesting to read about the new meaning of ‘commons’, ‘public’ and ‘public good’ especially

the call for the presence and involvement of ‘all who are concerned with education’ in forming and realizing common purposes, not just ‘stakeholders’. It will be good if education is built on a common public education, which is to call for a broad public sphere of discussion, engagement, and action around education. However, its implementation is quite difficult. And, it goes back to the notion of ‘whose commons’, etc. mentioned earlier.

A vital need for many kinds of educational institutions, which function as the place we come together to share knowledge, to think together, to learn together, to encounter difference, is clearly expected. The Commission indicated that schools need profound changes and this point should be elaborated. I wish there were more on this matter. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Commission has touched upon crucial issues. It is certainly imperative that education at every level must not focus on building human capital, but on building human beings.

Nurturing a ‘Man of Heart & Soul’ should be the prime function of education at the basic level while training a ‘Man of Knowledge, Ideas and Innovative Mind’ should be the focus of higher education since we still need both highly trained ‘I-shape’ scholars and well-rounded ‘T-shape’ graduates. Universities will still be a significant institution in producing research and enabling the circulation of knowledge, which both supports educational policy-making and strengthens schools and pedagogical innovation. It will play a key role in building education as a global common good and a supporter of other educational institutions at all levels and types. It is also important that special attention should be paid to early childhood education. However, in the future, we should give more attention to parent education or family education for the ‘will-be’ parents.

Concerning the content and methods of teaching and learning, the Commission insists that knowledge co-construction and pedagogical commoning should be fostered. It is true that traditional skills and empathy are still important and should be considered in co-construction. And it should be noted that education must nurture the ‘We-person’, not the ‘I-person’. At the same time, certain soft skills—not only critical thinking, as mentioned—should be enhanced. The learners need ‘futures literacy’, skills of ‘learning how to learn/relearn/unlearn’, and ‘learning to become’. Einstein’s quotes, ‘Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think’ and that ‘It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge,’ are still applicable.

In addition, the Commission states that we must see individuals collaborating for collective action as one of the most vital learning needs of the present for enabling people to create the futures they want to create. In addition, the curriculum has to encompass the major themes and problems of the world and develop itself through research and learner-driven projects. However, there is a need for balance between individual learner-driven and society-driven learning.

4) New times, New roles for Teachers

In the future, teaching will still certainly be the main task. But, if curriculum and learning will be developed through learner-driven projects as earlier mentioned, the role of professional teachers (not ‘tutors’ or ‘coaches’) may include other tasks than teaching such as life designers who provoke imagination in the students, help identify their strengths, interests and values and design pathways to achieve their goals. For instance, at higher education level, in 2050, it might

not be necessary for students to select colleges or majors they want to enroll because the world of knowledge, the world of work and the way of life transforms or changes rapidly. Hence, teachers should be equipped with the skills to design innovative modes of learning and support students in developing their way of thinking and learning. Teachers and learners should co-design learning plans to obtain all necessary sets of skills for the career paradigm that will emerge. In short, teachers must be able to guide students in the areas where they need guidance as innovators, and nurture them to become a holistic person. At the national level, this requires a major reform in both pre-service and in-service teacher education. The proposed ideas of 'regenerative education for our common future' will not be possible unless the teachers (as well as administrators) are aware of and willing to train and retrain for new roles and challenges.

4. Leang UN, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Below is the written version of his comments submitted after the Forum.

- 1) As a young person who has limited experiences, especially in participating in such a global forum, I would like to contribute mostly through my engagement within the Cambodian context where it is a theatre of global policy, especially since the 1990s.

As an eye-witness, there have been three phases of such global policy in Cambodia starting from Education for All in 1990, Millennium Development Goals in 2000, and currently Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Since the 1990s, millions and millions of US dollars have been mobilized to design and implement the project to achieve these global policies. What actually happens on the ground? The performance of the education sector in Cambodia has been diagnosed by the OECD 2018 report 'Education in Cambodia: Findings from Cambodia's experience in PISA-D' as being in a learning crisis, though I am not total in agreement with this report.

Now comes the International Commission on the Futures of Education. Please allow me to contribute here as I feel what need to highlight in order to avoid another learning crisis by 2050.

- 2) The Futures of Education's mandate is to serve as an agenda for global debate, policy dialogue and action at multiple levels. The statement is great, but how can such an agenda be lively at the national and local levels unless all education stakeholders internalize such an agenda of 'changing course towards public and common good'?

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the attempt to bring the agenda of UNESCO's 2015 *Rethinking Education* to Cambodia. This report is incomprehensible in Cambodian language, so how can we get all people to be involved in the debate, to say nothing about designing the education programme for Cambodia?

