Education Equity in the Global Context:
Insights from an International Organization

by

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DEDICATION

For YS, from the Duderstadt Center:

"anh vẫn nhớ em ngồi đây, tóc ngắn,
mà mùa thu, dài lắm, ở chung quanh"
(Nguyên Sa)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFA	Education for All
EFA GMR	Education for All Global Monitoring Report
EPM	educational planning and management
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative
GEMR	Global Education Monitoring Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
grand/child	child and/or grandchild
grand/parent	parent and/or grandparent
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SACMEQ	The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UN/ESCO	UN and/or UNESCO
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the conceptualization of education equity as manifested in the work of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), a UNESCO institute with a technical mandate on research, training, and technical cooperation in educational planning and management.

The study raises the questions of how UNESCO-IIEP approaches, addresses, and conceptualizes equity through its organizational life and work, and connects this conceptualization to the organizational structures, goals, technology, environments of the institute. It analyzes these connections using constructs from organizational theory that enable understanding and evaluation of IIEP's role in global education development and its work on equity. The study approaches education equity with a conceptual framework of equity and justice articulated by John Rawls and Amartya Sen that distinguishes between arrangement-focused and realization-focused views of justice. The methodological framework builds upon constructs in organizational theory with an ethnographic orientation, drawing on observation, interviews, and document analyses within my five months at the institute. The contextual framework situates the role and work of UNESCO and IIEP within global educational governance.

The findings characterize equity with different layers of complexities, highlighting its many dimensions and dilemmas as conveyed through the organizational life and work of IIEP. These dimensions and dilemmas are connected to the organizational features of the institute, which include its strong and tightly coupled technical core, its clear mandate and well-developed technology, its informal and collegial social atmosphere, and the complex relationships and interactions it has with actors in its environments. These features intersect and interact within the complex dynamics of organizational legitimacy and performance, shaping and defining the concept of equity as IIEP establishes itself and operates within the space of global educational governance. These dynamics inform organizational learning and are the basis on which IIEP situate and evaluate its role and its work on equity in the global context.

The dissertation makes several contributions to the study of global educational equity. Conceptually, it brings new insights into the discussion around education equity and how actors in global education address equity. Equity in global education is often more complex than the singular, universal concept reflected in the global discourse, and addressing equity issues often

calls for an arrangement-focused rather than an institution-focused view of justice. Methodologically, it approaches and brings organizational theory into the qualitative study of organizations, combining the theoretical rigor of the former with the data richness of the latter. Contextually, it presents a case for studying the conceptualization of equity in international organizations and the impact such a conceptualization may have. The role of IIEP as a prominent technical organization and its status within the UN/ESCO network allow its conceptualization of equity to both inherit from and add to the understanding and characterization of the concept in global educational governance. This work adds to the growing volume of studies on international and intergovernmental organizations in education, and, with its ethnographic orientation, highlights both the consequence and the complexity that characterize their work.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a description of the different levels on which I approach this study. On the conceptual level, it discusses education equity in the global context of development with the potential problems in conceptualizing and understanding among global actors. On the methodological level, it advocates the use of organizational theory and the qualitative study of organizations, drawing the theoretical strength of the former to explain the rich data captured by the latter. Contextually, it stresses the case for studying UNESCO-IIEP, a prominent technical organization in the global educational governance space. The second part discusses the features and foci of the study, with comments on its potential impacts. The chapter ends with the questions that orient and guide the study.

Rationale

This study investigates the concept of education equity in the global context of education development. It looks at the way equity is conceptualized, problematized, approached and addressed in the work of an international organization that specializes in global educational development work. In so doing, it relies on rich qualitative data collected from a close-up study of the organization and an analysis of the data using organizational theory to capture and portray a description of the concept of equity through the life, talk, and work of the organization.

I approach the study on three planes. Conceptually, I examine the idea of equity embedded and situated in an organizational practice in the context of global education development. Methodologically, I use the tools of qualitative research in an organizational setting

while building on the theories and concepts of organizational studies to interpret and explain the conceptualization of equity. Specifically, I study the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, an educational development agency with a mandate and a strong portfolio in technical cooperation work with countries and governments on educational planning.

On a conceptual level, education equity is widely acknowledged as a desired policy goal. Local, national, and global programs are characterized with the targets of universal access, inclusion, equitable outcomes, and equal opportunities. These seemingly aspiring and universal characteristics, however, may in different social, cultural, and political contexts mean different things and contradict one another. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), for instance, defines equity with the combined principles of fairness and inclusion (OECD, 2012), yet there are many instances where these two principles are at odds with one another. Policy analysts on both ends of the political spectrum disagree over the fairness of affirmative action or positive discrimination programs from the perspectives of inclusion or meritocracy. Likewise, universal education and uniform language of instruction policies may be a giant leap forward for certain disadvantaged groups, while at the same time a tremendous hindrance for certain others in the same country. While equity policies the world over tend to revolve around these core principles, what constitutes fairness and inclusion differ quite significantly across settings.

In the context of global education, where the effects of globalization and increased policy exchanges have contributed to greater policy homogeneity, the world seems to share a common

discourse on education and equity, spread by the mechanisms of globalization and global governance (Bray, 2007; Samoff, 2003; Spring, 2008). Fair and inclusive in nature, this universal discourse is not difficult to agree with. Missing in it, however, are the complex nuances and the peculiarities of meanings that equity holds in context. That poses a potential problem for work on equity in education to get beyond the discourse level, where the complexity of contexts sometimes renders policies incompatible, irrelevant, or even counterproductive. That explains why the same literacy programs may work in one country or region but not another, or the same pedagogical practices can help some groups of students and hurt some others. Tracking and school choice policies may work in certain contexts at certain times and may fail to work in and at certain others.

It is thus essential for the actors in the realm of global governance on education to demonstrate or articulate clear conceptualizations of equity, especially through the work they bring into the space. It is also important to study how these organizations approach their conceptualizations and the effects such conceptualizations have on their work. Identifying and understanding the various institutional and organizational factors that characterize organizational approaches to equity will shed light on how equity is framed, problematized, and addressed in the space.

Methodologically, I approach the problem from the techniques and principles of organizational ethnography. The descriptive strength of qualitative research has been used to study organizations, in studies on the workspace (Latour & Woolgar, 2013), on communities and

communal activities (Whyte, 1993), on organizational cultures (Graham, 1995; Leidner, 1993), on large influential global organizations (Harper, 1998), and on the nature of complex communal and organizational interactions (Hirsch, 1992; L. A. Suchman, 2007). Coming from the more ethnographic traditions of anthropology and sociology, however, organizational ethnography as of late has not fully incorporated the conceptual strength of organizational theory, a distinct branch of research more prevalent in business and organizational studies, even though both approaches center on the organization as the subject of study. Although the length of this study and the amount of data collected prevent it to be a full-scale organizational ethnography, it seeks to exploit the strength and rigor of both traditions, drawing on the theory of organization to elaborate and explain the way IIEP talks about and conceptualizes equity through its work, which is captured in rich qualitative data.

The organization at the heart of this study is the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). As a daughter institute of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it is part of a global network that is actively involved in global educational governance, working closely with countries and governments on global initiatives aimed at equity in education, such as *Education for All* (1990—2015) and *Education 2030* (2015—2030). While part of the UNESCO network, IIEP enjoys a good level of autonomy thanks to its technical mandate and its organizational constitution. In its capacity as a research, technical cooperation, and training institute, IIEP has for the past 55 years worked with governments and ministries of education to develop education sector plans, provide capacity

development, training and consultancy, and engage in global research and communications on educational planning. IIEP's institutional profile and technical portfolio, coupled with its work on equity issues in educational planning, make it a rich and an important case to explore the conceptualization of equity and how that is related to its organizational and institutional features.

The study

Given the centrality of equity in global education governance and the active roles UNESCO and IIEP play in this area, this study proposes to explore the conceptualization of equity in the case of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Through a qualitative framework, it studies how the organization approaches, conceptualizes, and addresses equity in its discourse and its work. It uses data from observation, interviews, and document analyses to produce a description of the idea of equity as manifested in the work of the institute through its members. Drawing on theoretical frameworks developed in organizational studies, it makes connections between this diverse and complex conceptualization and the organizational structures and environmental exchanges of the institute. Through this explanation come implications for organizational learning and the continued work on education equity by the institute and similar actors.

Equity

Equity is central to the study for several reasons. First, it is a universal policy objective that is sought after at almost every form and level of education everywhere. Classroom teachers desire teaching techniques and classroom policies that treat children equitably and get them to learn on the same high level. School and local educational administrators aspire to making sure all children within their jurisdiction have all the access and resources they need for learning. National education sector plans and policies that bridge the opportunity gaps among children and create leverages for the less advantaged to compete and achieve. Global programs and initiatives aim to bridge the development gaps among nations through the promotion of strong and equitable systems of education. Second, while equity is indeed a universal concern, it plays out very differently in different contexts. This poses an interesting conceptual difficulty at the global level, since gender inequalities may take very different forms in India and in Canada, whereas inequalities associated with race and ethnicity may bear different social and historical origins and implications between the United States and Singapore. To thus assume the phenomenon in a universal, holistic conceptualization would in turn leave much to be questioned when it comes to be characterized in local and national contexts, and a closer look at these contexts in the work of a key global actor is thus instrumental and informative.

Another potential reason for the study to pursue the conceptualization of equity lies in the hegemony of the global discourse on equity. Whereas the global discourse on equity is characterized with "universal" aspirations and ideals of human rights, social justice, and

egalitarianism, they reflect an epistemological framework based upon western scholarship and ideas imposed upon world countries that often does not take into the complexities of local contexts (Choudry & Kapoor, 2010; Kapoor, 2011; Spring, 2008). The complexities of equity that exist in these local and cultural contexts, especially the non-western ones, thus present a peculiar problem to governance and policy—global and local—that is sometimes inadequately addressed (Flinn, 2000; Froerer, 2012). As the previous paragraph makes clear, the same equity issues can manifest quite differently across political, economic, social, and cultural settings. Universal access to education, for instance, can be hindered by financial barriers in some places and by language policies in some others. To investigate how the dominant western-centric conceptualization and discourse of equity lend difficulties to the design and work of equity policy across national and local contexts will highlight this problematic nature of this piece of scholarship. Furthermore, to examine how an important global actor strategically copes and deals with such difficulties carries in it some pragmatic significance, both for the organization itself and for others in its niche.

Conceptualization

      The reason for the study to investigate the conceptualization of equity in an organizational setting stems from the hegemony of the global discourse on equity. The study aims to capture the complex nuances between idea and practice, where equity issues across local work contexts may add layers of complexity onto the universal understanding of equity. Beyond the seemingly homogenous idea of equity in education that the discourse embraces, local

contexts and conditions bring in layers of complexities and complications. Universal access or

equal opportunities may originate from very different concerns and may mean very different

things depending on contexts, and it is through the work of this organization that these different

dimensions of meanings are put together. Grounded in observations and discussions with the

institute experts, it captures the notions of equity from practice and contrast that with what

would be found in the discourse on equity. The study seeks to highlight this contrast between the

universal, holistic concept of equity that is prevalent in the global discourse on the one hand, and

the complex nuances and multi-dimensionality of the concept as it plays out in practice, through

the work of IIEP on national and international educational planning. These nuances and

complexities require the institute to devise its operations and its strategies accordingly,

maneuvering the complex interactions and interdependencies between its legitimacy and its

performance. In this way, this conceptualization is built into and characterize the very function

and survival of the institute.

IIEP

My rationale for choosing UNESCO-IIEP is multifold. First, as a Category-1 Institute—

one of a dozen that make up the technical arms of UNESCO—it enjoys by its mandate a certain

amount of autonomy from the funding, oversight, and supervision of UNESCO, while its

missions constitutes one of the core functions of its parent organization (UNESCO, 2017d).

Second, with educational planning and management as its specialization and expertise, it works

principally on an important area that has much to do with policy planning and decision-making at the central level, where equity issues are usually a focus (Benavot, 2011; Burnett, 2011).

Third, that UNESCO-IIEP is a technical organization comprised of experts in different educational fields also adds to the richness of the data to be collected. The breadth of expertise of its individual members spans a wide range of issues, from central planning to gender equity, from system mapping to financial planning and management. The impacts of their work are marked in their frequent contributions to the global discourse on equity: many of them are part of the teams working on—or have contributed to—the *Global Education Monitoring Reports*, or the former *Education for All Global Monitoring Reports*. The work of the institute as a whole has been widely recognized and acknowledged within and beyond these reports (UNESCO, 2009a, 2010, 2015a).

Potential impacts of the study

The impacts of the study are envisioned on three levels. Conceptually, it will provide a field documentation of how education equity is conceptualized and addressed in the organizational context of an important global actor, thereby allowing an examination of such conceptualization on the grounds of different ontological and philosophical perspectives. By examining and questioning the complexity, multiplicity, and multidimensionality of the equity concept in this context, it aims to highlight the intricate and difficult connection between theory and practice.

Organizationally, the study lays open to the institute the organizational features (i.e. its goals, strategies, niches, foci, human resources, etc.) that have an impact on the way it conceptualizes equity and the work on equity that it carries out, which may not be as apparent to its members from an insider perspective, and which will have important implications for the organization to adapt and develop its strategies to carry on and expand its work on a global scale.

The study also contributes to the body of research on international and comparative education, where education equity is obviously a major concern (Scheurich & Skrla, 2004; Wiseman et al., 2010; Zajda, 2011). Although there is a wealth of research on this subject that approaches the issue from different angles, few of these studies approach the issue from an inside perspective of an international organization, especially one that plays such a prominent role as UNESCO or IIEP does, often due to the relatively limited access to these organizations (De Grauwe, 2006). In my capacity as both a researcher and an intern at IIEP, I was able—though within a limited time— to carve out such a perspective. This study, through its qualitative orientation, brings an inside look at how equity is conceptualized and problematized in such a setting.

And finally, the study attempts to make clear the potential contributions of organizational theory to qualitative research on organizations, especially to organizational ethnography, where the shared focus on the entity—the organization—leaves much to complement. Organizational ethnographies and qualitative studies of organizations in the arena of education, diverse as they are in their designs and theoretical perspectives, do not substantially benefit from this piece of

scholarship (Pedersen & Humle, 2016). Few organizational ethnographies have made an explicit attempt to connect with organizational theory (Cunliffe, 2010; Eberle & Maeder, 2011; Neyland, 2008), while few works in organizational theory have traditionally been either ethnographic in design or set in a qualitative approach that has much to do with education. Although this study does not meet the description of an ethnography, owing to its limited data types and relative short duration, the connection it attempts to make between these two bodies of work could serve as an example for similar studies on the topic.

Questions

The questions I propose to ask in this study are:

1. How is education equity conceptualized and problematized in the organizational life and work of UNESCO-IIEP?

2. How do the organizational features of IIEP (its environments, social structures, goals, technologies, and participants) characterize its observed work on education equity?

3. How can these characterizations be explained in the framework of organizational theory?

4. What implications do these characterizations have on understanding and evaluating IIEP's role and its work on global education equity?

These questions are elaborated, addressed, and answered in the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the idea of education equity and the role that equity plays in the global educational governance agenda. It will also review prominent concepts and ideas in

organizational theory that are characteristic of the organization of focus and which helps better understand its equity conceptualization. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological framework of the study, with a discussion of the ethnographic methods used to study the organization. It also describes in detail the data collection and analysis processes. Chapters 4 through 7 detail the findings of the study, starting with the description of IIEP's conceptualization of equity in chapter 4, followed by the dilemmas and politics that accompany that conceptualization in chapter 5. Chapter 6 draws on the organizational structures of IIEP to explain this multi-dimensional conceptualization of equity, and chapter 7 views the problems and dilemmas of this conceptualization through the description of IIEP's relationships and exchanges with actors in its environments. Chapter 8 pieces these findings together to make sense of equity conceptualization in organizational features terms. Chapter 9 concludes the study with a look into the future work of IIEP on equity and the implications it may have for understanding equity in the global educational and global organizational contexts.

CHAPTER 2. FRAMEWORKS

This chapter reviews the research around the three perspectives raised in the previous chapter. Conceptually, it discusses the idea of equity from a philosophical standpoint. This idea is then linked to the equity concerns that have been raised and addressed within the realm of global educational governance. Methodologically, it introduces key constructs and ideas from organizational theory that are mentioned and used in this study. Contextually, it reviews the history of UNESCO and IIEP, their roles and involvement in the global governance of education, and the impacts they have on the global initiatives targeting equity in education.

Introduction

This chapter reviews the conceptual, methodological, and contextual frameworks for the study. It begins with an in-depth exploration of the concept of education equity, tracing the historical and philosophical origins of equity, both as a philosophical ideal towards justice and an objective for policy and governance. It then examines equity as a target of global education governance and reviews the key global initiatives on education equity since 1990. The methodological framework used in this study introduces the theories and constructs of organizational theory to draw the connection between the conceptualization of equity and features in the organizational structures and environments of IIEP. Finally, the contextual framework reviews UNESCO's and IIEP's roles in global education governance, making the case

for how an understanding of the way these organizations conceptualize equity matters in the context of global education governance.

Equity and equity in global education governance

The idea of equity

I approach the idea of equity from social justice as the point of departure, contending that equity reflects the principles of social justice theories. In so doing, I draw specifically on the works of John Rawls (1999) and Amartya Sen (2001, 2009), two influential thinkers on this topic. Rawls proposes the idea of justice as fairness, "a theory of justice that generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the traditional conception of the social contract" (1999, p. 3). By framing his thesis in this way, Rawls denies an imperfect vision of justice where "the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others" (p. 3). He calls for the basic structure of society—its major institutions and social arrangements—to reflect this principle of justice. Equity, in this sense, is a manifestation of this principle. It addresses "the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation" (p. 6). In the context of global education that is the focus of this study, for instance, it would mean mobilizing social and political resources towards helping the disadvantaged, for they should not be left alone to bear the burden of development and social progress.

Sen develops upon Rawls' vision of justice to further his line of thinking on the subject. He notes that one may be compelled to act in the face of injustice, regardless of the ideological grounds on which injustice is perceived (Sen, 2009). Action towards injustice, argues Sen, may be driven from two divergent lines of reasoning. The first one—deriving from Rawls and a school of Enlightenment thinkers—reflects a transcendental institutionalism that embraces the ideal of perfect justice, whereby emphasis is placed on identifying the nature of "the just" rather than being concerned with injustice. This view of justice focuses on making social institutions right without paying attention to the contexts of the societies in which the institutions exist (p. 5).

The other approach to justice, according to Sen, is a realization-focused comparison (2009, pp. 7–8), which also derives from aspirations for a perfectly just society. Sen suggests, in contrast to the *arrangement-focused* view of justice, an approach to justice from *a realization-focused* perspective, bringing into view the importance of context and the emphasis of the outcomes of justice on human lives. This perspective makes it easier "to understand the importance of the prevention of manifest injustice in the world, rather than seeking the perfectly just" (p. 21). In line with this perspective, equity in the global education context means alleviating and eliminating the effects of unjust institutions, like economic inequalities or gender discrimination, rather than aspiring for a perfectly just vision of society.

Present in both Rawls' and Sen's argument, however, is the idea that justice is inherently complex, and it can be approached from different ideological and philosophical standpoints, or, as Sen calls it, "the possible sustainability of plural and competing reasons for justice" (Sen, 2009,

p. 12). As he succinctly illustrates with the example of three children and a flute, arguments for what is fair and just can be utilitarian, egalitarian, or libertarian in nature, each making its own valid claims and built on strong foundations (2009, pp. 12–15). Arguments such as these fill the space of education debates the world over, on whether educational access, resources, and outcomes should be assessed on the basis of meritocracy or of positive discrimination. I aim to use these complex and competing approaches of equity and justice as a frame of reference to examine the conceptualization of equity at IIEP to better understand how the context of their work guides and determines the idea of and action on equity by the institute members.

The dimensions and dilemmas of equity

One inference of the multi-perspectivity of equity is that the concept is inherently multi-dimensional. Since equity derives from the idea of justice and can arrive from different ideological perspectives, the dimensions that it conveys are numerous. By raising the question "equality of what?", Amartya Sen guides us to explore some of these dimensions (Sen, 2001). These many dimensions are a result of the diverse human characteristics that differ each of us from one another, by which "inequality in terms of one variable (e.g. income) may take us in a very different direction from inequality in the space of another variable (e.g. functioning ability or well-being)" (2001, p. 20). These variables, which includes for instance income, wealth, utilities, resources, liberties, right, and so on, obfuscate and complicate the comparative notion of

justice, and thus justify a realization-focused approach to equity rather than an arrangement-focused one.

The realm of global education governance has long acknowledged these diverse dimensions of equity. The *Global Education Monitoring Reports* (prior to 2015 the *Education for All Global Monitoring Reports*) have raised and addressed such diverse issues as gender equity (UNESCO, 2003a), social and economic inequalities (UNESCO, 2009a), marginalization (UNESCO, 2010), displacement (UNESCO, 2018), and quality of education and equity of educational outcomes (UNESCO, 2004, 2014c), among others. The complexities and intricacies within these diverse dimensions of equity in turn make a single conceptualization of equity even more problematic, as Sen rightly observes that "[o]ne of the consequences of 'human diversity' is that equality in one space tends to go, in fact, with inequality in another" (Sen, 2001, p. 20).

Another inference is that equity is inherently problematic. While the calls for equity are often equally forceful and homogenous in many places over the world, they can take very different ontological routes. Some advocates for quality education for all may promote alternative forms of education—private schooling among them—on a libertarian ground, whereas other advocates would argue that it is the function of the state to ensure equal educational opportunities for every child, coming from an egalitarian perspective. Likewise, the utilitarian reasoning that scholarships should be meritocratically assigned based on proven capacity to benefit from them is at odds with the egalitarian ideal that scholarships and educational opportunities should make up for the systematic disadvantages that certain population

historically endures. These competing ontological underpinnings of equity make difficult its conceptualization on the global level.

Such problems play out in the policy debates and the political discourses around equity. The principle of meritocracy, where resources and opportunities for educational advancement are argued to be allocated to those most merited, are at odds with the principle of egalitarianism, where such resources and opportunities are to be channeled to those less advantaged. Debates over affirmative action or positive compensation policies often lend different shades of meaning to such concepts as *equality*, *fairness*, and *equal opportunity* (Bacchi, 1996; Rosenfeld, 1989). National education policies—and to some extent global initiatives since the 1990s—grapple with the problems of whether to provide all children with equal access to basic education or to pursue the quality achieved among higher performing groups (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Tollefson & Tsui, 2014; Zajda, 2011), or whether to differentiate students based on their interests and capabilities or to provide a universal curriculum for all (Oakes et al., 2012; Rolleston & James, 2015).

At the micro level, they are manifested in the dilemmas of the classroom where teachers have to make the difficult choices of whether to teach to the pace and interests of faster learners, or to allow those with a slower pace time and attention to catch up (Lampert, 1999). These dilemmas are especially difficult when the choices are often confounded with other factors, such as race and ethnicity (Anyon, 1981; Paley, 2009; Rist, 1970). In this way, they underline the fact that equity is inherently political at any level of education, and conceptualizing and addressing

equity at any level would constitute a political act. It is thus necessary to view the dilemmas of

equity through different political perspectives that take at their cores different ontological views

of justice (Sen, 2009), some of which are revisited in the next part.

Ontological perspectives

Equity is "a political issue, and differences in political views will influence the aspects of

equity in which we are interested," and so it is important for equity discourses and

conceptualizations within the space of global education governance to be guided by "a normative

framework about fairness and justice" (UIS, 2018, p. 16). Generally, the global discourse

embraces a few key ontological arguments for equity. First among those is a humanitarian belief

that education is a universal human right, and that every child, regardless of social, economic,

ethnic, or cultural backgrounds, must not be denied this right (United Nations, 1948). Moreover,

education is recognized among the first and foremost rights, since "education is also a means to

wider ends. Prospects for reducing poverty, narrowing extreme inequalities and improving

public health are heavily influenced by what happens in education" (UNESCO, 2009a, p. 26).

This humanitarian principle is embedded in the major global discourse on equity, especially

publications from within the UN network (OECD, 2012; UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO et al., 2015;

UNICEF, 1989) and serves as the founding principles for the majority of national laws and

constitutions promulgating education (Spring, 2000; UIS, 2018).

A second ontological perspective present in the discourse on education equity in the global governance space is an egalitarian one, imparting the central tenets of social justice. This is also prevalent in major publications on the topic. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics in its 2018 guide for measuring equity highlights the principle of equal opportunity, by which "everyone should have the same opportunity to thrive, regardless of variations in the circumstances into which they are born" (UIS, 2018, p. 17). This is connected with the principle of justice as fairness, which implies that circumstances into which children are born should not hinder their opportunities for education and success in life, for "[o]pportunities for education are heavily influenced by where one is born and by other factors over which children have no control, including parental income, gender and ethnicity" (UNESCO, 2009a, p. 26).

The third major perspective reflects a utilitarian view of education, whereby the promotion of equity in education systems is related to the prospects of economic prosperity and social harmony. This perspective embraces the human capital theory to make the call for equal opportunity in education (Coleman, 1988; Coleman et al., 1966). In this view, education equips the future citizen with the necessary skills for economic and social participation, and therefore investment in education will lead to a skilled and competitive workforce, conducive to economic growth and social well-being. The OECD, for example, estimates that "if all 15-year-olds in the OECD area attained at least Level 2 in the PISA mathematics assessment, they would contribute over USD 200 trillion in additional economic output over their working lives" (Schleicher, 2014).

Less such specificity, UNESCO also often makes the call for equity from an economic and social development (UNESCO, 2009a, 2015a).

Generally, these principles guiding the global discourse on equity coexist in harmony. They are often interrelated and complementary. The principle of equal opportunity, for example, is a direct inference of the humanitarian view that characterizes most if not all of the global and national discourses on education, since it is against the rights of the individual to not be given a fair and equal opportunity to access education. Likewise, calls for equity often stress its importance by highlighting the costs of social and economic inequalities, on the grounds of a utilitarian perspective. Getting below the discourse level, however, is where issues become complicated. Critics of utilitarian approaches to equity often argue that it downplays the value of education as a basic human right by characterizing education as an investment for economic development, whereas the voices coming from the other direction warn that the humanitarian approach makes a weak case for competition and thus quality, and risks paying lip service to education (Klees, 2008b; Klees et al., 2012; Sellar & Lingard, 2013a, 2013b).

It is the aim of this study to uncover the diverse and complex nuances of equity in education through the work of IIEP, thereby highlighting the challenges facing the aspiration and work towards equity of global governance actors. In so doing, it is necessary to review several terms related to equity and how they are used in the education context. The following part discusses the definitions, distinctions, and the complex nuances involving the use of these terms in the global educational governance context.

Equity, equality, fairness, inclusion

The concept of equity, when viewed through the lens of education, becomes quite ambiguous. *Equity* is often used alongside other terms that refer to similar concepts, such as *equality*, *fairness*, and *inclusion*. These terms can often be used interchangeably in several contexts by different global actors. It is thus helpful to review the ways these words are used.

It is necessary to first make the distinction between *equity* and *equality*, as these two terms are often mistaken and interchangeably used. *Equality*, in its basic sense of "the quality or state of being equal" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), conveys equal treatment of everybody regardless of their differences. Given the long history of unfair and unequal mistreatment of minority and underrepresented groups everywhere in the world, equality is thus an important and desired policy objective.

The term *equity*, however, is more fuzzy and requires a step further from the concept of equality, as "[a] commentator talking about equity rather than equality may be suspected of having abandoned safe territory based on a clear concept for the minefield of a fuzzy concept" (European Group for Research on Equity in Educational Systems, 2005, p. 13). Donald B. Holsinger and W. James Jacob characterize this distinction with equality signifying "the state of being equal in terms of quantity, rank, status, value, or degree" while equity "considers the social justice ramifications of education in relation to the fairness, justness, and impartiality of its distribution at all levels or educational subsectors" (2008, p. 4). Equity is thus a step further from

equality since it takes into account the different circumstances around different people and aims to alleviate the social, political, economic, cultural and historical barriers that prevent them from participating in society. In that sense it is closer to the concept of justice as discussed above, and the concept of inclusion as discussed later on.

The distinction between equity and equality is also pronounced by UNESCO, most notably in the discourse around gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Within this issue, (gender) equality "requires the protection and promotion of human rights for all: the rights of young and adult men and women, boys and girls" while (gender) equity is recognized as the "[s]pecific measures that favour the most disadvantaged sex must be designed to eliminate disparities between the sexes, sexist-stereotypes and discrimination" (UNESCO, 2003b, p. 9). In other words, equity is seen as the means to achieving the final goal of gender equality. This distinction also highlights the connection between equity and social justice, as equity "compensates for unequal opportunities and guarantees the fairness of our programmes" (2003b, p. 9).

Another consistent characteristic of equity from the definitions above is that it is closely associated with fairness. In fact, many take equity to be about fairness in simplest terms (Berne & Stiefel, 1984; Sherman & Poirier, 2007, p. 20). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in more technical terms, takes equity to mean "a *distribution* is fair or justified" and that it "involves a normative judgement of a distribution, but how people make that judgement will vary" (UIS, 2018, p. 17).

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), another

important actor in global educational governance whose roles are associated with international

tests and educational policy debates around its signature testing program, the Programme for

International Student Assessment (PISA), also make the connection between equity and fairness

in its publications. In fact, OECD employs a definition of equity consisting of two dimensions of

fairness and *inclusion*. In this definition, equity as *fairness* means that "personal or socio-economic

circumstances, such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to educational

success," while equity as inclusion implies "ensuring that all students reach at least a basic minimum

level of skills" (OECD, 2012, p. 15). Taken together, *equitable education systems* refer to those that are

"fair and inclusive and support their students to reach their learning potential without either formally

or informally pre-setting barriers or lowering expectations" (OECD, 2012, p. 15). This definition has

been used with consistency in providing both an objective and a framework and for evaluating equity

in OECD reports (Field et al., 2007; OECD, 2012, 2013, 2015; Schleicher, 2014).

The concept of inclusion is also taken up by UNESCO in its publications to carry a meaning

similar to the equity focus of this study. By referring to such historically marginalized and excluded

groups as adult without prior education, children with disabilities, working children, or girls,

UNESCO defined inclusive education as not only providing these groups with access to education,

but also ensuring their quality educational achievement for the ultimate goal of "an individual's

effective participation in society and of reaching his/her full potentials" (2009b, p. 6). In this way, the

idea of inclusion as defined by UNESCO to some extent mirrors the focus that OECD places on

reaching "a basic minimum level of skills" (OECD, 2012, p. 15), although in UNESCO terms

achievement is understood more broadly as "the acquisition of the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills required to meet the challenges of contemporary societies" (UNESCO, 2009b, p. 6).

UNESCO also set the guidelines for promoting inclusion in education, by which

> [p]romoting inclusion means stimulating discussion, encouraging positive attitudes and improving educational and social frameworks to cope with new demands in education structures and governance. It involves improving inputs, processes and environments to foster learning both at the level of the learner in his/her learning environment and at the system level to support the entire learning experience. Its achievement rests on governments' willingness and capacities to adopt pro-poor policies, addressing issues of equity in public expenditures on education, developing intersectoral linkages and approaching inclusive education as a constituent element of lifelong learning.

(UNESCO, 2009b, p. 7).

This idea of inclusion in UNESCO's discourse would later be revisited and readdressed. The organization, in a subsequent call for inclusive education, pairs the terms *equity* and *inclusion* (UNESCO, 2017a). Situating the problem in the "need to address all forms of exclusion and marginalization" of the global movements, UNESCO "calls for addressing inequalities related to access, participation, and learning processes and outcomes, paying particular attention to gender equality" (p. 12). In this context where "every learner matters and matters equally," inclusion refers to "a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners," while equity "is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance" (pp. 12–13). Taken together, these two concepts denote an egalitarian view where each individual is treated with fairness, and that fairness is accounted for by taking into consideration the circumstances each brings to the educational process.

Equity in global education governance

Starting from the premises of social justice discussed above, equity in the context of global education governance is characterized by the ideal of providing everyone, regardless of their personal or social backgrounds or circumstances, a fair opportunity to access, acquire, and succeed in education (OECD, 1993, 2012; Scheurich & Skrla, 2004; Sherman & Poirier, 2007; UNESCO, 1990, 2009a, 2010). When coupled with the globally prevalent characteristic of education as a state-sponsored and state-governed service, it places education equity in one of the policy foci of education governance, at all level from local to national. Examples across the world and through the span of modern history have seen equity at the forefronts of policy debates (Gause, 2011; Karsten, 1999; Scheurich & Skrla, 2004; UNESCO, 2015a). Achieving and maintaining education equity, however, is a mounting challenge. Around the world, ensuring and inspiring equity has proved to be a daunting task for education governance, rich and poor countries alike.

In the context of globalization, the growing influences of inter- and supranational entities have seen education governance spreading beyond national boundaries (Arnove, 2012; Rosenau, 1995; Samoff, 2003; Spring, 2008; Wiseman et al., 2010), and bringing with it the discussions of equity. Education equity infiltrates the discussions and populates the publications of international and intergovernmental organizations. It has become an omnipresent term in international aids and investments and the focus of cooperation and development projects

(Spring, 2008; Wiseman et al., 2010). Global governance, which has evolved as a project to bring countries together to solve problems beyond their individual interests and capacities (Rosenau, 1995), has put the education and equity discourse in the voice of several key global actors, most prominently among them the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and so on (Karin Amos, 2010; Rosenau, 1995; Samoff, 2003; Spring, 2008; Wiseman et al., 2010). Though varied in approaches and ideologies, it is frequently in the work of these organizations that education equity is paid much attention to, and it has become an important tenet of their discourses on education (Field et al., 2007; OECD, 2012; Sherman & Poirier, 2007; UIS, 2018; UNESCO, 1960, 1990; UNICEF, 2019; World Bank, 2018).

The early roots of global governance stem from postwar reconstruction initiatives, with the birth of the United Nations and organizations within its network, coupled with the rise in global tension and competition for a world order during the Cold War, as well as global investment and the flows of aids and resources between developed and developing countries that facilitated globalization towards the end of the twentieth century (Edwards et al., 2018; Rosenau, 1995; Spring, 2008). Borne of such a long and complex process, global governance, in the eyes of many scholars and critics, often reflects the ideological tenets of neoliberalism (Kapoor, 2011; Klees, 2008b, 2020; Spring, 2008). In the case of education, the debates and critiques have been whether global initiatives for education reform and development embrace a humanitarian

perspective (Klees, 2012; Spring, 2000) or geared in a neoliberal orientation (Klees, 2002; Klees et al., 2012; Samoff, 2012).

This study is interested in studying the way equity is conceptualized and addressed at the global level. While the equity finds itself at every level of education governance, it is at the global level that the various movements and interactions form a particular niche for education equity within the politics of global development aids (Karin Amos, 2010; Mundy, 2007b; UNESCO, 2015a). Moreover, the increased attention paid to the field of international comparative education within the past few decades, coupled with the growing global interests on international assessment programs as a source of information for national policy making, has heated up the conversations on equity and quality on a global scale (Bray, 2007; Bray & Thomas, 1995; OECD, 2012; Sellar & Lingard, 2014).

Global initiatives targeting equity

Within the realm of education, efforts towards global education governance are best manifested in several global initiatives and concerted efforts, the earliest notable among which was the *World Declaration of Education for All*, also known as the *Jomtien Declaration*, by 33 intergovernmental organizations, 125 non-governmental organizations, institutes, and foundations, and the governments of 155 countries in 1990, which laid down a global path to ensure equity and quality in education as a universal human right for all children (UNESCO, 1990). With a discouraging number of children in developing countries out of school and their

youths and adults illiterate, the focus for this first wave of global attention and action was universal access to basic education, envisioning that "[e]very person—child, youth, and adult— shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs" (UNESCO, 1990, p. 4). Towards this goal, the main responsibilities were on the shoulders of governments and global actors to develop a supporting policy context, mobilize financial and human resources, and strengthen international solidarity through knowledge sharing and the distribution of global development aids (UNESCO, 1990). The uniqueness of *Education for All* lies in the focus of basic education, which is "broader and more attuned to the realities of people's lives than earlier attempts to address these issues," thus providing "an enlarged vision of national education" (Bennett, 1995, p. 2). Early implementation of the initiative was met with positive reactions, such as increased enrollment numbers and decreased dropout rates worldwide, but it also raised serious doubts and concerns regarding the effectiveness of the approach. Among these doubts was the failure to address the question of egalitarian access (Bennett, 1995, pp. 6–8).

After a first decade of limited action and lackluster results, the global commitment was renewed with the ratification of the *2000 Dakar Framework for Action*, spearheaded by major organizations in the global education governance project and laying out a clear framework for achieving the goals set out in the 1990 Declaration (UNESCO, 2000). The sense of urgency is intensified with the birth of other initiatives aimed at meeting the targets: universal primary education was incorporated into the *United Nations Millennium Development Goals* as MDG 2 (United Nations, 2000), bringing attention onto a higher level. Within this context, the *Education*

for All—Fast Track Initiative (EFA—FTI) was proposed and launched in 2002 to ensure reaching

MDG 2 by 2015 (UNESCO, 2015a). This initiative was later renamed as the *Global Partnership*

for Education (GPE), carrying on its mission in *Education 2030*, and has by now become one of

the most important actors in global educational governance.

Realizing in 2015 that these global efforts were stopping short of realizing their goals,

international organizations and national governments agreed at the conclusion of *Education for*

All to carry on the work in another initiative, *Education 2030*, as ratified in the *Incheon*

Declaration by representatives of 160 countries and key UN organizations (UNESCO et al.,

2015). *Education 2030* carries over the goal of universal primary education—the unaccomplished

mission of *Education for All*—with a renewed focus on the quality of education provided in

addition to access, focusing attention on (UNESCO et al., 2015). The initiative, which is part of

the larger *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), is focused on the ten targets of SDG 4, namely

free, equitable and quality primary education (4.1), quality early childhood development, care,

and pre-primary education (4.2), affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary

education (4.3), relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for youth and adults

(4.4), eliminating gender disparities and ensuring equal access to education and vocational

training for the vulnerable (4.5), universal literacy and numeracy for all youth and a substantial

proportion of adults (4.6), knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development for all

learners (4.7), building and upgrading child-, disability-, and gender-sensitive facilities (4.A),

expanding higher education scholarships to developing countries (4.B), and increasing the supply

of qualified teachers in developing countries (4.C) (United Nations, n.d.-a).

Among these, except for target 4.5 that deals explicitly with equity issues related to gender

and vulnerable learning populations, almost—if not—all other targets address equity concerns to

some extents, expanding free or affordable educational opportunities to everyone. And as with

Education for All, despite considerable global efforts and resources directed at these targets,

progress has been slow and meager: "262 million children and youth aged 6 to 17 were still out of

school in 2017, and more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum

proficiency standards in reading and mathematics" (United Nations Economic and Social

Council, 2019, p. 10). It is in this context that the global discourse on education governance

continues to call for action towards equity (OECD, 2016, 2018, 2019; UNESCO, 2015a, 2016,

2017b, 2018; UNICEF, 2019; World Bank, 2018).

A temporal shift of focus runs across these initiatives. While earlier efforts were driven

towards universal access and basic learning skills, especially in places where large numbers of

children were out of school and youths and adults lacking basic literacy and numeracy skills,

recent foci have been placed on achieving equitable learning outcomes (UNESCO, 1990;

UNESCO et al., 2015). This shift is often reflected in global governance and comparative policy

as paradoxes and policy dilemmas (Mundy, 2007a). This study aims to documents such

paradoxes and dilemmas through the work of IIEP on educational planning and management.

Measuring equity in the global education landscape

Since the focus of equity at the global level is broad, much of this work has been concerned with large-scale cross-country data. Equity is described and measured in terms of statistics, with variables like enrollment, progression, and completion rates denoting the status of equity in and across countries (Gorard & Smith, 2004, 2010; Schleicher, 2014; Sherman & Poirier, 2007; UIS, 2018; Zajda, 2008, 2011; Zajda et al., 2008). Approaching equity from different theoretical perspectives, different authors develop different frameworks for their work in evaluating equity and inclusion in the global and international context, some of which come to be adopted by global policy agenda.

Joel Sherman and Jeffrey Poirier (2007), for example, building upon the work of Robert Berne and Leanna Stiefel (1984), developed a framework composed of targets, objects, principles, and measures. Targets usually include students, parents, and other actors and elements of the educational system. Objects are classified in terms of *access and progression* (rates/ratios of enrollment, entry, progression, repetition, etc.), *resources* (class size, per-student expenditure, teacher to student ratios, quality of school facilities, textbooks, etc.), and *results* (test scores, graduation ratios, etc.). The equity principles include *horizontal equity*, which is concerned with "treat[ing] students who are alike equally and ensur[ing] that they experience similar levels of educational resources and achieve similar results", *vertical equity*, which "recognises that students are not all the same and that their starting points relative to other students should be considered in an analysis of equity," and equal educational opportunity (EEO), which is based on

the notion that "all children should have an equal chance to succeed, with this success based on personal characteristics such as motivation and effort." Lastly, measures include statistics that are used to evaluate "the extent to which an education system is either horizontally or vertically equitable and the extent to which there is equal educational opportunity" (Sherman & Poirier, 2007, pp. 22–31). This framework provides a useful way to compare the status of equity across countries and evaluate the extent to which public policies succeed in addressing equity problems.

Similarly, work on large-scale international comparisons use different assessment tools and measures to interpret issues in equity in and across countries. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the OECD's signature international testing programs have in the past cycles incorporate survey data aimed at measuring different aspects of student and system characteristics, with equity a consistent focus (OECD, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018; Schleicher, 2009, 2014). Similarly, in proposing a framework for measuring equity within SDG 4 and *Education 2030*, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) presents five concepts that can be applied directly to a distribution. The concepts can be univariate (i.e. based on "the distribution of an educational variable") including *minimum standards*, whereby a binary variable such as primary completion is positive for everyone, and *equality of condition*, whereby an educational variable is measured in the same way for everyone regardless of their characteristics. The concepts can also be bi- or multivariate (i.e. based on "the joint distribution of an educational variable and one or more characteristics") including *impartiality*, which assumes that "education does not depend on background characteristics", meritocracy, which assumes that "education is positive related to

ability but not related to other characteristics, and redistribution", which assumes that

"education is positively related to disadvantaged" (UIS, 2018, pp. 23–34).

It is within these conceptual and methodological frameworks that IIEP functions as a

research, training, and technical cooperation institute. With its focus on system planning, the

approach that the institute adopts relies heavily on large-scale data and quantitative analysis.