- 3) Futures of Education acknowledges the possibilities and limits of educational responses to society. For me, to limit the role of educational responses means we limit our educational programme to only formal schooling, which is not reflecting the broader sense of education as lifelong learning in which UNESCO is the champion so far. But, we must make clear that lifelong learning is not only about the learning skills that the current schooling system is adopting; there must be a lifelong learning programme to work with the professionals in the field, if not directly

addressing the core issues of public and common good, at least to understand what public and common good means, so that they can support the school programme.

Currently, we see a disconnected intervention, lacking an ecosystem of educational policy and project interventions between school and community.

- 4) Futures of Education calls for broad public and expert engagement and sparking public debate on what public and common good is. Again, this links to 2) and 3). The core issue is how we can bring this down to the level of national and local. This is because public and common good at the global level need not only to be contextualized, but also be identified in a particular context.

So far, in the Cambodian context, there are a handful of overseas educated persons who claim to be *omniscient*. Even in terms of textbook development, teaching methods, school management and leadership in which they never have any previous work experiences, they still wrote a policy and manual for all schools and school principles. As I have witnessed, rather than solving the problem, the result is, as identified by the report in my introduction, 'a learning crisis'. This is because the majority of their advice transcends the context and this also leads to the disappearing of educational diversity, which I will talk about later.

For example, in many parts of the world, climate change could push human mobility. This is not so much the case in Cambodia, but educational programmes in Cambodia follow the global agenda sometimes blindly due to the lack of capacity to identify or differentiate between the global common good and public and common good in its own context. In Cambodia, in fact, it is the current consumption-based and materialistic lifestyle that force people to migrate. So, we need to have a vision not only for education, but for what humans and societies we would like to be and to have in the future, and for how we can adjust our education system accordingly.

- 5) Futures of Education values a culture of highly physical interaction. This is a great insight and I think UNESCO should be a role model—especially during the pandemic—on how to keep such a culture alive, rather than promoting online learning. Though students are learning online, which is currently advocated for during this pandemic, we are losing our diversity in this digital age as the majority of content is monopolized by the English language.
- 6) Futures of Education calls for intellectual decolonization, which is actually a great call. But how can we do it if there is no budget to support the revitalization of the endogenous culture and epistemology, even from the UNESCO? Decolonization will require people who are highly educated in terms of theory and philosophy, especially epistemology. Currently, the department of philosophy who is supposed to cultivate thinkers is struggling to survive. If decolonization will happen, we need a programme to support philosophy and this must be stated boldly in the Futures of Education report.

Without a strong philosophy, today, our education programme gives more priority to quality of education over relevancy of education that promotes social justice, common good and future generations. One can argue that there is no emptied quality, quality is always accompanied by a certain relevancy. I can say yes, but the relevancy of this quality of education is measured solely by the existing market economy and only serves the private goods. In this sense, there is a *reform* to respond to the existing needs, but there is no *recontent* to change the agenda.

- 7) Futures of Education calls for reframing humanism for shared futures. I think the reframing must be undertaken right now and one should question the SDGs for 2030, especially how it operates at the local level. Is the education in a particular country at the moment going to lay down the foundation for the vision of 2050 advocated by the Futures of Education? Or is it actually cementing the issues to be thicker and thicker? Remember, we still have 9 years to go before the SDGs ends in 2030. If we do not evaluate at the moment, the vision of 2050 is just another paper as it has always been, for example UNESCO's reports in 1972 and 1996.

I think we must treat school as a public and common good in itself that needs to be achieved through school activities. Currently, the education-for-work model (where work refers to the private market in an urban and modern setting) has nothing related to treating school as a community of public and common good or engaging with the local community as a public and common good that is waiting to be served.

- 8) Futures of Education addresses an education for the uncertain future of the world of work. A real education must take away the preparation for the world of work, and society as a whole needs to rethink what work means—if we could not avoid the word 'work' or what our vision for society is—so that it can help to facilitate a 'recontent' and not enforcing a reform to suit the existing work model. Actually, different kinds of work related to cultural diversity and tradition or an alternative society are disappearing daily as educational responses aim only to address the current existing labour market demands.

The analysis of what humans really need from birth to death can facilitate the division of work, thus education can prepare for that. We can experiment with this on the small scale of the commune or province.

- 9) Futures of Education calls for intellectual decolonization and epistemic diversity. This is a great call. But, as I mentioned earlier, we need real educators and local scholars who can do that. Here, I would like to provide an example of what should not be done if diversity is to grow.

In Cambodia in 2000, there was a project from an international organization to change the way Cambodian language should be learned and taught. In fact, Cambodia has its own unique way to learn its language as it is a unique language spoken and written in the world. Instead of improving it, now almost every Cambodian kid cannot read and write properly due to the change to the global method of language learning and teaching (whole word learning) that was introduced by this international organization and educational reform in many aspects. This includes the taking away of local and traditional contents, and Cambodian students now know less about their own culture and tradition. On another note, the more and the higher education they get, the more alienated they are from their own society due to the preparation for work, the massive inflow of multinational companies and the use of foreign languages.

- 10) Futures of Education calls for a rethinking of education towards 2050, strengthening a common public education. In this sense, I favour an education governance where there should be very limited or no K-12 private schools, so that every child who is not yet spoiled and corrupted by the society will cultivate a common understanding of what public and common goods are.

- 11) Futures of Education calls for a new time for teachers. This is a great initiative. But, what we see mostly are the programmes that train educators, but never educate educators. We cannot have

educators if we continue to train them. Furthermore, we have not seen any programme that educates educators to have a community spirit or to serve public and common goods using a framework of working together and combining their different expertise and subjects to demonstrate a role model in particular educational institutions in which they are involved. That is to say, using school as the sphere for public and common goods is still waiting to be addressed.

- 12) Futures of Education identifies the key roles for higher education, which is very crucial, but our universities are not serving that purpose. Look at the way neoliberalism invades a public university and the running of a university like a corporate company.
- 13) Futures of Education stresses the urgency of global solidarity and international cooperation. This call has been for a while since the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005, but all donors and international organizations are still not working smoothly with one another, and actually they are looking at poor countries as their market and competing for their projects to be solved. I wish UNESCO could (a) be back to its glorious time before the 1990s and (b) be in a position to coordinate well with governments and other stakeholders to make sure that a real global aid architecture would be in place.

Sorry to say this as I have not seen any serious engagement from UNESCO in promoting higher education in Cambodia. Other active players in Cambodian higher education have never exhausted and never run out of money, which is pushing a reform in higher education gearing towards tangible outcomes and labour market demands, and thus an absence of what public and common goods are among future generations.

IV. Discussion with ZHANG Wei (East China Normal University, China) and Mark MACA (Central Luzon State University, Philippines) moderated by Edward VICKERS (Kyushu University, Japan)

- 1) **Vickers:** I wanted to pick up, first of all, on comments that Professor Liu was making. He expressed a certain skepticism about why we need a new report now and he himself talked a lot about that. There was another point where he expresses skepticism about the use of the term ‘radical change’. So, when the Update talks about the need for radical change in education, he wonders whether the use of that term is sensible. He says it gives an impression of ‘revolutionary and disruptive policies—will this bring negative influence to the reform and development of education?’ What do the two of you think? Do you think we should be talking about radical change, or do you think that is potentially counterproductive?

Maca: Yes, this is quite striking, what Professor Baocun emphasized in his report. I agree with him because, especially in this part of the world, in this region where non-interference among nation states is the stance of ASEAN states, the messaging could be quite interventionist or prescriptive. So, my take is to let every nation state put forward programmes and policies and activities in relation to these big concepts on, for example, human rights education and other value systems which people in Asia or this part of the world might consider as ‘Westernized’ or not ‘Asian’ enough.

Zhang: Actually, like Professor Liu, while I read it, I stopped for a moment on ‘radical’ because I feel, if we read what UNESCO in this report is now proposing, it’s actually building on what it has already been doing. I do feel that’s also linked to my comment that, perhaps in writing this by saying what we should do with education in the future, we can first talk about what we have achieved and what we have already been doing here, and then building on that. I do feel that ‘radical’ can be changed to some other vocabulary.

Vickers: Possibly the use of this sort of language of ‘radicalism’, ‘transformation’ or ‘revolution’, maybe on one level it’s justified, but on another level it’s potentially alarming and demoralizing to a lot of educators. I know for example, in Britain, a lot of teachers complain about an atmosphere of ‘permanent revolution’ in education which, in practice, many teachers find extremely unsettling and demoralizing. So, there’s a need for a bit of balance there perhaps.

- 2) **Vickers:** Next, I wanted to come to an issue that Professor Tsuneyoshi raised. She talked about this term ‘commoning’, and this is also something that Professor Chanita mentioned, but Tsuneyoshi-sensei said, if ‘commoning’ means simply to work together, to co-construct, how can we ensure that this process of working together or co-construction is democratic? And this relates to the point that Professor Chanita made—who are the co-designers? Who’s doing the commoning? Who should be involved at various levels and how should they be involved?