Furthermore, its status as an institute within the UNESCO networks allows for collaborations

with other entities within the same organization, including UIS (UIS, 2018, 2019). This implies a

particular perspectival framework for understanding equity employed by the institute that is

fairly analogous with the ways other organizations approach the issue.

Organizational theory

This study draws upon the methodological framework and the epistemological

perspectives of organizational ethnography to observe and describe the work of UNESCO-IIEP

on and around global education equity. Developed from the ethnographic tradition that owes its

development to anthropological, sociological, and management studies roots, organizational

ethnography takes the organization as the setting, the subject, and targeted audience of study

(Neyland, 2008). Throughout its flow across these disciplines, the time-tested methodological

strength and descriptive richness of ethnography provides a sharp addition to the organizational

studies toolbox (Cunliffe, 2010). Beyond the rational behavioral frameworks traditionally

approached in the study of organizations, ethnography provides a glimpse into their social and

communal life, producing "a detailed, in-depth, up-close examination of a particular group and the way that group operates" (Neyland, 2008, p. 10).

Until fairly recently, however, few organizational ethnographies have attempted to ground their ethnographic work in the established rigor of organizational theory, and organizational theorists—a disproportionate number of whom descend from sociological and management studies lines—have not quite seriously entertained the potential usefulness of ethnography as a mainstream approach (Bate, 1997; Cunliffe, 2010; Eberle & Maeder, 2011; Rosen, 1991). This methodological complex is due in part to the social constructivist orientation of the anthropological and sociological traditions from which organizational ethnographies emerge: most organizational ethnographies would fit into either of these camps, and even when management studies would bring a more focused organizational theory orientation to this approach, organizational ethnography is still much more aligned with its genealogical traditions than its disciplinary area (Cunliffe, 2010; Neyland, 2008). Furthermore, research in organizational studies have since its foundation leaned so heavily towards economic, sociological, and behavioral orientations that not until much later did ethnography find its way in as a mainstream approach (Rosen, 1991). Studies in this space have, however, established the grounds for "in-depth, up-close studies of the everyday, routinized, informal activities of the workplace" (Neyland, 2008, p. 6), which is instrumental in demonstrating counter-intuitive aspects of organizational behaviors (Bate, 1997).

Acknowledging both the rigor of sociological and anthropological approaches and the depth of organizational studies, this study brings together—in an ethnographically oriented analysis of the organization—ideas, and constructs from organizational theory that aid the understanding of equity in the organizational context of IIEP. Taking the organization as the unit of study, it focuses on the identity of IIEP as a UNESCO institute with a specified technical mandate. As the analysis in the third section makes clear, UNESCO plays an active, legitimate, and important role in global educational governance, a pioneer in global initiatives targeting equity in education. The prominent role it takes in monitoring and evaluating the global progress in educational development gives rise to its status and reputation, and to that of its member institutes and offices. The case for IIEP is even more relevant. Its status as an autonomous institute with a technical mandate allows it to enjoy clear organizational focus and draw stronger organizational boundaries around its work. As part of UNESCO and the UN network, it carries the institutional visions and values that render its legitimacy within the global community. Moreover, the reputation it has gained over a fifty-eight-year history of quality work in the area of educational planning and management accords its strong relationships with key global donors and recipient country governments. The impact IIEP has on global educational governance—besides its active role as a key technical cooperation actor in the space—can be traced through its research portfolio, in which many of its experts have contributed significantly to global discourse on education equity, including the annual monitoring reports published by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2009a, 2010, 2015a). Therefore, even amid the political and institutional crises facing UNESCO

in recent history, IIEP still maintains and better manages its technical and financial resources for operation (IIEP, 2003; IIEP Finance Department, 2017; Wanner, 2015).

Even though this study falls short of being a fully ethnographic in nature, owing to the short time in the field and the limited types of data collected, it bears certain orientations of an organizational ethnography (Ciuk et al., 2018; Neyland, 2008), which is described in details in Chapter 3. The combination of qualitative data and theoretical insights benefits the study in ways that are methodologically enriching and engaging.

The study of organizations

The classic works of organizational theory shape a general understanding of the concept of an organization as the object of study in this research. The study departs from a set of parameters for organizational analyses (i.e. organizational structures, goals, participants, etc.) and draws on the prominent ideas discussed below to link and explain the organization's conceptualization of and work on education equity. Specifically, it analyzes and describes the organizational features identified by Scott and Davis (Scott, 2003; Scott & Davis, 2007) and Hasenfeld (Hasenfeld, 1983, 2010) and links those to the characterizations of equity in the discourse and the work of the organization, thus supporting analysis and discussion of the contributions IIEP makes towards the global work on education equity.

The key problem in this problem space is that its very subject—the concept of *organization*—is admittedly elusive and, according to Weick (1974), highly debatable. Weick

argues that organization is as much a myth as a noun because "[i]f one looks for an organization one will not find it. What will be found is that there are events, linked together, that transpire within concrete walls and these sequences, their pathways, their timing, are the forms we erroneously make into substances when we talk about an organization" (1974, p. 358). It is therefore misguided and misleading, in Weick's view, to separate the events (organizing) from the entity (organization). Taking the organization as a bounded unit brings with it the risks of overlooking the complex interactions between organizational elements and their environments that oftentimes pose challenges and difficulties for rational system theorists to address and understand. To this point, ethnography is an excellent tool since it affords a rich description of these complex interactions while other approaches have generally placed greater focus on the organization as a complete entity. Acknowledging Weick's point, however, does not deny organization as a construct. Even when organizations are made of constituent elements that extend their links and activities beyond their conceptual walls and their identity of the collective, the very mechanism that puts together in the application of the same technology for the pursuit of the same goals in itself constitutes an important unit of analysis. It gives life to unique concepts and features of organization that would be otherwise difficult to attribute to other units, such as legitimacy or identity.

Key concepts in organizational theory addressed in this study

Organizational structures

Approaching organizations as social structures consisting of collective actors working together in the pursuit of collective goals (2003, p. 5), Richard Scott proposes a model for understanding the elements of organizations. The model depicts the organization as constituted of social structure, participants, goals, and technology, and situated in its environment (2003, p. 18). Social structures include (1) the normative structure, which consists of values, norms, and role expectations, (2) the cultural-cognitive structure, which is characterized by the shared beliefs, interests, and understandings of the participants, and (3) the behavioral structure, the "activities, interactions, and sentiments that exhibit some degree of regularity," which in turn characterize the behavior of a class of individuals (2003, pp. 18–19). Participants—or social actors—with their agency are the individuals who contribute to the collective pursuit of goals in the organization. Emphasized are the facts that participants' fulfillment of designated roles is critical to the very existence of the organization, and that they are also the instrument of change and continuity (2003, p. 21). The concept of organizational goals, as "conceptions of desired ends [which] participants attempt to achieve through their performance of task activities," is rather controversial, yet central to the understanding of organizations (2003, p. 22). Technology, more broadly, refers to the technical know-how that directs activities towards achieving those goals. It is with organizational technology that "energy is applied to the transformation of materials, as a mechanism for transforming inputs into outputs" (2003, p. 23). And finally, environment is the

general term referring to the physical, technological, cultural and social surroundings of the organization, to which it must interact and adapt (2003, p. 23). Though environment is generally approached to in relation to the organization, its complex composition of environmental aspects characterizes complex interplays with other organizational elements, where "[e]ach of the four organizational elements shape and is significantly shaped by the wider environment" (2003, p. 24). The social structures, goals, and technology of the organization, argues Scott, are closely related to, and draw on resources from the environments to shape the organizational actions and behaviors (2003).

Following a similar analytical framework, Yeheskel Hasenfeld (1983) captures the elements of organizations in his seminal work on human service organizations, taking those as his subset of interests. The analytic framework he develops also details the environmental, structural, goal, and technological aspects of the organization.

Hasenfeld (1983) distinguishes between the two types of organizational environments. The general environment consists of the economic, demographic, cultural, political-legal, and technological conditions that surround the organization, and must be assumed as given—rarely can organizations significantly changes these attributes. The task environment, on the other hand, comprises "a specific set of organizations and groups with which the organization exchanges resources and services and with whom it establishes specific modes of interaction" (1983, p. 51). Because of the significant amount of exchange between the organization and its

task environment, it is both conducive and susceptible to changes in this environment. And the task environment, in turn, is also characterized by elements of the general environment.

Organizational goals, according to Hasenfeld, are often multiple, unstable, complex, and conflicting (1983, pp. 85, 89–92). In his analysis of the goals of human services organizations, he makes the distinction between official and operative goals. Official goals are those that "reflect the type of functions the organization performs for the larger social system" (1983, p. 85) and thus serve to justify the existence of the organization in agreement with social values and norms (1983, pp. 85–86). Operative goals, on the other hand, reflect "the organization's actual commitment of resources" (1983, p. 87). These goals are highly contingent on input and resources from the environments, which are often complex, changing, and which render them markedly different from official goals. The prime distinction, argues Hasenfeld, is that while official goals serve to elicit legitimation and support from society at large and thus "serve as a buffer between the organization and its environment" (1983, p. 87), operative goals serve as strategies for adapting to inputs from the environments. Meyer and Rowan (1977)'s characterization of the concept of decoupling in educational organizations exemplifies the tension between the official and operative goals of the organization.

Another important feature of organizational goals is that they are quite often unstable and evolving. Hasenfeld, in distinguishing between transitive goals (i.e. those directed towards projected social impact) and reflexive goals (i.e. those directed towards the internal harmonization of individual contributions), highlights the process of goal transformation in

organizations whose goals "become obsolete and irrelevant in the face of changing environmental conditions, be they demographic, sociocultural, economic, political, or technological" (1983, p. 103). This transformation can be classified into (1) goal succession, by which organizations successfully change their accomplished transitive goals and maintain their viability (1983, p. 103), (2) goal adaptation, by which organizations are forced to modify or change their transitive goals in responses to changes in the environment, and (3) goal displacement, in which organizations are forced to abandon transitive goals in favor of reflexive goals as a failure to adapt to environmental changes. These processes are helpful in explaining the internal transformation or restructuration of organizations functioning in complex and changing environments, as well as their diversion of operative goals from official goals.

Closely related to the goals of an organization is its technology. Technology is defined as specific procedures employed by the organization to bring about predetermined products and/or services. Technology guides the activities of the organization and is guided by its stated goals. Organizational technology can be closed, by which it is highly static and very well defined, such as the technology of automated manufacturing firms; or it can be open, by which it is highly evolving and very poorly defined, such as the technology of human services organizations (Hasenfeld, 1983, 2010). A closed technology renders the organization less reliant on environmental inputs and thus able to carry out its function relatively sealed off from environmental changes, while an open technology makes the organizational much more prone to

environmental changes, thus allowing for higher levels of decoupling between the organization

and its environment (Hasenfeld, 1983; J. W. Meyer et al., 1980; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

The relationship between organizational goals and technology is manifested in the power

structure of the organization. Hasenfeld (1983) describes in depth the complex power

arrangements within human services organizations, which he argues are not simply directed by

the norm of rationality. Quite contrastive to organizations whose technologies are well described

and understood, the complex and ill-defined technologies of human services organizations,

coupled with their turbulent environments, make for the articulation of their vague goals and

competing power mechanisms (1983, pp. 148–149). This is demonstrated in the terming of

human services organizations as "loosely-coupled systems" (J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Weick,

1976). The loose coordination between the tasks and activities constituting the organizational

technology results in a weak system of control over staff activities and multiple systems of

authority that weakens cohesiveness and reduce effectiveness (Hasenfeld, 1983, pp. 150–151). In

loosely coupled systems, often the technical core of the organization is more complex and less

thoroughly understood, which leads to the activities of the core safely buffered from outside

inputs. The organization thus tends to conform to certain institutional pressures rather than

demands from its operational environment, resulting in its resources diverted to "rituals and

ceremonies," or legitimacy-oriented activities (Donaldson, 2001; Hasenfeld, 1983, 2010; J. W.

Meyer et al., 1980; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Weick, 1976). In tightly coupled systems, on the

contrary, activities at the core are closely aligned with inputs from organizational environments.

The analysis of organizational structures reveals the way IIEP structures and organizes its activities as a rational entity, and how it makes sense of and interacts with elements in its environments. Related to the conceptualization of equity, the analysis explains how features of the technical core and the organizational culture within the institute account for the diversity of equity dimensions that characterize its work, and how its relationships and exchanges within its environments add to the complexity of equity problems and dilemmas it faces.

Organizational niche

Another concept from organizational theory that this study draws on is that of *organizational niche*. Developed by Charles Elton as an ecological term to describe "the status of the animal in its community" (1927, p. 63), niche is used in the sociology of organizations to refer to "a multidimensional resource space, that is, a set of resources upon which the organizations in a given population depend for survival" (Rowan, 2002, p. 290). Hannan and Freeman (1977) would further make the distinction between the *fundamental niche*, "the region of a resource space in which an entity can persist in the absence of competition" and the realized niche, "the subset of the fundamental niche in which an entity can sustain itself in the presence of given competitors" (Hannan et al., 2003, pp. 309–310).

Implied within this subtle distinction is the properties of the population that determine the level of competition within it. An organizational niche, these authors argue, generally depends on "both population properties, tied to form, and organizational properties, tied to

organizational identity" (p. 311). They characterize a model of niche on both organizational and

populational levels, using the ingredients of "(1) a market; (2) an audience with member

possessing distinctive tastes; (3) a set of sociodemographic positions associated with the audience

members; (4) a set of organizations making offer; and (5) organizations with identities and

applicable organizational form codes" (p. 312). From this model, theories on organizational

niche are developed and tested. The model uses certain terms, which are defined and related to

the case at hand in the table below.

Table 1: Organizational niche terminologies (from Hannan et al, 2003) related to the case of IIEP

Term	Definition	In this case…
organization	structured entity that exists in an ecology	IIEP
population	"[a set] of organizations with a common minimal external identity and common location" (p. 313)	technical agencies and consultants in EPM
niche	"the region of a resource space in which an entity [exists]" (p. 309)	educational planning and management (EPM)
audience	"potential takers of the organization's offering" (p. 312)	clients (countries, governments, ministries); donors (global development agencies); consumers (educational planners, researchers, and professionals)
taste	interests in or demands for product or service	demands for EPM
offering	product or service provided by the organization (p. 312)	technical cooperation, training, and research in EPM
appeal	"sociocultural affinity between the offering and the taste" (*intrinsic*) and "availability of the offering, its mode of presentation, and the organizational identity of the offerer" (*actual*, p. 316)	IIEP's mandate and expertise (*intrinsic*), IIEP's status, resources, and technical capabilities (*actual*)

The model is particularly useful in understanding IIEP's organizational ecology. It helps characterize the institute's *fundamental niche*, where it positions itself as a technical provider in educational planning and management, the specification of which constitutes its organizational mandate. It characterizes the institute's *realized niche*, where it conforms to its identity as a UN/ESCO entity and form codes (its value, visions, and language as such an entity), and where competition in the area of educational planning and management is scarce and where the quality of the service (or *offer*) it provides is acknowledged by its *audience* (i.e. donors, clients, and consumers). IIEP's *appeal*, both intrinsic from its capacity to meet market demands and *actual* as both a UN/ESCO entity and a capable service provider, is closely related to its *reputation*. By relating the fundamental niche with identities and form codes, the niche model is thus related to the concept of legitimacy, which is described below.

Legitimacy, performance, survival

The relationships and exchanges in the organizational environments determine an organization's legitimacy, performance, and survival tactics (Hasenfeld, 1983). Each of these concepts, while well-defined and established in the business and organizational studies literature, is difficult to characterize in the case of global technical organizations due to both the nature of their core activities and the complexities of the space in which they operate. To carve out a legitimacy framework for IIEP, which as a technical institute within the UN network occupies a niche of its own, thus posits the first problem. Much of the knowledge and many of the

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theoretical frameworks of organizational legitimacy come from the literature on the business

world of entrepreneurs and manufacturing firms (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; J. W. Meyer et al.,

1980; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Perrow, 1967; M. C. Suchman, 1995). A more modest share of

the literature is dedicated to human services and social organizations (e.g. Hasenfeld, 2010), and

less so for global organizations or those operating in the sphere of global governance and/or

global development (Edwards et al., 2018; Fuenfschilling & Binz, 2018; Guo, 2012; Scott, 2013;

Sorrell, 2018).

This study employs a legitimacy framework developed on the work of Aldrich and Fiol

(1994), later modified and developed by Mark Suchman (1995) and W. Richard Scott (2013).

Studying entrepreneurs in emerging industries, Aldrich and Fiol classifies organizational

legitimacy into *cognitive legitimacy*, which constitutes "the spread of knowledge about a new

venture," and *sociopolitical legitimacy*, or "the process by which key stakeholders, the general

public, key opinion leaders, or government officials accept a venture as appropriate and right,

given existing norms and laws" (1994, p. 648). In the case of IIEP, the concepts cognitive

legitimacy and sociopolitical legitimacy provide a useful lens into how the institute manages its

internal and environmental resources to position itself in the field of global educational

governance.

Aldrich and Fiol (1994, p. 649) present their framework on different levels of analysis,

moving from the organizational to the institutional, through which they document strategies

entrepreneurs adopt to promote new industry development. This framework, illustrated below

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(Figure 1), is particularly relevant to understand IIEP's development and reinforcement of both

its core technology and its image in the global education governance niche.

COGNITIVE LEGITIMACY

Organization
Develop knowledge base via symbolic language and behaviors

Intraindustry
Develop knowledge base by encouraging convergence around a dominant design

Interindustry
Develop knowledge base by promoting activity through third-party actors

Institutional
Develop knowledge base by creating linkages with established educational curricula

ORGANIZATIONAL

INTRAINDUSTRY

INTERINDUSTRY

INSTITUTIONAL

SOCIOPOLITICAL LEGITIMACY

Organization
Develop trust in the new activity by maintaining internally consistent stories

Intraindustry
Develop perceptions of reliability by mobilizing to take collective action

Interindustry
Develop reputation of a new activity as a reality by negotiating and compromising with other industries

Institutional
Develop legitimacy by organizing collective marketing and lobbying efforts

Figure 1: Entrepreneurial strategies to promote new industry development (adapted from Aldrich & Fiol, 1994)

The relationship between organizational legitimacy and performance is best understood

through its survival strategies. Political economy theory pictures organizations as "a collectivity

that has multiple and complex goals, paramount among them are survival and adaptation to the

environment" (Hasenfeld, 2009, p. 19). The organization depends greatly on its ability to

mobilize power, legitimacy, and resources from its interactions with elements in the task

environment (Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2010; Hasenfeld, 2009). This strategy is coupled with the

organization's focus on performance within its niche as the main strategy for development and

growth, as "survival and adaptation must be balanced against the goal of service effectiveness"

(Hasenfeld, 2009, p. 21). Institutional theory, on the other hand, provides different insights into

organizational structure by focusing on the organization design's capacity to reflect and reinforce

institutional rules. On this basis, organizations must response to *regulative rules* (the coercive

rules and laws that guide organizational behaviors), *normative rules* (its social values and

expectations), and *cognitive rules* (domanial maxims shared by the community of organizations) in order to ensure social legitimacy and survival (Garrow & Hasenfeld, 2010; Hasenfeld, 2009, pp. 27–28). These strategies transcend relationships, interactions, and the mobilization of resources in the internal and external environments of the organization. This is best demonstrated in the configuration model of organizational culture introduced by Dauber, Fink, and Yolles (2012), illustrated below as Figure 2.
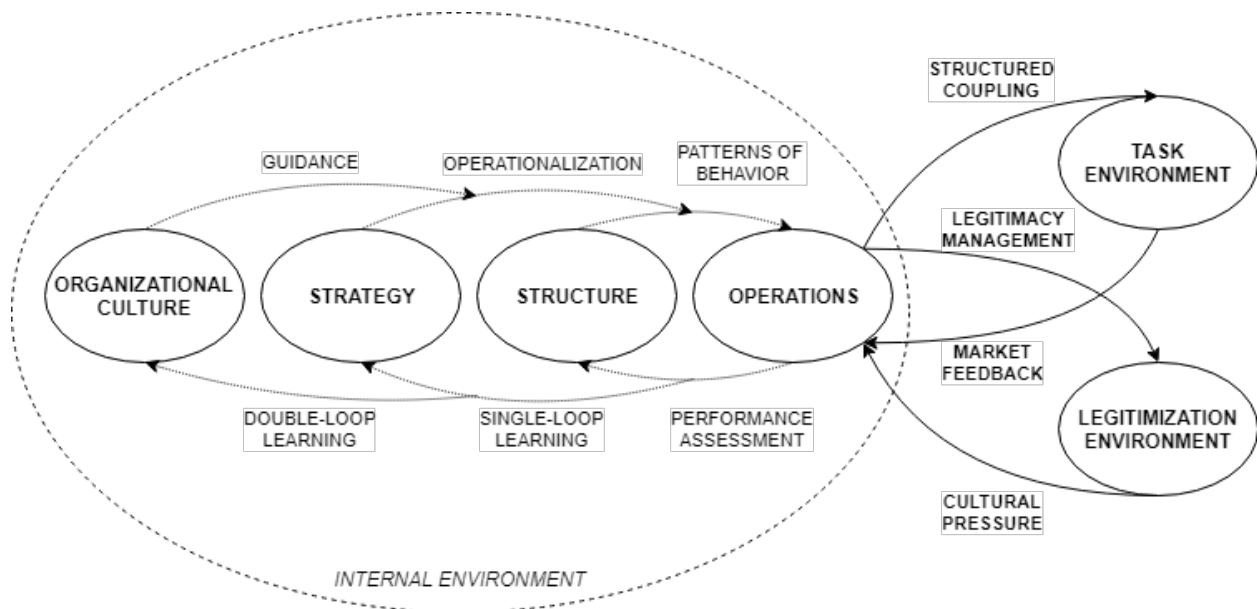
Figure 2: Organizational learning configurations: internal and external environments (adapted from Dauber et al., 2012)

In this model, the organization manages its internal environment through the learning and feedback loops between operations, structure, strategy, and culture, while interacting with actors and agents in the external environments. Organizational survival strategies depend both upon its responses to cultural pressures from the legitimation environment and its structured coupling with market feedback from the task environment, which in turn informs its internal operation, structuration, development, and enculturation strategies. This model is useful for

understanding IIEP's strategies and responses to both its institutional environment (legitimacy) and its task environment (performance). These environmental dynamics subsequently explain the complex equity problems entailing the dilemmas and politics it faces in the field.

Studying UNESCO in particular, Edwards et al (2018) approach the concept of legitimacy using a different conceptual framework. In their study, the authors identify legitimacy consisting of three components of sociopolitical acceptability, reputation, and status. Sociopolitical acceptability can be achieved with the organization "(a) adapting to its context, (b) responding to changing expectations, and (c) invoking or affiliating itself with symbols (or other organizations) that possess legitimacy" (2018, p. 34). Reputation refers to (a) the prestige accorded to the organization based on its past performance, (b) its success in fulfilling the expectations of multiple stakeholders, and (c) the perception of the quality of its work (p. 34). Status refers to the "[p]rominance of relative position, as determined by others" and to "[d]eference behavior of peers" (p. 35). While the organization may strive to improve its sociopolitical acceptability, reputation and status are beyond its direct control (p. 34). Legitimacy is thus a notion accorded to the organization and not something it can claim on its own (p. 35).
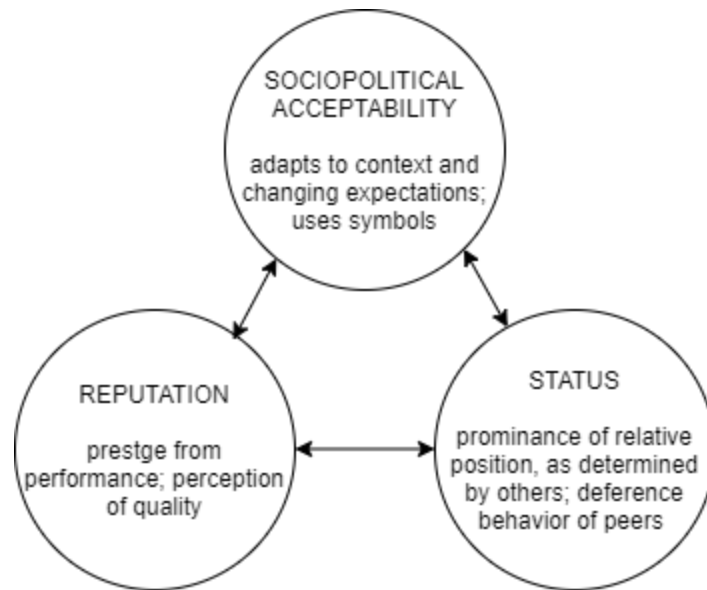
Figure 3: Components of organizational legitimacy (adapted from Edwards et al, 2018)

Brought together, these frameworks of legitimacy propose a way to analyze and evaluate the legitimacy of UNESCO-IIEP, by describing and evaluating the work it does, its relations with other organizations within the UN/ESCO network, its relations with its clients and donors, the soundness of its technical methods and approaches, as well as its standing in the world of educational planning and global education development. Legitimacy is thus a central focus that guides much of the analysis in this study.

The methodological features of organizational ethnography, as well as its techniques, principles, and sensibilities upon which this study is designed, are discussed in the next chapter.

UNESCO and IIEP

In this section, I turn to the organizations at the center of this study and review the contextual background of their work in global education governance.

The concept of global governance emerged towards the end of the twentieth century,

building on an institutionalization of international policies and the global flow of development

aids over the past century (Rosenau, 1995). Prior to this movement, the internationalization of

education policy had undergone quite an organic mechanism, owing to the increasing availability

of international and comparative educational information, policy borrowing and copying, and

the growing global development aids and technical cooperation (Ball, 1998; Wiseman & Baker,

2005). The shift of focus within the last decades of the twentieth century from comparing basic

structures of schooling and enrollment to educational outcomes was accompanied with the

growth and expansion of international organizations with a focus on education, such as the

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In addition, major funders

and financial institutions active in global development also focused and expanded their research

and technical work on education, chief among those the World Bank, the International Monetary

Fund (IMF), the Asian development Bank (ADB), and the development agencies of such donor

countries as the United States (USAID), the European Union (EUDA), Japan (JICA), and

Australia (AUSAID). These agencies developed and elaborated their own information systems

and sets of criteria and guidelines for funding development work on education, in the process

populate and complicate the international and comparative policy landscape.

Another group of actors who saw growing influence within this expansion stage were the

global technical, cultural, and political agencies with their work related to education. Chief

among these are organizations within the UN network, including the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR), the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Also present within this space are international non-governmental organizations whose work borders educational issues, with such representatives as Oxfam, Save the Children, Oxford Policy Management, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), among others. Together these actors bring their technical expertise into international comparative policy, and into the work of international development on education. Although their work contributed to improved understanding of education systems and policies, they also bring complication and complexity into the space with their varied approaches, ideologies, and modes of operation (Klees, 2012; Mundy, 2007b; Wiseman & Baker, 2005).

The first major movement towards the global governance of education was the *Education for All* (EFA) initiative. Started in 1990 with the *World Declaration on Education for All*, also known as the *Jomtien Declaration*, the initiative was spearheaded by key actors in international development (WB, UNDP, UNFPA) and education (UNESCO) and adopted by 155 countries (UNESCO, 1990), laying out six educational goals for 2015. The commitment was renewed ten years later at the World Education Forum in Dakar, with the participation of 164 countries (UNESCO, 2017c). EFA goals and programs would then be incorporated into the United Nations

Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as MDG 2 and led by a newly created organization, the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, which later became the Global Partnership for Education.

At the conclusion of the initiative in 2015, realizing the goals not fully met and the challenges still ahead, the global community renewed their commitment with the more ambitious plan of *Education 2030*, laid out in the *Incheon Declaration* (UNESCO et al., 2015). Once again, this educational vision was incorporated into a larger global program around sustainable development, with education (SDG 4) being one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs).

These programs and initiatives reflect strong features of global governance, in which the leadership of major international actors is coordinated to create changes at the global level. Countries are brought onboard by the commitments they ratify, and through the mechanisms of global trade, foreign investments, and global development aids. Public governance is concerned and targeted with broader goals for social and economic development across nations in addition to national interests (Rosenau, 1995, 2004, 2007a, 2007b). The initiatives were often met with widespread enthusiasms, as evidenced in the global consensus and commitment they garnered, but often they are also met with much resistance and many criticisms (Mundy, 2007a, 2007b; Wiseman et al., 2010; Wiseman & Baker, 2005). It is in this global governance context that the roles of UNESCO and IIEP come to be examined.

Roles of UNESCO in global education governance

Among the many stakeholders in the field of global education, the United Nations

Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) finds itself in a special role.

Established in 1945 as a result of a global movement in aspiration for peace, the organization

carries the mission of encouraging world peace through promoting education, science, and

cultural understanding (UNESCO, 2012; Wanner, 2015). Among these functions, its work in

education is of particular importance, taking up a large part of its programs and administration

(UNESCO, 2012). Since the inception of the *Education for All* (EFA) initiative in 1990, UNESCO

has played an active role in its implementation and monitoring as one of the inaugural sponsors

(the others being UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank). Its role rose into prominence as the

agency tasked with the monitoring of the EFA program starting in 2002 (Edwards et al., 2018;

Wanner, 2015). This task is carried forward at the end of the Education for All era and the

beginning of a new global movement in education towards 2030 (UNESCO et al., 2015). While

the involvement and work of the UNESCO in global education has been the subject of many

praises and criticisms (Klees, 2012; Mundy, 2007a, 2007b; Wanner, 2015), it is reasonable to say

that UNESCO has assumed an indispensable role in global education governance.

Concerns for equity at the global level, however, go back further, embedded in the role of

the United Nations in disseminating the idea of universal human rights worldwide, of which the

right to education is recognized as one (United Nations, 1948). Education is also embedded in

various global declarations and conventions on from a human rights perspective within the UN

umbrella (UNICEF, 1989; United Nations, 1960, 1979). These rights-based discourses provide

the bases on which global governance of education took shape (Spring, 2000), which characterize

much of the discussion on equity in education on the global scale, and which sometimes create

tensions and conflicts with other perspectives in making the call for education equity (Mundy,

2007a, 2007b).

It is with the start of *Education for All* in 1990 that UNESCO began to take an

increasingly important role in global education governance. With the program's hiatus during

much of the 1990s, UNESCO took the lead in reaffirming its urgency by orchestrating the *Dakar*

Framework for Action (Wanner, 2015). Among the early sponsors of the initiative, UNESCO was

trusted the role of progress monitoring and evaluation by the global community, partly because

of its official role as the UN education arm and partly because of its perceived neutral influence

on developing countries compared to that of the World Bank, a major development lender

(Edwards et al., 2018; Wanner, 2015). This led to the creation of the Education for All Global

Monitoring Report team (renamed Global Education Monitoring Report team in 2015), a

division with great technical autonomy and resource independence within the organization

(Edwards et al., 2018). At the conclusion of the initiative in 2015, this role of UNESCO is

reinforced and carried over to the *Education 2030* framework, assigning it with the production of

annual or biannual *Global Education Reports* (GEMR) since 2016.

UNESCO's central role in the monitoring and reporting of the global education progress

has produced an important set of discourse on global education and equity issues. The *EFA*

Global Monitoring Reports (2002—2015) and the subsequent *Global Education Monitoring*

Reports (2016—present) have closely monitored and reported the annual global progress made

towards meeting the goals. These reports play an important part in the making of policies and

decisions on education equity both at the global and national levels and function as a yardstick

for evaluating the global commitment to education, with implications and consequences for the

global flow of education development aids (Edwards et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2015a).

Roles of UNESCO-IIEP

Of the thirteen UNESCO institutes and functional departments specializing in education,

the International Institute for Education and Planning (UNESCO-IIEP) was among the earliest

formed. Created in 1963 by recommendation of a consultative study that envisioned a truly

autonomous institute that is multi-disciplinary in character, where education experts work, teach

and share ideas, and where planning practitioners can take courses and gather useful experience,

the institute is a quasi-autonomous body within UNESCO, governed within the organization's

legal framework yet outside the Secretariat (IIEP, 2003, pp. 7, 8).

Within 56 years of its existence, the institute has established itself as a prominent expert

in the field of educational planning and management, with its core activities organized around

research, training, and technical cooperation (Burnett, 2011; IIEP, 2017b). As a Category-1

institute, it enjoys a certain amount of freedom and autonomy from UNESCO, while its core

activities are closely aligned with and constitute those of the parent organization (UNESCO,

2017d). While each UNESCO institute carries a different mandate and covers a different area of focus, and while they exercise great care for their work not to overlap, the scope of the work of IIEP is inherently large and allows it to interact and cooperate with great many countries, both developed and developing. The macro nature of its work also fits well within the niche of global development aids on education, where its technical expertise is drawn upon as a valuable resource (UNESCO, 2009a, 2015a; Wanner, 2015). This characterizes its expansion over the years to become one of the largest and most financially stable of UNESCO institutes, despite the many financial difficulties that plagued its parent organization in the past decades (Edwards et al., 2018; Heyneman & Wagner, 2011; Mundy, 2007a; Wanner, 2015).

Since its inception, the institute has incessantly conducted research, provided training, and engaged in technical cooperation with governments, ministries, and educational organizations and individuals all over the world. Its past and present teams of experts have contributed to the global educational discourse through their research, training, and publication activities (IIEP, 2003, 2018b). Members of the institute frequently participate in the monitoring and evaluation of global education through the publication of EFA and GEM reports (UNESCO, 2010, 2015a, 2016, 2017b, 2018). As a member institute, it also shares close working relationships with other UNESCO offices, institutes, and agency, and as a technical cooperation provider, it also works with governments, ministries, and major actors in global education governance, chief among them national development and international cooperation agencies, intergovernmental institutions, civil society organizations and global partnerships, as well as the private sector and

private foundations (IIEP, 2014b). In the dynamic landscape of global education governance, the impact of IIEP—whether on national system planning through its research, training, and technical cooperation and/or on the global transfer of education development resources through its involvement in and relationships with global projects and actors—can hardly be overlooked.

With UNESCO's and IIEP's active involvement in the global education governance landscape, especially their roles in the *Education for All* and *Education 2030* initiatives, it is important and necessary to approach and study the way equity is conceptualized and problematized in these organizations. While a large part of that can be examined through their respective relatively large repertoires of publications, it is also essential to go below the surface of the official discourse to explore the nuances and complexities of such conceptualization and problematization. This thus sets the contextual framework for this study.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the conceptual, methodological, and contextual frameworks for this study. The frameworks developed above set up the grounding for the research questions the study explores:

1. How is education equity conceptualized and problematized in the organizational life and work of UNESCO-IIEP?

2. How do the organizational features of IIEP (its environments, social structures, goals, technologies, and participants) characterize its observed work on education equity?

3. How can these characterizations be explained in the framework of organizational theory?

4. What implications do these characterizations have on understanding and evaluating

    IIEP's role and its work on global education equity?

These frameworks both serve as a frame of reference and guide the data collection and

analysis processes, as will be discussed in the next chapter on method.

CHAPTER 3. METHOD

This chapter presents the methodological features of organizational ethnography, as well as the methodological procedures conducted in this study. Drawing on the framework of organizational ethnography, it details the data selection process, the types of data collected, the coding and analysis processes, and how the findings are organized and presented. It also raises several issues with validity and the characteristics of the data presented in this study.

Organizational ethnography

This study is developed upon the methodological design and principles of organizational ethnography to explore the conceptualization of equity in the organizational context of IIEP. Although it falls short of a full-fledged ethnography due to its limited duration and the amount of data it collected, the methodological features discussed below are useful for understanding the orientation in which it was conducted.

In the spaces below, I draw specifically on the writings of Daniel Neyland (2008), Michael Rosen (1991), and John van Maanen (1979), among others, to discuss the methodological features of organizational ethnography. Developed upon the techniques and principles of traditional ethnography, the method takes the organization as the physical and conceptual boundary within which ethnographic work is conducted. Rosen (1991, p. 3) characterizes organizational ethnography as distinct from "general, mainstream" ethnography in the sense that

the former is "predominantly concerned with those social relations coalesced around a subset of goal-oriented activities." This organizational feature is markedly different from, but likely congruent with, that of everyday life. Organizational ethnography is inherently associated with rules and the interdependency of rules and situation, since "[m]embers of a social system generate rules through the very interpretive mechanisms used to decide the meaning and applicability of rules" (p. 3). Because rules are both generative and derivative, here surfaces an interesting interplay between rules and situation: while rules are static, deterministic, and constraining, situation is dynamic, fluid, and evolving. Organizational life thus combines the dynamism of the situation—organizational life and work—and the staticity of rules—organizational discourse and policies—which organizational ethnography aims at describing.

Studies in organizational theory, especially on organizations functioning in a large complex problem space such as UNESCO and IIEP, often take them as a specified and bounded entity, focusing on their actions and behaviors as a rationale agent (in other words, on the staticity of the rules that make up these entities) rather than on the complex webs of human interactions that make up the life of them (in other words, the situation). The ethnographic tradition used in this study is afforded with the capturing and analyzing of rich data, allowing for capturing such complexities that organizational studies would come short. The method is also effective in the conveyance of complex nuances and meanings that few other approaches can compare.

On the other hand, the feature that sets the organizational ethnography apart from the

broader ethnography of everyday life is that organizations demonstrate a complexity quite

distinct from the complexity of society since they are both partial and specialized (Rosen, 1991, p.

4). This partiality and specialization marks the technical rationalities of the organization, which

in turn determine power relations and behaviors (Foucault, 1982; Rosen, 1991; Scott & Davis,

2007). Rosen did note, however, a constant infiltration of the social context into organizational

life, as "the longer people interact with each other within this formalized space, 'the more that

general social awareness from the outside everyday world seeps back' into organizational

relations" (Rosen, 1991, p. 4, citing Spooner, 1983). Perspectives from organizational theory, a

large part of which views the organization as a rational entity, would thus be instrumental for

highlighting the difference between organizational ethnography and the ethnography of everyday

life.

Epistemological perspectives

Of the epistemological questions that lie in the heart of ethnography, debates often

revolve around the choice of a realist approach on the one hand and a constructivist perspective

on the other (Hammersley, 2010; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Neyland, 2008; Rosen, 1991).

Rosen argues that ethnography is inherently constructivist, or "social constructionist" (1991, p.

5), by which it presents ethnographers with questions of validity, generalizability and

replicability. Tied to the cultural aspect of organizations, "the 'truth' of organizational research

[is] also as a social construct, […] an outgrowth of and simultaneously embedded in the culture of its producers" and thus the aim of the method is "to understand how members of a social group, through their participation in social process, enact their particular realities and endow them with meaning" (Rosen, 1991, p. 6). The distinctions between the constructivist and the realist approaches can be summarized in ways that the former is closer to those who constitute data, is more theoretically evolving, and is more likely to venture into the (more or less) unknown, as "social constructionist research is […] an exploration in a basic sense" (Rosen, 1991, p. 7). These distinctions entail further considerations of researcher's roles, writing styles, and use of ethnographic tools (Neyland, 2008).

For van Maanen (1979), these epistemological contrasts present an intriguing dilemma: the balance of *facts* (first-order concepts) and *theories* (second-order concepts, those used by the fieldworker to make sense of first-order data) (van Maanen, 1979, p. 539). While useful for the interpretation of facts, theories also carry with them the danger of imposing the ethnographer's own misunderstanding and misconception of those facts, as "when first formulated such second-order conceptions are relevant primarily to the culture of the researcher, not the researched" (1979, p. 541). It is thus important for the ethnography to not blend first- and second-order concepts and leave both open to readers' interpretation and critiques.

Eberle and Maeder also posed this question in the choice for ethnographies to be more data- or more theory-guided. In this way, they agreed with van Maanen that a great number of ethnographies are theory-guided, employing the theoretical chainsaws of highly abstract

concepts and frameworks to cut up the often thin, flimsy paper of empirical data (Eberle & Maeder, 2011; van Maanen, 1979; metaphor mine). This concern implants in this study with the understanding that the theoretical frameworks developed herein serve to provide a way to make sense of the collected data, rather than to guide the data collection process. Though there is no doubt that they do affect and guide data collection to a certain extent, it is useful for the analyst to be exploratory and not leading data into confirming the frameworks, bearing in mind the complexities of organizational life and behaviors.

Despite both my limited role and my limited time at the institute, there were instances when these perspectival contrasts came into view. For most of the study, the major stance taken was more realist, where I aimed to capture and describe as faithfully as I could the work processes and the social atmosphere at IIEP. This was due to the reverse knowledge gap uncharacteristic of traditional ethnography: I was a novice studying experts rather than an expert studying novices. Even in places where my analyses were interpretive, they were less constructivist. But since ethnography is constructivist in nature (Rosen, 1991), my interpretations did inevitably characterize much of the data I collected. There were also activities where I took a more active role in co-constructing the discourse on equity as directly related to the work of the institute, for instance my work in the planning of a training program for EU education advisors (Chapter 6), or my interviews with twelve experts on the internal gender mainstreaming program, which undoubtedly became part of the official records of IIEP activities.

Practical concerns

Rosen (1991, pp. 16–17) raises four practical concerns in conducting organizational ethnography, which involve first the difference between the working knowledge—the "technical expertise and emotional feelings [deriving] from doing a particular type of work"—of the participant, who is more involved in the work of the organization and is thus more knowledgeable, and that of the observer, who sees organizational work from a distance and is thus less knowledgeable. The second concern is organizational secrecy, which acknowledges the difficulties on the part of the ethnographer in gaining access to organizational sensitive information. With trust as third issue, the observer, who normally is marginal to the political process, is ironically more likely to be trusted than the participant, who to some extent is part of the political process. This bears important practical implications since "[g]iven that organizations are centred around the interests of at least a segment of their memberships, organizational culture is also palpably political" (Rosen, 1991, p. 4). The final concern raised by Rosen is role definition, by which he refers to the "switching back and forth between the organization participant (inside) and scholarly data gatherer (outside) roles" which is a potential cause of conflicts and confusion between the ethnographer and the subjects of the study (1991, p. 17).

These concerns are attended to this study. As the discussion above on epistemological views made clear, I entered the field with a reverse knowledge gap, where my own knowledge of and practical experiences on education equity stood in stark contrast with those of the experts I studied. This knowledge gap was addressed to some extent through my experiences and learning

on the job as an intern; thus, the understanding of equity that this study develops also reflects my

own learning in the field. The concerns of secrecy and of politics and trust address one another.

Although my status as an intern did not lead me deep into the internal politics at the institute,

and there were instances where I perceived my presence was somewhat less welcome at meetings

on sensitive topics, such as the internal financial report and training, the overall collegial

atmosphere and culture allowed me see myself as a member. The comradeship I shared with

fellow interns also spoke to that sense of belonging. It was thus difficult to distinguish my

insider/outsider roles in the field.