Maca: I had the same questions when I was reading the report. I wanted to push it further by asking whether this ‘commoning’ will be for commoning of frameworks, rubrics, or accreditation of education credentials across borders. Because, in the context of the Philippines for example, this would greatly benefit migrant skilled workers from developing countries. This is part of the concern on the cost of migration because of these not-so-common frameworks of credentialism. At the same time, I’m also concerned about challenges of cross-border ‘commoning’, for

example when it comes to addressing the needs of refugees and vulnerable migrants, because there's a move now towards an educational passport for this group. So, beyond the question of who makes the decisions and how they are made, I'm more interested in what it will be like concretely on the ground.

Vickers: Right, so you're kind of echoing the points about how the language of commoning and involving everyone sounds good, but how is that going to work in practice? That's a little bit difficult and we would need to think a lot about that.

Zhang: I do feel we need to think about the power structure when we talk about everyone involved. The document talks about governance several times, but I don't see sufficient discussion about the role of the state and the market, and adding on that, families and civil society. Perhaps, Ed, you can tell us about your research and how this commoning effort of UNESCO is kind of offset by national agendas for economic utilitarian nationalism.

Vickers: Well, let's not get into that now! But I think perhaps on the highest global level, there's a big problem in commoning between UNESCO and the OECD, for example. I don't think they're on the same page, and there's a power imbalance there as well, which I think maybe could be explicitly addressed in UNESCO reports—maybe they should be going for the OECD (politely but firmly)!

- 3) **Vickers:** But you raised the issue of the role of the market vis-à-vis the role of the state, Zhang Wei, and that actually relates to your research on private tutoring and shadow education. And it also relates to a comment by Leang Un when he said that he thinks private education should either effectively be banned or be severely restricted if we want the public function of education to be experienced properly by everybody. [He said] If we want everybody to be learning together, if we want education to bring people together in communities, private education is undermining that, so we should ban it or severely restrict it. What do you think?

Zhang: Ideally, if we can say if we want a global public 'common' education, we should have everything public, but even this report is trying to say we should redefine 'public'. And in reality, when governments try to ban private tutoring—which is my research area—actually, it doesn't work. And this is linked to our discussion on commoning—families don't want something in common, they want distinction. So as long as society has differentiation and inequalities, I think education has a limit, so if you try to equalize schools, families will try to unequalize in the market, and then private schools also come on the scene. And now also with digital education, there's a lot more that families can mobilize. I do feel it's a matter of monitoring and steering rather than unrealistically saying we should totally ban it.

Vickers: And you're also saying that technology raises new challenges for maintaining any sort of balance between a sort of common, public, shared set of educational opportunities and what's available through the private sector.

Zhang: Especially because the market jumps much faster than the state in creating this digitalization of education, and the market now is really dominant and aggressive, so that's my concern. That's why I feel that the state's role should be brought out more.

Vickers: Although of course an overly strong state is going to potentially raise problems for diversity, or we run up against the problem which Tsuneyoshi-sensei raised: democracy. Who

controls the state? Who controls the education that the state provides? Mark, what do you think about this issue of privatization?

Maca: In the Philippines, there's a somewhat symbiotic or kind of a balance between private and public schooling and, based on my previous studies, it's a reality that provision of education here is a choice between parents. It's actually enshrined in our constitution, the right to choose the kind of education you want for yourself or your children. At the same time, again, following up my earlier comment about labour migration, the demand for labour migrants actually pushes for the maintenance of a very robust and actually very lucrative private education system. So, this 'commoning' framework is quite interesting if we're going to do it here in the Philippines, because up until about four years ago, the private education system here had a K-12 year cycle, while the public education system only had 10 years. These kinds of changes in the cycle of education or the transformation of the landscape actually just happened recently in the Philippines. So, let's see how UNESCO's position will be interpreted and supported by development partners and other stakeholders.

- 4) **Vickers:** The concept of decolonization or decoloniality, decolonizing education—this comes up a lot in the Update. Clearly, this is a concept that, in certain respects, seems attractive from the perspective of Leang Un or Professor Chanita, but what does decolonization mean to you? Who defines what's colonial and who defines what's indigenous? How useful do you see this concept being in helping us to ensure greater diversity in our debates over education?

Maca: It's actually interesting for me to read this specific phrase, because it's been a while, but not in the context of the Philippines—the fact that we have been pushing recently with mother tongue, multilingual education, it's affirmative action towards this whole decolonization movement. But at the same time, there's this global movement towards introducing anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ableist and alternative perspectives in the curriculum and across education policies, so I would interpret it that way, this proposition towards decolonization. It varies from country to country, from education system to education system, but more concretely in terms of what is indigenous or what is Western, for example, in the context of the Philippines, there is the more recent movement of the Ministry of Education in the country to legitimize the efforts of the grassroots communities on indigenous people's education.