Generalizability

The question about organizational ethnography's capacity to generalize knowledge and

develop theories has long been raised. Rosen, writing in 1991, bemoans a lack of a body of

organizational ethnography. This inadequacy, he argues, "slows the refinement of theoretical

formulations" and mark its advancement "in a slow and staggered manner" (Rosen, 1991, p. 19).

Writing a few years later, Bate highlights the methodological weaknesses of organizational

behavior research as being "*a*historical, *a*contextual, and *a*processual in its approach and

outlook," and argues that ethnology would bring in alternatives to management research thanks

to its methodological affordances in each of these respects (1997, p. 1155). I would argue,

however, that the ethnographical affordances of rich and thick descriptions, when placed

alongside the depth and sharpness of organizational theory, has the potential to make great

contributions to the understanding of not only organizations but also organized social practices in general. The methodological strength of organizational ethnography also takes into account the uniqueness of ethnography as—arguably—"the only human activity in the social sciences" (Rosen, 1991, p. 21), considering the space it provides for interpretation, meaning construction, and reflexivity beyond the damning positivist grip of other methodological traditions (Moss & Haertel, 2016).

The generalizability capacity of this study can be assessed as a projected study into technical organizations in the realm of global educational development, building off the technical image of IIEP. Its findings could also be generalized onto organizations within the UN/ESCO networks, as these often share certain institutional characteristics, such as their humanitarian ideology or their perceived status and authority among world countries. Moreover, the descriptions of IIEP's organizational structures and environments and their relations to the ways equity is conceptualized within the institute also add to the rich dialectic discussions of legitimacy and performance in organizational theory.

Data

In this section I describe in detail the data collection process and the types of ethnographic data collected for this study. The data were collected over a period of five months when I was an intern in the Training department at UNESCO-IIEP. The data reflect an observer—participant approach, where they were continuously examined through the lens of a

quasi-insider with hands-on knowledge and experience of the events and activities in the institute.

During the length of my internship/study at UNESCO-IIEP, I had the opportunity to approach, observe, and interact with the organizational members and other participants on a day-to-day basis. This was made possible thanks to the various tasks given to me within the scope of the internship, and how these tasks opened up opportunities for further connections and interactions. Neyland (2008) raised the issue of identifying between insider and outsider roles in ethnographic research, yet in this particular case the identity distinction was not always clear: it was through the work of an insider (intern) that I was able to collect my data, therefore completing the tasks of an outsider (researcher), and while I was there as an insider (intern), it was my declared status as an outsider (researcher) that somewhat distinguished me from other interns, gaining me access to certain experts and their projects while restricting that to others.

The data collection techniques that I brought to the study include:

Participant observation

For most of my time as an intern at UNESCO-IIEP, I took on the role of a participant observer. Unfamiliar with the working context of international organizations, I learned about the work and the organization itself from constant on-the-job observation and reflection. I took field notes of my activities there. Besides noting the main activities prescribed of my duties, I also took notes of conversations with experts and staffs, events, staff meetings, among others. One

recurrent activity that was particularly helpful was the informal conversation among interns, which mostly took place during lunch. Since interns were placed under direct supervision of individual experts, having the chance to share stories and experiences at work was in a way gaining access to the experts themselves that in many cases would otherwise be impossible.

The activities that took place at IIEP were numerous. My regular duties as an intern consisted of being at the institute eight hours a day, five days a week. My job description was quite flexible: I had the freedom to organize my own time, as long as I was reachable during the business hours of a working day and completed my assigned tasks on schedule. Where there were department meetings and group discussions, I was notified in advance. I took advantage of this lax schedule to study the institute more closely, reading its internal publications and its past technical cooperation projects from the library, familiarizing myself with the training resources and materials, as well as befriending and socializing with trainees and fellow interns.

My major assignments during the internship were administrative tasks in preparation for the 2017 summer school—an irregular thematic training program provided by IIEP with that year's theme focused on educational planning and leadership for female planners. My other main duty was to conduct the internal evaluation of IIEP's gender mainstreaming of its training program, in which I worked under the guidance of my supervisor to interview course instructors on how they had incorporated gender mainstreaming guidelines in their courses in the previous year.

Besides activities related to my prescribed duties, I tried to attend every open meeting in

the building that I found out about. These included all-staff meetings where the institute

leadership provided updates on its activities and operations. I also attended two quarterly

strategic debates in July and in October. These debates, initiated by the research department and

drawing online attention worldwide, brought in authors and speakers from other institutions to

discuss issues related to education. After the conclusion of the summer school, I was also

involved—at the request of the training department head—in the preparation of materials and

plans for a training program for EU education advisors scheduled in October 2017. This

experience provided me with particularly helpful insight into how a special training program

would be planned and delivered.

During my time there, I also took all the opportunities available to gain access to the

UNESCO headquarters and to the Education Sector. There were in total six such opportunities.

For the first one, which happened right after I began work, I joined the Training department staff

to lead a group of Annual Training Programme (ATP) participants to the headquarters for an

introduction of the UNESCO Education Sector. There was another such occasion later in August,

when we led a group of summer school participants on a tour and information session at the

headquarters. I also took the opportunities to attend three UNESCO-wide activities during the

length of the internship: one workshop on the prevention of violent extremism hosted by the

German national delegates in June, another global conference on Women Empowerment and

Leadership in June, and an internal launch of the 2017/18 Global Education Monitoring Report

in October. My informal tour and visit to the headquarters took place in August in preparation for the Summer School tour. We were introduced to the history, architecture, art collection, and organizational aspects of UNESCO, the information of which we then compiled into a guide brochure to be delivered to the 2017 summer school participants.

I took notes of most of these events and activities. In the notes, besides the basic information of time, venue, participants, and proceedings, I also paid attention to the important things the participants said, their feelings and reactions to the events, and the overall judgment or evaluation of these events' impacts on participants. I also from time to time inserted my judgments and interpretation in the notes to help me make better sense of the observation.

Semi-structured interviews

The second set of data collected for this study exists in the form of interviews. I was particularly fortunate to be given the task of reporting the gender mainstreaming progress of IIEP's internal activities. In this way, I was given access to key IIEP experts who conducted training activities in 2016–17 as part of their duties. Within this project, I interviewed 12 program specialists on the progress of gender mainstreaming in their work activities. Most of these interviews were helpful and engaging, and from which I proposed to have follow-up meetings with some of them to collect data for my project, to which six of them agreed. Because the first round of interviews was part of my official duties at IIEP, I did not record the conversations out of respect for the participants and the organization and only took summary

notes of our conversations. For the follow-up conversations, ranging from forty to eighty minutes each, I sought and obtained permission to record the conversations, and the transcriptions served as the main bulk of interview data. The list of questions I used across these interviews is included as Appendix 1. It should be noted, however, that during each interview, I tended to redirect the questions and ask new ones once I found an occasion emerging that would provide interesting findings; therefore, the list was at best not faithfully followed. Such instances could be easily tracked back and identified in the transcripts. In addition to the six in-depth interviews, I also had another discussion with an expert with decades-long experience in global education development and who had worked closely with IIEP in the past. I learned about some aspects of UNESCO's and IIEP's history from this conversation, as well as about the politics underlying global educational technical cooperation, which I kept notes of (*Interview 7*, personal communication, October 26, 2017). There are also notes of additional separate interviews with two of these IIEP experts on two different occasions. One was in June 2014 when I visited the institute for the first time and had a discussion with one of them on education and gender issues. The other was a follow-up interview I had with the Head of Technical Cooperation when we ran into each other at a conference in Mexico City in March 2018—five months after I left IIEP. In this conversation we talked about IIEP's organizational culture, its visions and strategies for growth, and the challenges that await the institute in the years to come.

The following table lists the interviews I conducted as part of the research, with their specified lengths, the formal roles of each expert, and their pseudonyms if they are mentioned elsewhere in the write-up:

Table 2: List of interviews

No.	Length	Date	Interviewee's role (and pseudonym if referenced elsewhere in the text)
1	1:18:36	2017-10-09	Program Specialist & Executive Officer, Director's Office
2	1:16:21	2017-10-16	Program Specialist, Training and Educational Program (Mirabelle)
2a		2014-04-16	(same person)
3	52:56	2017-10-16	Program Specialist, Research and Development
4	1:05:15	2017-10-20	Program Specialist, Technical Cooperation
5	56:31	2017-10-25	Program Specialist & Team Leader, Technical Cooperation
5a		2018-03-26	(same person)
6	38:29	2017-10-26	Program Specialist & Team Leader, Training and Educational Program (Jacques)
7		2017-11-09	Outside expert (independent consultant)

Besides these expert interviews, I also had informal, non-structured interviews with the participations of both the Summer School and the ATP during their time at IIEP. These conversations were later recalled and put into notes.

Document analysis

Being an intern at UNESCO-IIEP also gave me access to a large amount of texts produced by, on, and about the organization. These varied in types, ranging from official reports and policy memos to research publications and course materials to informal errand notes, emails, and text messages. These texts hold valuable information and serve as—besides a rightful source of

primary data on its own—a source of data triangulation that greatly complement, verify, and

enhance the observation and interview data that I simultaneously collected. Table 3 below lists

the key types of documents that were regularly referenced in this study. These documents

provide both a general historical overview of IIEP's role within the UN/ESCO network and its

day-to-day activities, relationships, and communications. They allow a look into the heart of

IIEP's core activities (e.g. project reports, research publications, training materials) as well as the

social and communal life within the institute (e.g. bulletin board announcements, emails, social

media posts).

Table 3: Types of documents referenced in the study

Type of document	Description	Examples
Formal organizational documents	Organizational founding texts, administrative documents from UNESCO and/or IIEP.	(IIEP, 2018a, 2018b; UNESCO, 1990, 2014a, 2014b; UNESCO et al., 2015)
Technical publications	Technical cooperation project reports, research reports and publications, training analyses and summary reports	(L. W. Anderson & Postlethwaite, 2006; Bropy, 2006; Grauwe & Naidoo, 2004; IIEP, 2014c; Poisson, 2010, 2014)
Informal organizational documents	Announcements, email, work notes, posts on social media	UNESCO's and IIEP's Facebook pages and Twitter handles, emails, announcements
Presentations and memos	Staff meeting presentations, team meeting memos	(IIEP Director's Office, 2017; IIEP Finance Department, 2017)
Training materials	Training handbooks and supplements (research publications)	(IIEP & GPE, 2015b, 2015a)

Analysis

I organized the data collected into the three categories of *observation*, which included

mostly observational field notes and artifacts; *interviews*, which were then transcribed; and

documents, which came in the forms of organizational publications, official documents, and

work-related communications—mostly emails. For the first round of analysis, I coded the

interview transcripts and observation notes to identify major emerging themes. There were two

rounds of coding: a first round of in vivo coding to identify major themes, and a focused coding

once the set of codes was developed. Except for the interview transcripts, which are quoted at

length throughout the chapters that follow, the observational notes and document analyses were

synthesized into textual and visual tools (e.g. vignettes, anecdotes, tables, figures) to supplement

the presentation of findings. All of the names used, if any, in the write-up are pseudonyms.

I then summarized the set of codes into a table (Appendix 2) and visualized them into a

map to show their relationships (Appendix 3). I grouped most of the major themes that emerged

under the two categories of (1) *equity* and (2) *the organization*. The first group deals with the

conceptualization of equity and includes topics such as gender *equity*, *poverty*, *crisis-sensitive*

education (*dimensions of equity*). The second group includes topics that are related to IIEP, such

as *technical cooperation* (*core technology*), *concessions and compromises* (*relationships > with*

countries), and so on. Below I present two examples of how the interview data were coded in each

group.

(1) EQUITY > REASONS FOR EQUITY > EGALITARIAN > POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION:

There is a general agreement [that] all children should have equal rights to education; there's general agreement [that] children and young adults and parents are in different positions, that some of them have very disadvantaged positions, including because of decades if not centuries of discrimination, and therefore there is a need for compensatory programs, there is a need for positive discrimination.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

(2) THE ORGANIZATION > CORE TECHNOLOGY > INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION:

As sensitized to some of the lessons that we have drawn from our research, we also do some training activities in different parts of the world based on the major outcomes of our research, and when we provide technical assistance, we can only be relevant if our advice is—I would say—enlightened by what we've been learning ourselves through the research.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Once all the materials had been coded, I aligned the codes with the orienting, analysis, and synthesis questions to warrant data and evidence for answering these questions. The data alignment is summarized in Appendix 4. The orienting questions are printed in bold and numbered numerically, while the analytic and synthesis questions are printed in regular and numbered alphabetically.

As an example, the code (1) POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION in the example above falls into the group of data that answers the Question 1.a., as it contributes to my understanding of how the interviewed expert conceptualizes and justifies equity in education. Likewise, example code (2) INTEGRATION AND COORDINATION presents as data for questions 2.f. and 2.h. since it describes elements of IIEP's core technology and how these elements interact with one another.

Finally, I reviewed all the coded segment relevant to research question 1 to synthesize chapters 4 and 5, using the sub-questions as guides for the thematic organization of these

chapters (chapter 4 on the configurations of the conceptualization and chapter 5 on the complexities associated with it). Likewise, the contents of chapters 6 and 7 are informed by the coded data that answered question 2. Data coded for questions 3 and 4 make up the synthesis of the final concluding chapter.

Validity

The finding chapters that follow mostly rely on interview data to structure and present the analysis. The reason is that the interview data are so much richer and more in depth than the other data collected. Even though within my duties and experiences as an intern I gained access to a variety of activities that laid the basis for my observations, they tend to be informational, limited in depth, and corroborating the interview evidence. The document analyses also support and confirm the points raised by the experts in the interviews.

Specifically, I rely mostly on the interviews to capture and describe the conceptualization of equity within the institute (chapter 4), since the concept is first and foremost understood and used by its members. The complexities and intricacies of this conceptualization (chapter 5) tend to play out in the work of IIEP, which is at times described using observation notes and vignettes. Document analyses point out where the conceptualization is textually problematic—that is— where there is a mismatch between equity discourse and equity practice.

The use of non-interview data is featured mostly in chapters 6 and 7, where I talk about the structure of IIEP and its environments. The observational vignettes describe the activities

taken within each department that I could capture. The documents lay out the institute's history, its mandates, and its visions and strategies.

Throughout the finding chapters, often evidence to support a claim is given from a single source, most commonly individual interviews. The reason for this study to rely heavily on interview data lies in their perceived strength of validity, the interviewees being internationally recognized experts in their problem areas and arguably the core component that make up the identity of the institute. There is also the problem of access and availability: I could only arrange interviews with at most two experts from each department. However, since many—if not all—of the interviewees are senior experts in administrative capacities and with leadership experiences, the visions and insights shared by them more or less reflect the official views of IIEP.

There is also an unarticulated sense of consensus in the variety of the data collected, in which what I capture from the interviews align with what I observe and what is widely shared and acknowledged in the institute, such as the views of interns or the understood arrangements of work in each department, which are not formally reflected as data in this study. Corroborating evidence, though present and numerous, is thus underrepresented in the findings. Furthermore, where disconfirming evidence is sought, I present it in the write-up.

Summary

The methodological descriptions above demonstrate the processes and procedures that follow the principles of organizational ethnography. I also bring theories, ideas, and constructs

from organizational theory to the analysis process, not just as points for discussion but as analytic codes that frame the presentation of findings in the following chapters. The use of organizational theory is therefore both essential and complementary to the ethnographic orientation of the design, and arguably an important contribution of this study from a methodological standpoint.

In the next four chapters, I give a descriptive account of the findings to these questions. Chapter 4 discusses the way equity is conceptualized and addressed in the work of the institute. This conceptualization is characterized with the diverse dimensions that characterize the work of individual experts. It incorporates the different processes, levels, and rationales behind the global call for equity in education. Chapter 5 looks further into the problems of equity to lay out some of the competing dilemmas that the institute deals with, due to the technical, ideological, social, and political complexities of the field. These problems and dilemmas both construct and constrain IIEP's strategies for advancing its work with countries, in some cases leading to contests and confrontations, while in others to concessions and compromises.

Chapter 6 describes the organizational features of IIEP in relation to this conceptualization of equity. It explains how the organizational structures, resources, and arrangement within and around the technical core characterize the diverse conceptualization of equity that the institute pursues. These internal elements are closely related to and interact with elements in IIEP's environments, which are described in Chapter 7. The interactions and exchanges between IIEP's institutional and technical environments demonstrate the complex

legitimacy—performance dynamics and are crucial to the understanding of the institute's actions

and strategies in the field.

CHAPTER 4. THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF EQUITY

This chapter begins with an examination of the idea of equity as conceptualized and articulated through the discourse and the work of the organizational members of IIEP, particularly of its experts. It approaches the idea on two levels. The first one—the organizational—questions how the organization as an entity understands and approaches equity in its work, through the discourse of its technical cooperation, research, training, publications, and how that is related to the concept of equity as approached and addressed by UN/ESCO—its grand/parent organization. The second level—the individual—explores how each individual expert conceptualizes and talks about equity through their areas of expertise, and how these varying dimensions and depths of meanings correspond to the larger conceptualization of equity in the organizational sense. The following discussion examines in greater depths and details the concept of equity as surfaced in the organizational discourse and expert interviews: the dimensions, processes, levels, and the rationale behind the call for education equity through their work. The conceptualization of equity in the organizational contexts of UNESCO-IIEP lays open insights into the inner workings of the institute, as well as the complex dynamics and politics in the field of global development assistance on education, which will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

Introduction

My five months of observation, participation, and interactions with participants in the field provided an insight into how IIEP as an organization and its members approach the concept of equity. As discussed in Chapter 2, the concept is generally characterized around the idea of justice stemming from different philosophical and ideological perspectives. At the organizational level, IIEP, as a grand/child of UN/ESCO, adopts a view of equity that has been prevalent in the

global discourse over the past decades: one that views education as a human right, a lever for development and economic growth, and a catalyst for peace and social harmony (UNESCO, 1990, 2000; UNICEF, 1989; United Nations, 1948). The global discourse also underlines the egalitarian perspective that every child should have equal opportunity to basic education regardless of their background and social standing, and thus promote a positive compensation approach to equity (UNESCO, 2009a, 2010). For IIEP, this conceptualization of equity is "relatively straightforward [and] not very difficult to agree to" (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). The individual conceptualizations, however, tend to embrace a diverse array of perspectives, not necessarily divergent from the organizational conceptualization, but reflecting the experience and expertise of each individual expert through their work in global education development assistance in ways that deepen our understanding of equity in practice.

Through my interviews with the experts there, the conceptualization of equity at UNESCO-IIEP came into view through different lenses, including through the dimensions of equity (educational disadvantages, gender equality, accountability and ethics, learning environments and outcomes), the process of education (access, resources, outcomes), and through the levels at which education equity is addressed (classroom, within school, and beyond school). These aspects of equity embolden the ontological grounds on which equity rationalizes and envision action paths towards achieving them.

Equity through the lens of organizational expertise

Institute

This section examines how equity is conceptualized and addressed rather homogenously

at the organizational (institute) level. Equity is undoubtedly an essential focus in the work of IIEP

and UNESCO. The Education sector of UNESCO compiles and publishes regular guidelines and

provides specific terminologies on the topic of equity. Some of those key publications, excluding

the annual *Education for All* reports and *Global Education Monitoring* reports which have been

commissioned to a special unit housed within UNESCO (Edwards et al., 2018; Wanner, 2015),

include those on the part of UNESCO (Delors, 1996; Sherman & Poirier, 2007; UNESCO,

2015b), and those published by IIEP (e.g. the Education Policy Series; Caillods, 1998; Duru-

Bellat, 2004; Tsang, 1994). During the time I was there, a guide on inclusion and equity in

education was published (UNESCO, 2017a), as well as the update of the Medium Term

Strategies, of which equity is a priority focus (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9,

2017). Since I left IIEP in November 2017, there have been several new publications on the topic,

such as the 2018 *Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education* published by UIS (UIS, 2018).

During an interview with one of the experts there I was referred to the internal guidelines on

equity and equality terminologies, which clarifies the differences between the key terms and calls

for unity in internal documentations and publications.

At first glance, the conceptualization of equity in the discourse embraced by UNESCO

and IIEP underlines a strong humanitarian approach to education. The call for equity relies on

the fundamental premise that education is a human right and thus should be provided to everyone regardless of their background and circumstances (United Nations, 1948). A quick look at the publications within the group of UNESCO presses reveals this emphasis. The 1990 *Global Declaration on Education for All*, the document that laid the groundwork for the twenty-five years of global development work on education that followed, reiterated the right stated in 1948 UN Declaration in its preamble (UNESCO, 1990). Its successor, the 2015 *Incheon Declaration* revisited this idea, affirming that "education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights" (UNESCO et al., 2015).

Beyond this humanitarian rationalization for equity in education, these documents also stress the importance of equity from an egalitarian perspective, acknowledging that many children face various barriers and challenges on their quest for learning and education. Such barriers and challenges may take roots in extreme poverty and socioeconomic inequalities (UNESCO, 2009a), in the social, political, economic, and cultural forces that marginalize people (UNESCO, 2010), in the social and cultural attitudes and discriminations towards genders (UNESCO, 2003a), in poor education governance and a lack of accountability and transparency on the part of governments (UNESCO, 2009a, 2017b), and in contexts where natural and man-made disasters jeopardize schooling and learning conditions (UNESCO, 2011). The commonly agreed mission in global development assistance has been one of positive compensation: to bridge these gaps and make education available to all, as the name of the first movement suggested (UNESCO, 2015a).

Beyond yet these humanitarian and egalitarian perspectives, the call for governments into action has also been characterized with social and economic interests: that there are strong and urgent social and economic incentives, on both personal and national levels, for policy and governance to address the equity issue in education. The *Jomtien Declaration* (UNESCO, 1990, p. 3) asserts "that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance, and international cooperation," while the Incheon Declaration reiterates education as "essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development" (UNESCO et al., 2015, p. 7).

The discourse of IIEP, presented in its official documents and its published works, fall well within these lines. Equity is embedded as a strategic vision in its mission statement, with its ninth *Medium Term Strategy* (2014—2017) listing four thematic strategies, all of which have to do with equity and equality, and the first one explicitly on "reduced social inequalities, particularly gender inequality" (IIEP, 2013, p. 9). The subsequent version of the document adds another priority on "equitable and sustainable financing of education" for the 2018—2021 period (IIEP, 2017a).

This conceptualization of equity is also reflected in IIEP training materials, one of the core components of its activities. One of the key principles in preparing an effective education sector plan identified in the *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation* stresses the importance of addressing disparities in the sector plan, stating that

[a] sector plan should recognize that, within a country, there may be significant gender differences between girls and boys and inequalities between groups of students in their participation in education and the quality of education they receive. These groups may be defined for instance by their location, their socio-economic or ethnic characteristics, or their abilities. A credible sector plan must identify and attend to gender considerations across the plan, including where gender disparities intersect with other sources of disparity, and address the specific needs and opportunities of different groups.

(IIEP & GPE, 2015b, p. 10)

A quick look at the institute's research works and publications over the course of its history yields the same observation: education equity in the sense of human right and social and economic egalitarianism has long been at the core of its work. Past and present works by IIEP experts all shed light on the importance of planning and developing inclusive and equitable education systems and addressing disparities in education (Berg, 2008; Caillods, 1998; Carron & Ta, 1981; Duru-Bellat, 2004; Hernes, 2007; IIEP, 1997; Inglis, 2008; International Working Group on Education, 1999; Poisson, 2010, 2014; Tsang, 1994).

The interview experts also acknowledged and associated themselves with this common view of equity and equality. One senior expert in the technical cooperation department summed up the idea of equity as it plays out in the global discourse:

The global scenario is relatively straightforward: equity is a [major] objective. […] There is a general agreement [that] all children should have equal rights to education; there's [a] general agreement [that] children and young adults and parents are in different positions, that some of them have very disadvantaged positions, including because of decades if not centuries of discrimination, and therefore there is a need for compensatory programs—there is a need for positive discrimination.

To this general agreement here within the institute I think that [it]'s only particularly important that the role of the public service is precisely to support those who are the weakest in society, when the public service—knowing that no public service can respond to all the

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demands within society—it needs to put its resources first, or it needs to direct its resources to the [weakest].

This is reflected in the SDG 4, this is reflected in international agreements, and it is a set of values let's say that we strongly defend—that's the global agenda, and that's not very difficult to agree to.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Reiterating this general agreement, a senior expert in the training department described the focus of the institute's work on training over the years:

[…] I think equity—it's one of the lenses that you do use when you do education sector analysis. You're obviously going to look at things like internal efficiency, external efficiency, quality learning, and so on, but one of the lenses that you apply [is the] equity lens.

And I think it's quite systematically applied in terms of analysis [in] relating factors such as poverty and gender in particular [to] access and participation in education—I think we apply it quite systematically; [...] also in terms of those aspects applying it to education assessment because we have a long standing relationship with SACMEQ—the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality—so I also think we look at learning—we've been looking at learning through the equity lens.

To some extent, [for] many years I think the areas [where] we need to do more and—as you know—[where] we've been developing materials recently is looking at some of the other disadvantaged groups or marginalized groups, particularly children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, linguistic minorities and so on, and we're also intending to look more at migration in future because as you know it's a huge issue so that's also an equity issue.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

To conclude, the institutionalized discourse on equity at UNESCO and IIEP is consistent and in agreement with the global conceptualizations of equity as characterized in the discourse of *Education for All* and *Global Education Monitoring* reports. These characterizations call for greater gender equality and increased support towards disadvantaged groups, stressing education as both a basic human right and a driver for economic growth and social harmony. This

consistent and homogenous line of conceptualization on the surface aligns the work of IIEP with

the way the global community identifies, prioritizes, and organizes work towards equity and

equality in education.

Individual

When it comes to the individual level, the conceptualization of equity among the

members of IIEP is filled with varying depths and colors. The interviewed experts demonstrated

varying levels of acknowledgement and knowledge of different equity problems as they are

related to their experiences and their expertise. One interviewee addressed my questions on the

conceptualization of equity entirely from the perspective of gender equity, whereas another

viewed equity mostly from the lens of governance transparency and corruption. Some experts

pay greater attention and place greater emphases on pro-poor incentives and positive

discrimination towards the economically disadvantaged, while some would structure their

conversations on equity around disabilities and the need for more inclusivity in education. The

following discussions shed light on some of such dimensions to portray the complex and diverse

ideas around equity.

Equity penetrates the work of education planning in general, but also surfaces in the areas

of interest and expertise that these experts identify themselves with. Throughout our

conversations, one expert whose work has centered on gender equity and equality approached

the concept of equity almost entirely through gender issues, such as differences in learning

outcomes between boys and girls, access to education for girls, and gender relations and sexual harassments within schools (*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017; *Interview 2a*, personal communication, June 4, 2014). Another expert, whose work focuses on corruption, transparency, and accountability in governance systems approach equity explicitly from these lenses (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). Yet another expert who in the past had worked intensively on students with disabilities refer often to equity as providing equal opportunities for students with disabilities and disadvantages (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017). These lenses and perspectives both add diversity to the way equity is conceptualized and talk about within the institute and convey richness and depth to such conceptualizations. It is not that these experts are not aware of their rather partial views of the concept, but they acknowledge it for the depth they wish to bring to understanding the issues:

> *And then of course [we] always think you know—well in my case I have been only talking about gender, but the gender within other kinds of inequality [variables] is something that we don't do enough, so [even] within the research angle I think that is something that we should be doing more.*
>
> (*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Likewise, the narrow scope of the topic of ethics, accountability, corruption, and transparency—the research focus of another interviewee—was acknowledged in relation to the broader concept of equity in our conversation. Nevertheless, because they have a direct impact on the educational experiences of children, these issues are inherently and deeply connected to equity issues, as explained by the expert:

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And […] now I'm working on the issue of transparency, accountability, and fight against corruption in education; and so well the main topic is not only the topic of equity of course, but this is part of the of the subject.

Because one of the things that you see when you look at corruption issues, these two—well quite often it's the most disadvantage—those who do not have the connections within societies, those from the poorest social economic background—that are the first victims of corruption, and so that's one also of the lines that we are trying to analyze as part of this research.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Equity, in these instances, is tangled and embedded within different facets of educational planning. Foci like gender, transparency and accountability, crisis-sensitive planning, which at first sight may seem independent separate from equity, are in fact intricately linked to the concept through different mechanisms. Together, these different facets bring up a broader view of educational planning and management, from which equity also emerges panoramically, where gender disparity, socioeconomic inequalities, systemic corruption, and sociopolitical crises often intersect and interact.

This part—whole relationship between a consistent and homogenous agreement on equity and the fragmented, in-depth knowledge and understanding portrays an interesting characteristic of the technical composition of IIEP. On the one hand, it allows for organizational uniformity and adherence to the global discourse on education equity, especially from its grand/parent organizations of UN/ESCO; on the other, it affords the technical expertise, the knowledge, and the competencies to carry out its work within the complexities of education planning in the field, which will be the topic for exploration in Chapter 5. One expert in a

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managerial role explains the affordances of approaching equity from different dimensions with

in-depth technical focus, in contrast to approaching the issue as a single policy focus:

> *[E]quity has many dimensions, so we have plenty of implications that deal with equity—different aspects of equity. But whether there is a—like a condensed—a condensed—I have the word in French—publication that would that would look at all [the] different aspects of equity, or the main types of policies—main types of inequities in terms of policies and so on—I don't think we have. I don't think we have.*
>
> *I'm even wondering to what extent—well a publication—such a publication would have to be very sketchy because it couldn't and couldn't go in any details. If you just take gender inequities, that's already work for all the people who are working in this house. But it wouldn't be a bad idea to have yes something for policy makers that captures of the main—the main points.*
>
> *But you know we do so many things. Maybe we have this. I'm just not aware.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

The organizational structure of IIEP whereby each expert undertakes the three different

roles of research, training, and technical cooperation also allows for the dual benefits of

organizational knowledge and learning and strengthening and developing individual expertise.

Although it may pose a bit of a challenge for communication and knowledge sharing (*Interview

5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018), it is nevertheless an effective strategy for

organizational adaptation and survival (Hasenfeld, 2010; Scott & Davis, 2007). The next part

looks at these deep and diverse ideas and understandings of equity in an attempt to piece them

together into a broader, more general concept that bears the organizational identity of IIEP.

Intermediary

   Between the organizational and the individual conceptualizations of equity lies an intermediary space in which these views come to interact. The commonly agreed idea of equity in the global discourse mentioned earlier is often not widely discussed among the members of the institute, partly because it is quite straightforward and easy to agree to on a surface level that questions are not frequently raised on the topic, even when equity is embedded within the institute's thematic priorities and when its members deal with equity issues in their work on a daily basis.

   Another issue that came up in my interviews with the experts concerned the meanings of equity-related terms. The distinctions between *equity* and *equality* notwithstanding, I found that these two terms were sometimes understood and used interchangeably in my conversations with many of the experts. Two of them asked me early in our conversations what I interpreted of *equity* and *equality*, and one of them referred to a guide circulated within UNESCO—as part of its work on gender equity—on how to correctly use the terms. In this guide, *equality* is defined as the desired outcome of education policy, whereby different groups and individuals receive equal treatment and recognition, but due to the varied circumstances that different groups and individuals face, they need varied treatments and assistances in order to arrive at that outcome, which in turn defines *equity* (UNESCO, 2003b). Another expert acknowledged the distinction between the terms and the possibility of confusing them:

I may from time to time confuse in in our conversation equity and equality. I know there's a difference and I to a large extent understand the difference: […] equality being the objective, equity being the strategies to achieve those objectives or the approach to achieve those objectives.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The reason for the confusion in using the terms lies at the heart of global technical cooperation work on education, where organizations interact and their technical languages intersect. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for example, discusses education equity in many of its publications (OECD, 1993, 2012; Schleicher, 2009, 2014), in which it has consistently defined *equity* in terms of *fairness* and *inclusion* (Field et al., 2007; OECD, 2012; Schleicher, 2014). When organizations bring to the field their own conceptualizations and interpretations of the terms, it becomes harder and more frustrating for fruitful communication to come across:

[The different meanings and uses are] what I noticed in most of the learning materials [and how] this kind of work is changing my perspective. Well, frustrating, because the big brothers like OECD and the World Bank—they use the word equity [quite differently].

And people like us who are using a lot of works done by them are of course adapting that kind of [use]. So well how did that change my perspective? Well I am more careful about what I use—that's one of the changes; and I should be more careful about pointing out other people's work—you know when OECD and World Bank [do] and [say] some things in certain ways, but for UNESCO to change their way of calling things, that's [different].

But you know—I don't know if that falls into your category of [how did that] change—and more and more it's frustrating.

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Differences among organizations notwithstanding, the issues are even more frustrating when it comes to translation and interpretation of terminologies across languages, the challenges

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of which have often hindered the work of development assistance. Another expert remarked on

the difficulties of working through language barriers in technical cooperation, which would

without doubt affect conversations on equity:

> *It's still [a communication] issue, and I have difficulties convincing some of my colleagues here how important it is because we continue to have the same issues now you know. People tend to think translation is appropriate, but de facto you know when you're dealing with languages like Thai or Vietnamese or Khmer, it's a language [of] development issue—very often so.*
>
> (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

This linguistic issue presents a challenge for IIEP, simply because it works with many

different countries. Although its research, training, and technical cooperation work is conducted

mostly in English (and sometimes French), its technical focus on system planning requires the

knowledge to be transferred to and applied in other languages, and the institute has not yet the

resources for this. The experts mostly rely on in-country resources for the translation and

application of this technical knowledge, but as the excerpt above clarifies, the technicalities of

development language are an issue—very often so. This suggests that equity issues in educational

planning may be simple and straightforward in the source language, but their meanings may be

altered or compromised in certain target languages, absent good translation.

The difficulties in conceptualizing and materializing equity in the work of IIEP are

further demonstrated in the following vignette of a training preparation meeting, where

participants grabble over incorporating equity issues in education sector planning—the core

technical focus of its training activities.

Equity in or through educational planning: an observation

I was asked to attend a preparation meeting for an upcoming training program in partnership with the European Union (EU). The EU was to host a global meeting of education advisors—those working in headquarters and field offices all over the world—to provide an update on the state of global development work on education. The meeting was planned as a response to criticisms often directed at the EU as distant, bureaucratic, and not engaged or updated with country progress. The first three days of the meeting would be devoted to training, with thematic foci on digitalization, innovation, cost affordability, equity, disabilities, and linguistic minorities. UNESCO-IIEP has been identified as the training partner and have agreed with the EU on a training contract that would take place early the following month in Brussels.

Present at the meeting were Jacques, Simona, Allemand, and myself. Our task was to outline a plan for the upcoming training program, which will take place within the first three days of the global meeting and will involve about 70 participants. The EU had just sent their TOA to the institute and the four of us were basing our plans on these terms.

Jacques had just joined the training department at the beginning of the year, having arrived at UNESCO-IIEP from another global organization, where he had worked in its education programs and had held positions from field consultants, experts, and head of units and regional offices throughout his 20 years there. Simona, in contrast, had been at the training department for several years. While Jacques was more senior in terms of both position and experiences, Simona appeared to be more familiar with the work within the department.

I was asked to work on this project upon Jacques's suggestion and Mirabelle's agreement, after the successful completion of the year's summer school, which she hosted, and which drew praise from the institute leadership. Allemand had just arrived that day at the institute as an intern assisting Jacques on this project and I did not know much about him at that time except that he was in the second year of his Master's degree in International Development at a major institute of higher education in town.

The training team to participate in this project would include Jacques, Pierre from technical cooperation, and Simona. Between that time and the date of the training they were expected to come up with a training program that would fill the first three days of the meeting, and training materials to be delivered to participants. Although the participants were not necessarily experts on education planning and management, most if not all of them have had experiences working on education development in various capacities and in different contexts in developing countries.

The four of us discussed ways to proceed from the EU TOA. It seems that IIEP has delivered similar training programs before, and they have developed a well-documented program with training materials that can meet such demands from partners. Simona suggested that we use the core of this training program to proceed and make changes here and there to meet specific demands from the TOA. Jacques on the other hand suggested that we replace the training program with a new one, or at least change it fundamentally since it had been used for several years and the information had been a bit outdated. The specific changes that he suggested were to include a conceptual discussion on equity in education, where they would need my help, and to develop a new country case with updated data on each of the themes, where they would need Allemand's.

Simona seemed a bit reserved about the idea of making fundamental changes to the training program, especially on making the idea of equity and inclusion explicit because many of its components have already discussed equity. She suggested paying attention to other requirements raised in the TOA, which centered on educational technology. Jacques suggested not to place too much focus on technology alone since the institute did not have much resource or expertise on that area, but to combine the technology and equity foci into a common issue, such as how technology could bridge the equity gap by supporting students with disabilities, for example.

We did not seem to have reached an agreement on the details of the training program after this first meeting, the outcome of which was for Allemand to work with Simona to develop a new country case study based on the format of the previously used one and updated data from another country. As for me, I would write up a conceptual discussion of equity in education for Jacques, where I would identify and raise equity issues, and to then compact it into the form of a presentation, which he would edit and use at an upcoming conference in Johannesburg.

In many ways the diverging suggestions between Jacques and Simona reflects interesting dilemmas of equity issues within the institute. Even though equity issues are high on the thematic priorities of its strategy, the way it is internalized and reflected in the work of its individual members vary. For some, like Jacques, there is a need to make the issues explicit and address them in the focus of a single lens. For others, like Simona, the preferred treatment would be to embed them within the technical aspects of education planning. On the one hand, this presents a

thematic—technical choice that the experts face in their work, while on the other, it demonstrates the varying orders of importance and focus each expert placed on equity. This problem is similarly reflected in the interviews I had with training experts on gender mainstreaming, which will be detailed and discussed as a separate case.

The extent to which the explicit—integrated and the thematic—technical dilemmas are connected to the part—whole conceptualization puzzle requires some examination. The puzzle is complicated, and it reflects yet another dilemma peculiar to the organizational identity of IIEP: the unending compromise between a diversification of issues and a desired depth of expertise. With many of its experts invested in great depths in a diverse array of knowledge and research fields under the umbrella of education planning, attempts at coordination may seem challenging. It is true that the parts make up the whole, but for the parts to come together as a whole calls for skilled leadership and coherent shared understanding throughout the institute.

These dilemmas also paint a contrast between an arrangement-focused and a realization-focused approach to equity (Sen, 2009)—another perpetuating dilemma—in this case through the technical lens of the institute's expertise. Here the experts are faced with a choice between approaching and addressing equity as if it were a priority in the institute's missions and strategies on the one hand and, on the other, integrating it in their technical work to the extent that they are technically comfortable (and competent) to do so. This is not an easy choice to make, especially when the work of technical cooperation often comes with resource constraints and time pressure. The extent to which incidences like this one contribute to the notion of

organizational decoupling (J. W. Meyer et al., 1980; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977), however,

merits a closer investigation. Decoupling, in such an instance, would mean that IIEP deliberately

buffers its core activities from market demands and adhere them to institutional pressures, which

is to say, as an UN/ESCO entity that has every reason to care about equity. In other words, IIEP

would choose to prioritize equity only on paper and would conveniently sidestep these issues in

its work. The institute is, on the contrary, committed to addressing the issues and problems of

equity through its work; it needs, however, to build up its capacity to bring up equity discussions

above and beyond the technical foci of its experts and to coordinate its resources more effectively

towards this end.

The dimensions of equity

The componential ideas of equity were characterized through the individual experts'

mentions of the areas of work they focus on. These experts view equity through gender, system

financing, ethics, corruption accountability, poverty, and learning environments, to name a few. I

also note the points where these componential views converge and contrast with one another and

the problems they might pose to the work of educational planning. The dilemmas and

complexities emerging from these conceptualizations are discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

Education for the disadvantaged

A lot of the conversations on and around equity center on the disadvantaged. That is because the commonly shared conception of equity within IIEP is one that agrees with positive compensation. This is demonstrated in the attention IIEP paid to certain disadvantaged groups and its efforts to accumulate such attention into its strategies and its technical programs. One of such focus is education for refugees and children affected by wars and conflicts, under the auspice of crisis-sensitive planning:

> *We have also developed over the years—past fifteen years, basically fifteen—twenty years— a very strong comparative advantage with regard to—let's call it education in emergencies—and now we call it resilience of education systems through crisis-sensitive planning.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

> *[…] It's present in our in our midterm strategy; it's present in our discourse as I said already. I think [many] of us really do care about that perspective for instance, from this year onward—so around now but also the next two or three years, we will put a major focus on education for refugees, because you could argue that the refugees are internally displaced persons but especially refugees are indeed the most disadvantaged people on earth—so [the midterm strategy] does show a response to that.*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Educational planning for disadvantaged groups has long been a focus at IIEP, built into its operational agenda and reflected in its organizational discourse. What should be noted from the conversations above is that from the general discourse, including this piece of research, sometimes such language as *medium-term strategies* may appear as if the work on equity by IIEP conveniently "falls into" or "follows" the broader, more general global trends and discourses of

equity in education. This could be largely misleading and oblivious of IIEP's role as a pioneering

research and training institute. A quick look at the publication history of the institute reveals that

many of the issues around equity has been part of the institute's research and knowledge

repertoire for almost the entirety of its existence (IIEP, 2019a). Many of its experts, past and

present, such as N. V. Varghese or T. Neville Postlethwaite, have been leading voices and

advocates on education for the disadvantaged through their work and their affiliations with a

wide range of global missions prior to or during their tenure at IIEP. This is reiterated through

my conversation with an expert in an administrative role, who reminded that another senior

expert at the institute "did not wait fifteen years to start working on quality issues" (*Interview 1*,

personal communication, October 9, 2017).