- 5) **Vickers:** There's a lot more to say on this and on other issues. One of the issues I wanted to raise relates to gender. But I think this is perhaps something that others may want to raise in the discussion now, or directly in comments to the International Commission.

Below is the link to the additional written comments submitted by Mark Maca after the Forum:
<https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/AP%20Forum%20on%20the%20Progress%20Update%20-%20Mark%20Maca%20comments.pdf>

V. Open forum

The main session of the forum featured those pre-registered to share 2-minute comments addressing the content of the Progress Update. During the open forum, participants were invited to submit and share additional spoken and written comments. The comments below appear in the order the participants spoke.

Mark BRAY, University of Hong Kong/East China Normal University, China

- This is very stimulating and I'm going to grab the 2 minutes to echo a little bit.
- The last discussion was talking about the role of the market and the private sector. It's great in a report like this to have words like 'a robust vision of education of as a common good that benefits all'. It sounds great, like 'no child left behind'. But wait a minute, middle class parents *want* to leave other children behind. Upper class parents *want* to leave other people behind, and they will do so. If they can't do so through the schools, then they will do so through, as we said, private tutoring and residential proximity to certain schools and so on. So, I would like the report to address that more than just assume 'oh, this is lovely'.
- And perhaps, I would like to bring up Michael Sandel's work. He's challenging meritocracy. He describes meritocracy as 'the last acceptable prejudice' after racism and sexism are out of favour, which he says are 'discredited but not eliminated'. Well, what about meritocracy? I think that perhaps we should question that and bring it into the discussion.

CHOI Taehee, the Education University of Hong Kong, China

Link to presentation: <https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/A-P%20Forum%20on%20the%20Progress%20Update%20-%20Choi%20Taehee%20presentation.pdf>

- I have general feedback and one suggestion.
- I think the Progress Update shows that tremendous work has been done because it's really really difficult to predict the future. The direction is well set and covers all the aspects of our lives. I like that it focuses on the key issues of sustainability and inequity against the trends of global self-interest promotion by the government, people mobility and ever diversifying education stakeholders.
- Also, it's turning the pandemic into a learning opportunity to review education and observing that tutors or coaches will not be enough to ensure education, which is fantastic. The Commission uses the report as a call for ongoing debate, which is really commendable.
- I have one suggestion and it connects with the comments from previous speakers: How can we defend education as a public and common good? We cannot do it by chasing off the private, it's not going to happen, so how can we do that? We need to help schools learn to work together with the private and integrate or concert it as part of the public education. We should raise awareness on its possible unintended adverse impact on educational equity.
- We also need to teach schools to work with the private by closely monitoring the quality and equity of the education provided by private parties, including setting goals together when

writing contracts, and gathering feedback and reflecting on it throughout the partnership rather than at the end of the programme.

- I have many other practical suggestions, but because of the time I'll stop with sharing this report: ['Outsourcing of Education in Hong Kong: Practice, Issues and Recommendations'](#).

NONAKA Chisato, Kyushu University, Japan

- First, as a researcher in the field of education, I simply enjoyed reading the Progress Update for it conveyed the possibilities and promise of education, and also, it seems to build upon our basic (shared) understanding that education is a field where an action or pragmatic aspect of a 'vision' plays a significant role.
- I also felt that 'building *hope*' as mentioned in the report has to be treated not simply as an ideological endeavor, but with a tone of seriousness, especially during these challenging times with the pandemic.
- Page 2, towards the bottom, mentions the public and expert involvement in creating this report, and I think it's great to reflect a variety of voices like those of policymakers, professors/researchers, committee chairs, as well as of the online and public, but I just want to make sure that those people include students and teachers who are *the* main stakeholders of education. It didn't really talk about that, so I just wanted to make sure that the report includes those voices.
- Page 6, towards the bottom, mentions the importance of different epistemologies and concepts like *care*, *ubuntu*, and so on. This I think really helps readers to engage with this report, especially if these concepts resonate with them personally. For Japanese education, I was thinking, in early childhood and elementary school, maybe *omoiyari* (empathy) may be a similar concept. I think if we could perhaps explain how it's understood and practiced in the specific local contexts and show how it may be borrowed or translated into other contexts, that would be perfect. Although, I also understand the challenges of policy borrowing or lending in international contexts, so maybe it's easier said than done.
- Page 13 in paragraph 2 talks about building new relationships between family, social and work times and spaces, and it was a little unclear. It sounds important but I couldn't really picture how or in what manners to build new relationships, so maybe examples would be helpful.
- Page 13 in paragraph 5 where human capital is mentioned, I'm not sure if it's just me, but I don't find building human capital to be evil or unnecessary. I think education in fact needs to serve this purpose too, while capitalism is often portrayed as something evil. In reality, it can be a part of motivation for some of us, though perhaps not of everyone. 'Building human beings' in my opinion consists of developing human capital, if that makes sense. I think it's important to address the needs of building human capital in the report to some extent.
- Page 14 paragraph 2 mentions that school buildings should be designed or remodeled with the same boldness; yet, particularly in the Japanese contexts where funding for education is not necessarily abundant, it is unclear how that may be possible.

Ora KWO, East China Normal University, China

- I am very delighted to have the opportunity to think through the issue. I want to focus on the relationship issue that was raised in the very beginning. I find that the document itself is very helpful with developing language that can be a common framework for thinking. I don't think we need to focus too much on the correctness. I believe that a lot of people have worked together to make it happen.
- What I want to raise is the matter of distractions, because a lot of the time when we want to see things happening, it's not the goal that is not good enough—the goal is good enough—but we probably are often distracted by many other issues, which I've listened attentively and I find many conflicts and many contextual challenges and realities needed to be addressed.
- I want to make a point about 'big-picture good story' and 'small-picture good stories'. I would prefer to see that UNESCO is creating a big-picture good story with this kind of discourse and multi-round discussion. But the small-picture good stories need to be finding a channel to spread. We want a lot of encouragement—we want encouragement not from 'everything is good' or 'everything is bad', but we want encouragement from how stories are being told from overcoming conflicts, from addressing challenging realistic issues to the reality that we want to get to. That's the future.
- Right now, one story which I can see is a very good story is that I see Ed, Mark and Zhang Wei making all these comments and I think this is very promising to see that our younger generation is actively engaged (so that I can retire!).

OGISU Takayo, Sophia University, Japan

- One thing I wish to see as an extensive discussion in the final report is about learners. The Update talks about what to teach, how to teach and also about teachers, but it doesn't necessarily talk a lot about learners. I felt that learners are left out from the discussion of education as a global common good. Because education cannot be enacted without learners and because basically everyone on this earth is learners, including ourselves and policy-makers and teachers, I think it is somehow dangerous to think about education as a global common good without taking into account learners.
- Another thing is I do believe that this idea of education as a global common good has profound theoretical possibilities to expand our imaginary boundaries regarding education and schooling. I believe that some challenges of our time stem from the fact that the modern education system was developed based on the nation state framework, and in our time, we have a lot of people who live outside of the nation state framework, such as stateless populations or illegal migrants. So, we need to rethink the very idea of nation states and national education systems. I think, in this sense, reframing education as a *global* common good and acknowledging a collective global responsibility for education would be quite effective to help us at least imagine education differently from what we have done so far.

Veronica RETNAM, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

- This report which has repositioned education as a public good is hopeful, but I think it lacks some clarity. My comment is about what is missing and is based on the statement that certain approaches to education have ‘run their course’. There is a need to call out what these are, even if it is a short paragraph, in terms of approaches related with education for growth—we want to make sure that these approaches are not repeated.
- I interpret this as being related with the human capital theory with its elements of managerial economics through the concept of quality, which has positioned education as a private good. All of this must be addressed because quality and professionalism—terms which are very present in educational documents—must be understood and examined from the perspective of those on the ground and not just from the top. Their views must be put into policy documents. Only then can the new make way for the old, and only there can there be an initiation of a regenerative education co-construction for many in the social and physical worlds.

Manzoor AHMED, BRAC University, Bangladesh

- We have in the past commissioned reports like *Learning to Be* and *Treasure Within*. These raised many challenges, but they ended on a kind of hopeful note looking to the future. Can we do the same here—can we be as optimistic, as positive as it was in the past? The reason I’m raising this is because we seem to have questions about what is common, whether we can use the term ‘radical’ in our report, things like that.
- Carrying this point further, I’d just like to mention something that has probably been underplayed in what has been written so far in terms of progress, which is that the question, the idea of human progress itself has come under challenge these days. This is the reason for my being a bit doubtful about a positive and optimistic road to the future.
- From a South Asia perspective, and I think even globally, we see the resurgence of exclusionary values, extreme nationalism, undermining of pluralism, plural identity and human solidarity, rejection of respect for diversity, disdain for common human values, human heritage and civilization, and so on. These are kinds of problems we faced, I think, twenty years ago at the beginning of the new century. So, how do we overcome this? I think what is underplayed so far is that there is a need for a kind of underscoring of the moral and ethical purposes of education, which is not how this is promoted.
- Also, we need a regional perspective. A South Asian perspective is needed to be brought out rather than just a global view. So, that is something I hope that we can talk more about.