The notion of disadvantage extends from education for children in conflicts and crises

onto education for children in poverty, children of ethnic or linguistic minority, and girls in

places where gender discrimination is prevalent. This dimension of equity permeates both the

organizational discourse and technical aspects in my conversations with the experts. The

medium-term strategies for both 2014—2017 and 2018—2021 identify as the first thematic

priority to address and reduce social inequalities (IIEP, 2013) and educational disparities (IIEP,

2017a). The work of IIEP in the past decades have placed a lot of emphasis on these groups, as

discussed above and as recounted by the experts in these interviews:

> *To some extent, [for] many years—I think the areas [where] we need to do more and, as*
> *you know, [where] we've been developing materials recently is looking at some of the other*
> *disadvantaged groups or marginalized groups, particularly children with disabilities, ethnic*

minorities, linguistic minorities and so on, and we're also intending to look more at
migration in future because as you know it's a huge issue so that's also an equity issue.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

And so the topic of equity if you have a look at twelve past activities of IIEP you would see
what was included as part of our research work; for instance we have—as I mentioned
already—this research on the alternative education strategies for the disadvantaged some
years ago. [My colleague] whom you know also conducted a number of research activity
related to this one: gender [issue] is one aspect of it that has been a twist as part of our
research.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Not only does equity for disadvantaged groups stand alone as a single focus, it is also

deeply embedded in the technical aspects of the work of the organization. This perhaps explains

the disagreement between Jacques and Simona: the former was approaching equity as a single

phenomenon to be addressed by the work to be redesigned while the latter sees it as part of the

technical work to be redesigned. One interview reveals how the focus on disadvantaged and

marginalized groups informs and guides the technical work of education planning and

information system management:

And then as part of our technical assistance work maybe it's a bit more diluted the way we
put the emphasis on equity issues, but certainly for instance my colleagues working on EMIS
or school mapping are going to check that there are a number of indicators that are
included that look at specific categories of the population that are considered more
disadvantaged than others, so that this is part of the monitoring that is being made.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

This again speaks to the institute's approach to equity through its technical facets: that

disadvantages in education is evidenced, monitored, and addressed through the techniques and

tools of educational planning. For IIEP to approach equity from a technical standpoint does bring complications. It is true that the work of education planning and system management does have to answer many questions about different aspects of equity, with student learning as a measure of system quality one of them, but it is also true that bringing those questions together in a greater purview constitute problems whose scope usually outgrow the technical mandate and authority of the institute. Nevertheless, even within the jurisdictions of IIEP's technical profile, equity questions are often complex and puzzling enough to complicate the travaux of its experts.

Ethics, corruption, transparency, and accountability

The point that in-depth technical knowledge in each research area may help deepen the collective understanding and initiate organizational responses to equity is illustrated in the use of data tracking systems that IIEP has developed in collaboration with countries to monitor and address transparency and corruption in educational governance. One of such instances comes with the development of PETS (Public Expenditure Tracking Survey):

> *Well I can just give you one the specific example: for instance at some point we've paid attention to the issue of public expenditure tracking surveys—the PETS—and if you look at the results of some of the PETS that were conducted, you would see that sometimes they were interesting findings regarding equity issues.*
>
> *So the PETS allow you to track your resources from the central level down to the schools and to calculate the percentage of leakage within the system, and so you have some PETS like the very initial one that was conducted in [an African country] which showed that the small schools—rural schools—where the pupils were coming from the most disadvantaged backgrounds [were] missing the qualified staff. They were more or less receiving nothing from the government, while the big schools with more well-off parents, qualified teachers,*

they were receiving at least […] some part of what they were supposed to receive, even if they were not received one hundred percent of it.

And so clearly where there was a disadvantage here and equity issues where it was the most disadvantaged that were getting less into the system—so that's one way. We had in another study for instance that was dealing with the issue of school meals in [a South American country]. And so all those school meals were supposed to be free for the most disadvantaged of the population, and then when there was an evaluation that was made it was shown that in fact the most disadvantaged was not those who are benefiting from it, and sometimes it was [the] more medium level [populations] for different reasons who [are] benefiting from them free of charge.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

This example explains how a technical focus on governance, transparency, corruption, and accountability would identify and highlight equity issues in education systems, and how the enactment of some equity policies often perpetuates inequalities rather than ameliorating them. Because issues such as those are deeply embedded in intricate webs of social, economic, political, and cultural contexts, approaching them from a public governance perspective and through the technical knowledge and practice of education planning would inherently enrich the collective knowledge and understanding of educational equity from an organizational standpoint.

And such a focus is both broad and deep. The umbrella under which research is conducted in this area has been continuously expanding within the past fifteen years. Focus has been given to developing codes of ethics and codes of conduct, tracking public expenditure, developing and strengthening audit mechanisms through collaborations with partner countries. The interviewed expert explained how the program of research has grown within IIEP during the past fifteen years:

So the work on ethics and corruption is something that started in 2003—let's say—and that is still going on, but with many different projects under the big headings of ethics and corruption. So when we started, for instance, we've got quite a lot on the issue of Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys—the different types of tools that can be used to assess corruption issues in the systems—on Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys, on the Report Card Surveys.

Then we try to focus on strategies that have been implemented by countries to improve transparency and accountability in different domains. Then we have a special project on the issue of teacher codes of ethics and teacher codes of conduct. Then we had this specific project here on the issue of proper incentives, and now I'm working on another topic and that is related one but which is on the issue of open data within education systems.

So it's a kind of broad umbrella on the transparency accountability anti-corruption issues we have been working on now for more than fifteen years, but within this big umbrella there has been many different sub-projects—if you will—that have been developed and during this this general umbrella.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Part of the research on policy, governance, corruption and transparency address the issue of education financing, a central issue in education planning. By putting the pieces together, the technical aspects of these research programs shed light on equity issues that might otherwise be overlooked or underestimated from a policy standpoint:

So by having a precise picture of how education is financed in a country, sometimes the findings are really shocking: you see that it's actually the families who are bearing most of the load of the funding of education, which obviously makes a difference between those who have resources and those who don't.

So it's a very—it's a very surgical way to want to see where there are inequities. If sixty percent of education is financed by families, that means that this x-many percent of families which are below that threshold actually can't afford to have education, so that's the share of the population that is to be targeted for equity policies.

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

These instances reveal that even when the foci on equity initiated at IIEP may seem rather

fragmented and too much into technical depth, they afford at a deeper level understandings into

the problems and issues of equity and bring up helpful policy insights to effectively aid their work

of training and technical cooperation with countries. This is precisely the strength of the

institute: by approaching and studying equity in "the finer grains of analysis" (*Interview 1*,

personal communication, October 9, 2017), its experts can afford to capture and single out the

complexities and nuances of equity that would otherwise be overlooked from a more general and

holistic view.

Gender

Apart from the gender mainstreaming of IIEP activities, an institute-wide focus initiated

in concert with the UN/ESCO guidance and coordination which will be discussed in Chapter 6,

gender equity as an educational objective is also reflected on and discussed in IIEP's work. The

issue surfaces my conversations with the experts as a concern over a lack of emphasis on gender

disparities in education quality. Gender disparities have traditionally been addressed as unequal

access to education between boys and girls, and while this is still true in many country contexts, a

policy shift is proposed to turn attention to disparities in the quality of education they receive.

The gender expert expressed:

> [T]here was a gender [emphasis] also in the Dakar framework, but not much on learning,
> although the goal six [of the Dakar framework] had something about the quality of
> education and there was no definition about [gender disparities in learning]. It was the

quality of education and learning and what do we mean by having a quality education, so
gender discourse was still on sending [girls] to school.

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

It can, however, be misleading if the issue of gender is addressed in a standalone focus.

The issues of equity, as explained in the cases above, are often complex and intertwined. The

interviewed expert working on ethics and corruption refers to the instances of how work on

corruption and transparency can reveal such issues related to gender as sexual harassment in

schools (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). That is reiterated in a

comment by the gender expert on how gender issues should be studied and addressed in relation

to other equity issues:

And so—of course as I said there's always—in the countries that report there's always
regional differences, there's gender differences, the difference between the socioeconomic
levels, groupings, and the school locations—one at a time. And then also we try to combine
those variables and then try to see the gender differences in different socioeconomic or in
different school locations.

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

The complex interplay of these variables is further explored in a large-scale study to be

mentioned in Chapter 5, in which the way gender and other variables interact complicates

observations and understandings of equity across country contexts. The complexity of these

interactions also spells difficulties for the work of education planning, which relies substantially

on the analysis of the relationships of such variables. Another example from the same expert

highlights the complexity of data collection and the limitations of the data collected to effectively

measure and reflect the reality of gender issues in context, with the case of sexual harassment in

point:

> *And there was this interesting question about sexual harassment, although the way that is asked has a limitation because that does not say anything about whether the victims or the [perpetuators] are the men or the women or the girl or boy. Just by looking at how often this school heads will have to deal with it is already a kind of the first-hand question— information.*
>
> *What is also interesting would be [that] this kind of question is based on the perception of the school heads, and then if the school heads think that they are dealing with certain problems, that means they're worse than [the] reporting going on, and if something was reported, that tend to be the schools [that are] more open about this kind of problem.*

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

The case outlined above also sheds light on another issue inherent to the technical

limitations of work on global education planning: often it studies equity issues from a macro

policy-oriented perspective, relying almost extensively on large-scale measurements and large-

scale quantitative analyses, the nature and process of which usually do not afford a close enough

look into the roots and characteristics of the equity issues. This is coupled with the questions of

validity and reliability of their measurements—issues inherent in their methodological approach.

This methodological compromise lies in the very *raison d'être* of the institute: its organizational

mandate does not allow it to conduct work on lower, more focused aspects of education, such as

pedagogy or teacher education, which are often the declared domains of other UNESCO

institutes. This posits a peculiar dilemma that the institute often has to face in its work, and

which will be revisited in Chapter 5.

Learning environments and learning outcomes

Among the most visible evidence of UNESCO-IIEP's dedicated attention to learning

outcomes is documented in the thematic priorities of its Medium-Term Strategies (MTS). The

9th and 10th versions of the text, which lay down visions for the period 2014—2021, both place

"improved cognitive and non-cognitive learning outcomes" as the second thematic priority.

Furthermore, the 10th MTS takes an extra step in identifying "educational disparities" as the

target of its first thematic priority, narrowing down from "social disparities" in the previous

version. This easily recognizable change implies a shift from addressing social disparities by

improving access to education for disadvantaged children to more focused questions on the

quality of education that these children receive. A quick comparison of the texts of the two

versions reveal this: while the priority in the 9th MTS primarily concerns providing every child

with a fair chance of receiving education (IIEP, 2013, p. 10), the later version explores further the

implications for education planning beyond getting them to school (IIEP, 2017a, p. 7). A 2005

policy guide published by the institute describes the shift:

> *Educational opportunity, an extension of civil rights and economic inclusion, has been*
> *redefined: concerns for equal access and treatment have been replaced with an emphasis on*
> *equal attainment. To have equal attainment, however, variations in access and,*
> *particularly, treatment must be available to meet the needs of increasingly diverse*
> *populations of students.*
>
> (J. A. Anderson, 2005)

It is easy to acknowledge the shift, which has come with much fanfare in the policy

discourse from the global to the local. It is a move agreed upon across political and ideological

groups, and it shifts the global equity focus from getting children into and out of school to providing them with quality education in the process:

> *[…] I think this is quite interesting because even the different political groups who talk about inclusion and equity now, a lot of them agree that you have to look at learning, and therefore that is in a sense it's forcing more this equality agenda: it's not sufficient just to get the kids in school [and make] sure they finish like the MDG 2, but they have to learn something.*
>
> (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

This shift of focus does not necessarily equate a shift in the evolution of work, however. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, the work of IIEP within the past decades has paid consistent attention to learning outcomes and the quality of education. The focus of education planning—the soul of IIEP's work—centers on promoting effective policy and practice for improved education quality (IIEP, 2014c). The numerous publications rolling out of the institute press since its founding have tried in different ways to answer the question of improving quality. The second thematic priority of its most recent medium-term strategies explicitly addresses educational outcomes. Whereas outcomes for its 9th MTS are targeted as the learning needs of youth and teacher quality and careers (IIEP, 2013, p. 10), the 10th MTS aligns educational outcomes closely with the global *Education 2030* agenda, paying greater attention to skills for work (SDG 4.4) and education for sustainable development and global citizenship (SDG 4.7) while examining more closely the link between quality education and better opportunities for future economic participation (IIEP, 2017a, p. 8).

These aims, as relatively simple and straightforward as they may appear, are however not easy to approach within the technical jurisdiction of IIEP, in part because of the arbitrary nature of measuring quality, and also in part because the blatant inequalities entangling educational outcomes. Addressing learning outcomes inevitably requires addressing such inequalities in the first place:

> *And [with] the dimension [of] improve cognitive and non-cognitive education outcomes: this priority was already there, but we didn't do much in the past strategy; now you want to really do more. Basically the rationale is [that] there's plenty of learning data out there— there is so much that people are actually lost in it: they don't know what to do with it [and] they don't know how to do something with it.*
>
> *So we're going to give this approach using national learning achievement studies— international and national exam results which are normally nothing—nothing [was] used. Generally they just looked at the national level: oh okay kids are doing well on the whole or doing bad on the whole, but you don't look through: These are aggregated by region, and within the region by districts—that would show the blatant inequalities.*
>
> *Well it so happens that everything in this province—all the kids [who are] living in or nearby the urban center [are] doing really well, but those who are in remote rural areas, especially when they are girls, their results are very low, and they all drop out after two years or three years of primary schooling.*
>
> *So this is where you know you go look for inequities.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

The complexity of equity lenses between these different levels of analysis is well studied. Past and current work of IIEP has placed an emphasis on this distinction. Large-scale country studies conducted by the experts at the institute have attempted "to see whether the learning environment as well as the school environment and the home environment were equally distributed or given or provided among different groups of people, and then to see [whether] the outcomes are equal or not equal" (*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). The

major theme for 2018 training programs was inclusion, which covered not only access to education for the disadvantaged but also quality of the education they receive as well, the idea of which was laid down during an interview I had with the head of the training department:

> *So to have to really achieve inclusion and meaningful inclusion you've not only got to ensure that children with disabilities are in the class but you've also got to ensure that they have the right support to learn effectively, and that's a big challenge.*
>
> (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

That conviction did turn into action. Inclusion permeated major training activities at the institute in 2018, with planning for inclusive education for students with disabilities a focus of the summer programs.

Compounding, confounding, coherence, and context

The many dimensions mentioned and discussed in these conversations are but a few of the varied aspects of equity and inequity, which in reality often appears much more complex and difficult to deal with. Often these dimensions compound and confound to bring new problems and understanding of problems for the experts. The following example from a country in Asia demonstrates how growing social trends in a developing economy may bring new meanings and new implications to addressing equity in education:

> *But of course, there are socioeconomic [inequalities]. The socioeconomic ones are sometimes linked to geographic ones—rural or urban—but also single-parent families who have a whole new trend for migration—external migration and internal migration. It is so important that you have basically kids left with one parent, or you have kids left with the grandparents. Think of [this Asian country where the] head of household or both parents*

working in the cities, and kids, not being able to enroll in school in the cities, having to stay back in the countryside, so [there are] whole generations which are raised in conditions which make it a bit harder.

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

On the other hand, the separated in-depth focus on different aspects of education planning does not necessary negate the chances of crafting a coherent understanding of and encouraging actions on equity. The following exchange exemplifies the frequency at which equity issues overlap and intersect, and how work on one topic will inherently lead to knowledge and insights into another:

> *Well part of our work is on corruption issues, but part of our work is also on ethical issues, and so we've been working, for instance, on the issue of teacher codes of conduct—code of ethics—and in this case working more on the behaviors and on the relationship between especially the teachers and the pupils.*
>
> *And it's clear that's one of the issues for instance that come out—that can come out for this—issues that link to violence sometimes or verbal harassment or sexual harassment even of some of the pupils. So sometimes these bring us back to the issue of gender again—but not only gender—it can be also an issue related to the fact that because you come from one given minority, you are from one religious group, or whatsoever, you feel that you are not fully—your rights are not really respected at school or at home.*

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

It may seem as if a focus on corruption and transparency would have little to do with such equity issues as gender, minority, or disadvantaged groups, but these issues are inherently tightly connected, and therefore by having a team of experts working on each of these issues in great technical depth and in all three technical roles (research, training, and technical cooperation), conversations are facilitated and understandings deepened within the institute.

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These shared conversations and understandings, nevertheless, are heavily characterized by the contexts in which the work is conducted. Since IIEP works in collaboration with many countries whose social, cultural, political and economic profiles vary significantly, the diversity of equity issues and the sources of such issues also vary significantly. The same phenomenon of low school attendance for girls, for example, might be due to cultural beliefs and practices in one setting, or lack of social and economic incentives in another. As explained in the statement below, developing codes of conduct for teachers must take into account the issue of context for very similar reasons:

> *And so when we had this discussion about code of ethics and of code of conduct, of course this has to be applied to each context, because in all countries from the issue of equity, it's very different: in some countries in the more general gender issue, in some other countries, it will be the gender issues but more located in specific regions of the country; in others with some specific minorities—cultural or religious minorities—others it will be more urban poverty phenomena or it can be different types of things.*
>
> (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

This variance of context perhaps explains why it is difficult for the experts at IIEP, with their vast collective repertoires of knowledge and experiences, to come to terms with a single, coherent, overarching conceptualization of equity, when the same equity phenomenon can be—and indeed must be—understood, approached, and analyzed from different perspectives. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the complexity of context also provides the institute with a set of constraints within which they must navigate their work. Doing so, however, invariably enriches the organization not only in terms of social knowledge of contexts, but also in terms of the technical know-how that it brings into tackling equity issues through educational planning.

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Equity within and beyond schools: the processes and levels of equity

The many dimensions of equity that surmount the work and discourse of IIEP reflect a

diversity in its organizational conceptualization of equity, which mostly portrays the many ways

educational disadvantages are manifested and addressed in public policy. These disadvantages act

as a barrier not only to their access to education, but their effective use of educational resources

to bring about expected outcomes as well. A policy guidance published by IIEP acknowledges

this:

> *[T]here has been general acceptance that only those students who bring advantages to the school are likely to benefit from the exposure to this teaching [at school]. Minority students, economically disadvantaged students, disabled students, and other groups simply have not been expected to learn at the level of their advantaged peers.*
>
> (J. A. Anderson, 2005)

This statement acknowledges the need for education planning and equity policies to look

beyond equitable access to education and pay attention to factors that keep students in and get

them through the education processes: the inequalities in educational resources that students

receive and how those translate into gaps in outcomes. And that indeed has been a focus of IIEP's

research, training, and technical cooperation for much of the institute's existence. Equity in

educational resources and outcomes come up in recollections of past collaborations with

research consortia and work on gender equity (*Interview 2*, personal communication, October

16, 2017; *Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017), in ongoing technical

cooperation projects in developing countries (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017; *Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017), and in research on ethics, corruption, transparency and accountability (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). The 2017 UNESCO guide on inclusive education reiterates these points, taking into account both structural, systemic factors, such as system design, assessment, and curriculum and direct micro factors, such as pedagogical skills and classroom atmosphere:

> *Developing policies that are inclusive and equitable requires the recognition that students' difficulties arise from aspects of the education system itself, including: the ways in which education systems are organized currently, the forms of teaching that are provided, the learning environment, and the ways in which students' progress is supported and evaluated.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *Many factors can work either to facilitate or to inhibit inclusive and equitable practices within education systems. Some of those factors are: teacher skills and attitudes, infrastructure, pedagogical strategies and the curriculum. These are all variables which education ministries either control directly, or over which they can at least exert considerable influence.*
>
> (UNESCO, 2017a, p. 13)

IIEP's approach to address these equity issues, from a technical perspective, is inherently macro and top-down: for most of the time it works with national ministries of education on educational planning and system management. This function, built into the organizational mandate of IIEP, both propels and inhibits its capacity to work. On the one hand, the generates much more resources for IIEP compared to other UNESCO technical institutes since much of the global development and cooperation work on education is geared towards national policy

and governance (UNESCO, 2009a, 2015a); yet on the other, it limits the possibility for research

and discussions to venture into the core levels of the education process—schools and

classrooms—vicinities formally reserved under the technical authority of other institutes. This

territorial awareness often characterized my conversations with the experts:

> *I would say that [the focus is mostly on national level] because our main targets [are] educational planners and managers working at ministry level, most of our research focuses on national policies or national programs or projects that have been developed by countries, and quite rarely we go to very specific small initiatives that's really not [at that level]. Because we work with ministries, our concern is how this can be replicated or enlarged at the country level, so that this is something meaningful for ministries.*
>
> (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

> *When it comes to [educational] process it's also very important I think because then you're looking at an area which is quite neglected and perhaps institutes like ours don't look at it so much: but you have to get down to looking at what's actually happening in the school in terms of relationships between different actors, and you've got to look at what's happening in the classroom.*
>
> (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Operating on a macro level, however, does bring affordances. One of such affordances,

quite intuitively, is the simplicity and strategicity with which equity policy can be enacted.

Policies work differently at different levels: usually at macro level responses to inequity can be

singular and strategic, while at lower levels they tend to be more obscure and more complex:

> *But I also see inclusion of as a strategic response to inequity. And that can be at the system level—that can be at the national level you can have an inclusive system which might actually include quite a lot of diversity in terms of provision within the country where there's a province, district, or school level.*
>
> *Or if you take it more to the extreme which a lot of people seem to want to go is to actually have what you call inclusive schools: so the school is a reflection of the population that is*

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around it—all the members of that population—although that's quite a challenge because we're seeing much more diversification in education now: we've seen privatization which is also quite a threat to inclusion, so there's a lot of politics in the agenda as well.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Another affordance, quite counterintuitively, is that sometimes looking at equity from a macro perspective also reveals in depth the nuances of inequities that operate on school and classroom levels. Just as the examples earlier in this chapter indicate, addressing issues in accountability and ethics would eventually bring the conversation down to gender issues within school, and how examining the financing structure of a system may reveal the status of inequity on regional, school, and individual bases. This interactive dynamic between the macro and the micro makes IIEP's approach to equity intriguing and yet not at all inadequate.