Below is the link to the additional written comments submitted by Manzoor Ahmed after the forum:

<https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/AP%20Forum%20on%20the%20Progress%20Update%20-%20Manzoor%20Ahmed%20comments.pdf>

SUGIMURA Miki, Sophia University, Japan/President of the Japan Comparative Education Society (JCES)

Below is the written version of her comments submitted during the open forum session.

- I would like to congratulate this Futures of Education Report and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Commission and all concerned for this report. My understanding is that this report is like a very big umbrella for many various reports focusing on concrete topics which have been discussed in the international society. In that sense, what I think is especially important is that, while standing in the position that a new direction of education is required, the report encourages us to reconsider and rethink the role of education by fully considering the conventional educational efforts and their significance. It proposes that we try to think together, act together, with the direction shown in the report as open-ended. We believe that these perspectives are extremely important in reaffirming the fundamental role of education based on humanity and human dignity to realize sustainable social development and human resources who contribute to our future society.
- Based on this point, I would like to make one comment. That is, while education is regarded as a global common good and the action of ‘commoning’, it would be better if the concept of ‘sharing’ is also more emphasized, though we can find the phrase ‘Reframing humanism for shared futures’ on page 7 of the Update. In education, there is a direction of fostering global citizens with a global perspective. Meanwhile, there is also an aspect of education policy that makes use of the uniqueness and local and traditional socio-cultural contexts of each country and region. While sometimes it is difficult to aim for a unified common goal, we can share global issues, share ideas and values for problem solving, and foster mutual trust for action. I hope we can confirm this point which has been enriched in education for sustainable development. ESD includes the important concepts of diversity, inclusion, equality and equity, which should be important norms to be examined in this report based on human dignity.

Jae PARK, the Education University of Hong Kong, China

- The current 17-page draft has a calendar deadline set for 2050. I wonder what it is for, since this is not an agenda like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I think this report does not need to ‘pretend to be’ yet another agenda for global education.
- I find the term ‘Regenerative Education’ intriguing because it is like a lizard’s tail—we had something there and then we lost it, hence, we now need to re-generate it. Recently, in Hong Kong, the government has removed from the local school curriculum any reference to ‘separation of powers’ and ‘rule of law’. If these were lizard’s tails, we would need to regenerate them. However, there is a big silence among educationists in Hong Kong. It may be indicative of self-censorship, a deep erosion in basic freedom here in Hong Kong, or perhaps even a symptom of the pandemic depression.
- I feel uneasy to read in the progress report some familiar eulogies such as ‘interdependencies with one another’ or ‘cooperation and internationalization’ as something always desirable, plausible and gently sloppy. Thinking of *futures* of education in plural, it is likely that, if using ‘ideologies of interdependency and collaboration’, Western epistemologies will continue their neoliberal globalization project (e.g., in universities) whereas some authoritarian regimes will continue amputating more lizards’ tails in the name of the ‘common good’ such as security and justice.

Rajnish JAIN, University Grants Commission, Ministry of Education, India

- In the report, the focus on building human being and not human capital is very clearly reflected, and it also clearly outlines the urgency of building hope in the critical time of emergency owing to global health, poverty, and equality. The arguments presented are really insightful.
- A few comments we would quickly like to make here is, first, the 'Rethinking education towards 2050' section may be further developed with short term-targets keeping the 2030 Agenda on Education in mind.
- Second, we must also feel the aspiration for strengthening and diversifying an education work force that can deliver inclusive and equitable education for all.
- The third point which we feel is there should be focus on evidence and innovations from other sectors, which will help in putting forth a forward approach for addressing immediate needs, while also creating a collaborative framework to respond to the quickly changing world.
- The fourth point, which we feel is very important, is to have additional emphasis on skill and value education to equip our young generation with the skills and values that they need for the times to come. This will definitely add value to the report.

KASAI Haruna, Kyushu University, Japan

- First, I would like to comment on the concept of publicness of education. I'm doing research on minority language education and how it could potentially open up a space for reconstructing minority language-speakers' position in the broader society. In this sense, I think the publicness of education is very important for reconstructing the power dynamic in the broader society.
- I think the issue is: What is allowed to be included in the public and what is expected to stay in the private, and who decides this? The limited time and resources allotted to the public schooling requires the selection of who and what would be included. If we really want education to be a place for regeneration and healing and fixing past injustices, then education must prioritize the inclusion of minorities and the oppressed.
- I'd also like to add a comment on the section on 'New times for teachers'. I believe teachers have an important role in the concept of regenerative education, especially because they are the bearer of knowledge construction. Education institutions have to be rebuilt to allow teachers to co-construct society. I think this is one of the important aspects that should be emphasized in this section.
- The last comment I want to make is about the intersectionality of the issues mentioned in the introduction. For instance, those who are deprived of educational opportunities might also be experiencing environmental problems. Then, these issues might not be separate problems but are also connected with the positioning of that particular society in globalized capitalism and power dynamics in the global society. I wonder how these complex overlapping multi-layered aspects of the issues could be emphasized in this document, and also we probably need a deeper discussion on how they could be addressed in the context of education.

WANG Wenwen, Kyushu University, Japan

- I read the report and it's very good. I just think that there's a lot of arrangement, but not so much on how to resolve things.
- About language, the report shows the concept of regenerative education and sharing educational resources. I think the language choice of sharing educational resources is very important. Language has become a very important factor in limiting the sharing of educational resources. Especially in Eastern Asian countries, in primary or middle schools, they don't understand English language so they cannot get information from the outside. So, I think it's better to have local language versions of the educational resources so they can get more attention and spread.

Latika SHARMA, Panjab University, India

- The important thing is that, when we are tracing the route from the last report, it has really impacted practices in terms of addressing the gap between the educated, the adult education, the aspirations of the people who want to benefit from education. The report *The Treasure Within* has really been showing us the light all these years.
- Similarly, when we look into this present report of education futures, I think that contextual knowledge and methodologies need to be given a place. The word 'multi-cultural education' has been used a number of times in the discourses on education on so many platforms.
- In India, we have the experience of both living together and accepting each other, while at the same time building our own pockets of learning within communities. So in this, when we are trying to straddle the question of private and public education, it is very important that somewhere we can showcase some guidelines or examples where both private and public education systems are delivering in an equal way. Yes, equity and equalization of opportunities remains an issue, which perhaps 'commoning' is not addressing that much. So, my concern is about understanding 'commoning' or writing it in a more elaborate way.

YOSHIDA Kazuhiro, Hiroshima University, Japan

- This kind of report in its final form is expected to provide a lasting message based on the experiences in the 1970s and 90s. So, the big question is that: Will the main messages coming from this report last for the next 25-30 years? That should start with a robust understanding of where we go in this long time span. Also, will the roles of education stay unchanged or will it look different? And then, in order to fulfill those expected education roles, will the three thematic issues raised here be understandable and acceptable enough?
- In a nutshell, I think that the message at the moment is still weak for this kind of report which is expected to provide the vision and philosophy that can be accepted by wider participants.

Jose Roberto GUEVARA, RMIT University, Australia/President of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

Below is the comment that Jose Roberto Guevara submitted in writing during the open forum session.

On behalf of the ICAE, we welcome the inclusion of adult education and identifying its crucial role in contributing shaping of what a truly lifelong learning education system will look like, but also to contribute to developing the capacity, not just of youth and children, but of adults and the community.

VI. Final remarks of the panelists

LIU Baocun

- I agree with most of our colleagues and share their opinions about the report. It is true that the report puts forward many new ideas and new points, but there are still some conflicts between the ideas.
- For example, if we want to stress public education, we should not forget that private education is also very important. The report also stresses face-to-face education, but we must remember how to balance different aspects of education.

Leang UN

- I think that quite a lot of policy papers or visions or global agendas have been introduced, but the real issue is how we are going to actualize them. I know that UNESCO might have financial limitations compared to other organizations launching millions and millions of US dollars promoting their own agendas too.
- This is where I think rethinking what ‘human’ means as mentioned by our colleague from UNESCO Headquarters is a very important thing. But the problem is how to have a regular platform to promote such a new alternate way of rethinking in particular contexts, especially in poor developing countries where public funding to promote such a discourse is actually rather absent. If there’s reliance on international support, most of the international support will focus on economic growth, as we can see today.
- So, the problem is how we are going to promote or support very small local educators who are actually in the line of this discourse and support them to work on it. Otherwise, there will be no messengers or disciples of this global agenda within particular contexts. I think UNESCO can do that because this is a really large-scale implementation project, but the problem is how you’re floating those ideas within particular contexts; otherwise, no such discourse will appear in particular countries. For example, in Cambodia where, if you read all the advertisements, promotions and all these things that are actually being published, there’s actually not this kind of discourse on what alternative societies should be. It’s only economic development, growth, private goods—that’s what you already hear quite a lot in Cambodia. This is how I think UNESCO might like to support particular countries or groups of small people who can become the messengers of this alternative discourse.

Chanita RUKSPOLLMUANG

- I was listening to the discussion about commonness and distinction. I think it’s very interesting, but I still think that we can still use the word ‘common’ and ‘common goal’, because at least we

should have some minimum destination for the international community, but with diverse pathways maybe. I think the use of 'common' as a noun and 'commoning' as an action is very thought-provoking to discuss further.