The reasons for equity

The moral requisites of equity: humanitarian and egalitarian perspectives

Reasons for the call for equity are voiced quite unequivocally in my conversations with the experts. As a key UN/ESCO institute, education as a human right and the need for positive discrimination as an aspiration for social justice are justifiably the two compasses guiding its work on equity. These ideas circulate the air of the institute building, fueling coffee stand chats and cafeteria discussions. They come up in its organizational discourse and publications (IIEP, 1997, 2013, 2017a; IIEP & GPE, 2015b, 2015a), perhaps more so than with other UNESCO

institutes. They come up in the interviews with the experts, perhaps more so than with other technical organizations. One expert succinctly sums up the gist:

> *The global scenario is relatively straightforward: equity is a [major] objective. […] There is a general agreement [that] all children should have equal rights to education; there's [a] general agreement [that] children and young adults and parents are in different positions, that some of them have very disadvantaged positions, including because of decades if not centuries of discrimination, and therefore there is a need for compensatory programs—there is a need for positive discrimination.*
>
> *To this general agreement here within the institute I think that [it]'s only particularly important that the role of the public service is precisely to support those who are the weakest in society. [The] public service—knowing that no public service can respond to all the demands within society—it needs to put its resources first, or it needs to direct its resources to the [weakest].*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

To say that these humanitarian and egalitarian principles are central to the belief and conviction of the experts there is not an exaggeration. Debating whether the global agenda in the past was skewed in those directions, a senior expert in the training department contested:

> *I don't tend to agree with [the critic that EFA focused too much on access] because again something I haven't used—the term haven't used—is human rights, and I do strongly believe in the right to every child to have a basic education and the education should be of quality. I think looking back we [should] have been pushing the quality agenda more; there should have been more advocacy around the need for quality basic education.*
>
> (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

What is worth noting here is that the humanitarian requisite of education equity is not set up against a dilemma between access and quality (see Chapter 5), but rather it is the purveyor for both: that it is a right for every child to receive a basic education *and* that it is their right to receive quality education. And since every child enter the education arena from different

backgrounds and under different circumstances, there is a need for redistribution of educational resources, and that "[r]edistribution has to be organized in a way that helps even the playing field for everybody; otherwise there's no reason why things would change without intervention" (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017). At IIEP, aspirations towards that redistribution is manifested in the work of education planning:

> *I believe in the role of the state has to play [to make] an even playing field for everybody, because if it's not the case, then education becomes mass merchandise like any other product.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *And without—like I said before—without a very fine grained analysis of the education sector, which is really hardcore planning—it's data, it's looking at exam results, it's looking at the demography, population data, compare [by] geographical areas—to really spot those populations [who] should be targeted by the state [with] taxpayers' money, [it is difficult for the state to carry out that role].*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

The humanitarian and egalitarian arguments for equity are thus clearly inherent in both the genealogical and technical profiles of the institute. They are embedded in the human rights discourse of the UN, in the humanist and egalitarian ideals of UNESCO, and in the very technical questions that the institute deals with on a regular basis in its work. But does IIEP as an organization reach beyond those arguments to make the call for equity in their work? The following discussion explore how the institute addresses equity from a different view.

The practical requisites of equity: utilitarian perspectives

Equity and economic development

Moving beyond these moral convictions, there is also the call for education equity from a human capital perspective: that education is essential for economic growth and social development. While critics have often placed this perspective in contrast to the humanitarian and egalitarian rationales for equity (H. D. Meyer & Benavot, 2013; Spring, 2000, 2008), it has long been raised alongside the other two in the discourse of global governance, especially that of UNESCO (Delors, 1996; UNESCO, 1990, 2000, 2009a, 2015b; UNESCO et al., 2015). In my conversations with the experts, this utilitarian view is often staged as a step further from the moral convictions towards equity: that equity lies in the very economic and social interests of the countries:

> *And countries can become very powerful even without having big populations, and they can become very powerful without having a very strong industry if the people are very well educated, if the best minds are tapped. Then that leads to better research, and to the products and the byproducts of research, and this is where growth is to be found. It's no longer in—you know—mining the earth where there's almost no more oil.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *That's my personal conviction. Yes, it's [beyond] the moral aspect of equity, which is also a very important aspect to reminisce on. Because it's moral […] it—you know—should be cynical that we should think of economic first, but even from an economic point of view I think [equity]'s very important.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

The economic demand for equity becomes increasingly more significant in the context of a changing global economy, where new sets of skills and knowledge determine the success and

failure of countries, and where the notion of competitive advantages move from natural

resources to human resources, as suggested by the same expert:

> *And it's going to be like this more and more. When the world moves into artificial intelligence, some soft skills will be necessary. I mean we will remain only human for a special length of time, and that's where countries have to invest. And that's done only through education. It can be done. I mean it's not the primary resource that you find in the soil; it's something that needs to be grown.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

And not only is the economic future of countries lies in their capacity to educate the

young, it also lie in their capacity to ensure equal provision of education to every child regardless

of their backgrounds and circumstances, because "it's always an opportunity loss on the

opportunity cost for countries not to invest in creating equal opportunities for all":

> *So it's in these areas [education and research] where basically everybody is still equal. Even if you are born in a poor family, your IQ might be much better than mine, and that for the time being it's still dealt with by nature: it's going to change within the centuries to come but it's still the case.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

That opportunity loss is demonstrated in the case of a European nation highlighted in my

conversation with an expert in technical cooperation:

> *I worked in a very small country, six million people, 250 universities, half of the population highly educated. You don't find a plumber—you will find the PhD's everywhere and the pianos at home, even if they can't make ends meet at the end of every month in terms of salary. Very highly educated, but half of the population of rural areas not even access to the most decent minimum secondary education in terms of quality.*
>
> *So they want to bring the country ahead in terms of socioeconomic development: there is not less IQ out there than among the elites, so why don't you tap this IQ?*
>
> (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

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It is also in this latter case that the spell of inequality is cast: a lack of quality education widens the rip between the urban elite and the rural poor. The failure for this country to tap the potentials of its young minds lies in the very education that it provides—or fail to provide. Such examples highlight the importance of education equity within the very economic interests of countries in a competitive and changing global economy. It goes beyond the basics of human capital theory that necessitates education as a requisite for economic participation and economic well-being to stress the urgency for states to ensure equity in terms of economic security and opportunity costs.

Equity and social security

Education equity does not stop at the lever for economic growth and competitive advantages in a changing global economy. It extends beyond those material necessities to address questions of social security in changing demographics as well. The need for ensuring equitable education is raised in the contexts of a changing workforce composition and an aging population in many Asian countries:

> *And now you have countries which are facing really big challenges from the demographic transition. Now they are looking where the future pools—[the] untapped pools of workers [are]. So where are they? Among the poor, among the immigrants, among the women.*
>
> *So if you want to have enough workers to maintain living standards and productivity and pay for the older generation in the next twenty thirty years, you have to make sure that to get those not only into schools but that you get the best possible education—training, higher education—you can.*
>
> (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

And the call education equity should not, in the view of this expert, be a hollow, empty

call. It has to be embedded within the social policies that question the deep structural inequalities

amid changing social contexts. Her following explanation describes the gap between policy and

practice that deepens and perpetuates inequalities in another Asian country, and the social and

economic consequences that such deepening and perpetuating inequalities imply:

> *All the big move to the cities, one single child policy, forty percent of kids in the rural areas*
> *with under substandard education: they don't have enough kids anymore; they cannot*
> *afford to keep schools open; they create boarding school—sounds good; they have very good*
> *regulation in place for boarding schools. Just in practice they cannot follow.*
>
> *There is no heating in the winter; the kids are malnourished; the kids sleep three and two in*
> *a bed together; primary school kids—they don't have parents to give them the warmth of a*
> *family; they don't have learning materials. Nobody knows and has statistics about that, but*
> *out of these forty percent of kids what is the percentage wasted in terms of learning*
> *outcomes and outputs? And without these forty percent of kids, what are they going to do to*
> *maintain productivity over the next thirty years to pay for the old ones?*
>
> (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

Equity and social cohesion

The final aspect of equity as part of the economic and social interests of countries lies in

the prospects of social cohesion and social harmony: that more egalitarian societies enjoy greater

chances of peace and stability. This has been part of the arguments from IIEP to convince

governments towards more forceful actions on equity. An expert highlights this aspect as another

key leverage point alongside the education as human rights argument:

> *I think the other key leverage point that I see is that—as people know—equitable societies*
> *are actually very healthy societies. And if you look at if you look at learning outcomes, the*

more equitable the system is, generally the more the children to tend to learn on average, so the average learning outcomes will go up if your range in terms of learning outcomes is reduced—the average will go up.

So that that for me is a very good way of convincing governments to take an equitable approach in that it is in everyone's interest. But the other very important area I think is that inclusive education tends to lead to more and more inclusive society; a more inclusive society is a more cohesive society; and a more cohesive society is in everyone's interests because if you don't have a cohesive society you tend to have a lot of corruption, [you] tend to have violence, and so on, and most governments don't want that.

So that's often my line with governments; [it] would be to really focus on social cohesion; so if you look at mother tongue education: if you respect people's rights to learn in their mother tongue initially, they will then learn the dominant language—the national language—better and so on, and you have a more cohesive society.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

This point is particularly important, since a lot of writings have focused on the role of

education in the interest of nation state building and as a stimulant for unity and social harmony.

The argument is particularly forceful in the call for equitable ethnic and linguistic diversity, as

the argument against it has always been harbored in these precepts. The expert recounted his past

work in Southeast Asia as an example:

So what we tried to do was to show that teaching people another language is not going to lead to disharmony; on the contrary, it's going to lead to more harmony because ultimately they learn the national language anyway—the dominant language.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

"Cynical that we should think of economic first": the practicality of being moral

What these diverse perspectives and arguments for education equity portray is interesting

on both counts. First of all, they all point to the importance of ensuring equity within education

systems, whether from a set of moral beliefs and convictions or from the practical prospects of

social and economic benefits. Furthermore, these two sets of perspectives can be both competing

and complimentary at the same time. One expert describes below what she thinks was a

shortcoming of the global EFA agenda to not make the call forcefully enough beyond the

education as a human right rhetoric, which, in her words, amounted to a "non-recognition of the

importance of equity" and a risk of paying lip service to equity:

> *I think also that maybe EFA has not made the point so well, because it was really very general—you know—very general items on the international agenda, like the underlining of the gender issue. And so of course it's very important, but you need to make the arguments—I think—in a much stronger way, and you need to think of for whom are you making them.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *So I think this kind of argument [for economic and social interests] needs to be made, not just oh we need the girls because it's a human right. No, this human right approach alone will not help!*
>
> *We have to have the gender issue, yes; we have to have social issues; we have to have so many detailed issues, but we need to make arguments not only in terms of human rights [because] then we can only move those who think you know that this is really important. But there are many out there we think it's not so important, and who think those who put human rights ahead of everything else are just [being] good to [them] and they mean it in a negative way.*
>
> *We have to make the very hard arguments with facts and figures, and that is what often the World Bank tries to do. That is an advantage and that is what we in the UN maybe don't do enough.*
>
> (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

This argument does not suggest that the view of education as a human right is wrong:

quite the contrary, as one expert commented it would be "cynical that we should think of

economic first" (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017). What it does suggest is

that there are real and substantial benefits, both social and economic, in pushing that human

rights arguments that should also be highlighted. Such an argument is indeed well-founded,

when there is a moral argument in addressing social inequalities and disparities—the sources of

social unrest and instability—especially in the arena of education:

> *[The global rise of inequalities] is a major threat even if you would not have a moral concern about it. It certainly is a major threat. Now there will always be some disparities in the world. I mean you cannot dream of a world [that] would be fully normal or that everybody would be exactly the same—that's what some societies have tried and have failed to do.*
>
> *But the level of disparities has become [for me] a moral issue. Yes, but it's also simply a major threat because obviously at a certain moment this leads to revolts—it leads to revolutions. People indeed believe that they have nothing else to lose than their poverty; of course they'd revolt and so on, so it's a measure that—I think it's something that we need to focus on.*

<div align="center">(Interview 5, personal communication, October 25, 2017)</div>

And while this humanitarian—utilitarian argument might seem superficial, it yields real

implications and consequences to the move from access to quality, from policies to get children

into school to policies to give them equitable quality education. And that in a succinct way sums

up the ongoing questions, discussions, debates, efforts, and collaborations that continue to

pervade the day-to-day work of the institute.

Conclusion

The chapter has provided up to this point an account of how education equity is

conceptualized in the talk and in the work of UNESCO-IIEP. The conceptualization is filled with

complexities. These complexities capture the institutional and individual aspects of the work being done in the institute, they run through the varied dimensions of equity and inequity in different contexts, and they seep through the different levels and processes of education, all the while stemming from moral and practical perspectives of why equity is important—perspectives that are often competing and complementary in their own right.

The complexities and intricacies in this conceptualization of equity present a part—whole dilemma that the institute has to grapple with, and which very much has to do with its organizational design, its *modus operandi*, and its technical image. In many ways, the depth and richness of each individual focus on equity add up to the breadth and diversity of an overarching view of what education equity is, but their diverse problems and interests also complicate organizational focus and require skillful leadership in terms of coordination. The idea of equity both characterizes and is characterized by the complex dynamics of legitimacy and performance, as will be discussed in Chapter 8, as well as the tangled webs of dilemmas and politics in the field, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5. THE DILEMMAS AND POLITICS OF EQUITY

This chapter explores some of the complexities and dilemmas that surround the work of educational experts at UNESCO-IIEP. The scope of their described work covers technical cooperation, training, and research, as well as collaborative work they have been involved in with UNESCO or other organizations in the past. It begins by addressing some common dilemmas the experts face and goes on to discuss the complexities of field politics that oftentimes hinder and complicate the work in technical cooperation in global education. The chapter provides insights to further explore and discuss the idea of equity and the organizational features of UNESCO-IIEP discussed in preceding chapters.

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the conceptualizations of equity and the many dimensions that surround such conceptualizations, both from the personal reflections of the experts and from the institutional aspects of IIEP as a UN/ESCO entity. This chapter will proceed into examining the problems that arise from such conceptualizations, in terms of the dilemmas that play into the work of IIEP and its experts and the tangled web of political dynamics in the field that they often face. In discussing these dynamics, the chapter raises questions that both complicate and implicate the work of international development assistance in education. These questions spread across the many dimensions of inequity and the many ways they posit as policy

problems for different countries. As exemplified the narratives that follow, universal access may be a hard-to-achieve policy target in one context, with widespread corruption and systematic weaknesses blocking governance and policy efforts; yet in another context it may be a source of equity problems where aspirations and initiatives for access to education do not take into account the difficulties and disadvantages that certain populations frequently endure.

Connecting the dilemmas and problems that arise to the work of IIEP, the chapter also shed light onto the complex power dynamics and politics in the field of international development assistance on education. Beyond the largely unquestioned and widely adopted global discourse of equity in education lie the impeding intricacies of local contexts and politics. The work of technical cooperation—in many ways the essence of the work of IIEP—often must navigate these intricacies and possible tensions, faced with stagnation, concessions, and compromises. The complexities and put forth the question whether context could be taken out of comparative policy, and to what extent the role of organizations such as IIEP could advance understanding of global problems of equity in education.

Access and quality

A tale of two countries

One of the equity dilemmas that surfaced the interviews was that between access and quality. This being a well discussed problem in the educational arena, the debate has been whether for education policy makers to prioritize equal provision to education to (different parts

of) the schooling population or to ensure equal quality of such provision. Even though the questions are sometimes not formed as a binary choice: the argument has reasonably been advanced that universal access has to be guaranteed before the next step can be taken to provide equal quality, studies have shown that absent comparable quality, universal access does little to address equity and equality issues in education (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2016), and that the complexities and intricacies of educational practices sometimes mean quality inequality does complicate groups with the same access to educational resources (Anyon, 1981; Lampert, 1999; Lareau, 2002; Rist, 1970).

At IIEP, the question is viewed in the angle of system planning and management, which emphasizes the capacity of education systems to address equity issues in access and quality at a macro level. One of the debates linked to this dilemma is the capacity of the state to provide education as its core service, since diversifying the field of educational providers have sometimes been suggested as a reasonable equity measure to contexts where state governance is historically or systematically weak (Chubb & Moe, 1991; Friedman, 1997; Neal, 1998).

Through its collaboration with ministries and governments, IIEP has seen this problem manifested in a variety of contexts. One example of such takes place in a developing Caribbean nation plagued with natural disasters, corruption, and poor government capabilities:

> [T]he state is very weak—it's a failed state—and it has always been since the beginning. So, the state has very little control [over] the education sector—eighty five percent is out of its hands [i.e. private]. And in this eighty five you'll see […] why there's this disparity you can think of—some schools are private, and are for profit, but actually are giving terribly low-quality education to children, which would be even worse than what the state could provide.

And they are fee-paying, and they are fee-paying monthly—monthly—meaning that if the parents are not able to pay for the month of March then the kids don't go to school in March—better save for April and that they can they can go back—so you can imagine the inequalities are really terrible […].

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017).

The situation described in this country provides an interesting contradiction to the diverse providers thesis in the face of poor state management. In extreme cases such as this one, with low capacity for management on the part of the state, access to education is not remedied by the presence of alternative educational providers. Rather, these providers, lacking adequate oversight from the state, complicate the access issue by placing the burden of costs onto the back of parents and children.

With access to education trampled by the fee-paying for-profit barriers set up by private schools, which make up the majority (85%) in the country, one might hope that the quality of education they provide should be beneficial to those who could afford. Reality, nonetheless, has shown that absent government oversight over the eighty five percent of schools that are private (and for reasons that make sense political-economically), the quality picture glooms:

[E]ighty—eighty five percent of the schools are private, so the ministry has no control over eighty five percent including those who give very low-quality education and that are fee-paying. So one solution would be to say—okay, the state should take control, give licenses, or withdraw licenses and so on to those private schools, but those private school for large share—large share—actually possessed by people who work in the Ministry of Education.

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017).

The situation is, however, not completely hopeless. The interviewed expert acknowledges a small group of actors in the provision of education: faith-based private schools. Even though

they are also private schools, which means they require tuition and fees for enrollment, they are

much better organized compared to most private schools in the country since they draw upon a

much larger and stronger network of resources, and thus provide excellent quality of education.

These schools are also superior in terms of the quality of the education it provides when

compared to state-run public schools: "Because those organizations are actually stronger than the

state in terms of […] structure, resources, mechanisms for human resources […] they have

actually a much better functioning system than the state has" (*Interview 1*, personal

communication, October 9, 2017).

Nevertheless, the mere presence of such quality providers does not lessen the status of

inequity in the country. The real task, observed this expert, lies in the government's capacity to

deliver on its core services:

> *Is this equitable? It's equitable for those who can pay, and even if those are not for-profit—*
> *[if] they are there […] to be almost charitable—not everybody has access to them. So there*
> *is inequity when the state—when the government—cannot deliver on its core services:*
> *security, education, hygiene, health.*
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017).

How, then would public policy and/or international development cooperation address

the problem? Could the state, with its low capacity and its high corruption, step in to take control

and weed out the almost private education market, or could it act—be it temporarily—as a

mediator to equitably channel and regulate educational resources within its population? The

World Bank seems to have favored the second approach when, in a 2007 development assistance

program, it collaborated with the government to introduce a tuition waiver program to increase

access to education for poor children, which provided public financing for nonpublic schools on the grounds that these schools do not charge tuition (Adelman & Holland, 2015). While the scope of the initiative was small: it only covered two classes of 45 students each of the first-year elementary cohorts of 547 schools, it demonstrated the attempt on the part of global education development assistance to take part of the current nonpublic system and turn it public.

The effectiveness such a move had on equity is unclear, however. The final report of the program noted a modest increase on enrollment, as well as a drop in grade repetition and number of overage students. While this suggests that it somehow alleviated the financial barriers to schooling, the number of out-of-school children nonetheless remains high, and other financial barriers besides tuition are not accounted for. That leaves a lot to be done to just assure universal access, let alone tackling quality, since "[m]oving beyond access to learning outcomes will require greater investment, both in terms of the waiver value, program conditionalities, and enforcement" (Adelman & Holland, 2015, p. 15). The World Bank itself even acknowledged that this was a temporary solution when "building new public schools, a priority after the earthquake, has moved slowly and at high cost, and many costly inefficiencies exist in the public system" (2015, p. 15).

But to capacitate the state into action, which remains the main sustainability objective of development assistance programs, is not easy. The failure of the government to deliver on its educational promises is convolutedly linked to its failures in other aspects of governance. A lot of factors, both subjective and historical, come in to play:

Of the public sector as a whole—not just education sector but the whole public governance, the whole institutional context—is [so] endemically corrupt: it's so endemically poor, it's hit by an earthquake, and then it's hit by the dark [waves of corruption]. There's a variety of vulnerabilities to the system, including the history, [that] make for situation where inequity is the norm—I mean—unfortunately.

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017).

The challenge is then, for both the state and its technical cooperation partners, an enormous one. It has to look beyond the institutional confines of the education system to address drivers of inequity on a greater scale: on the social and political context of the country:

So looking at inequity in education is one thing, but it inevitably leads [to] looking at the drivers of inequity which are not always solely in the education sector. So to address the inequalities in the education sector as well as in the health sector, for instance, [we] will have a cure to create—to solve issues—which take place at the at the public governance— the overall level of the state.

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017).

To execute such a plan is not easy, especially when the systematic weaknesses of the state is tied to a complex network of power, corruption, and vested interests to maintain the status quo. Most private schools in this Caribbean nation are owned and run by ministry officials and their networks. The mere idea for the ministry to take control of private school quality through a system of licensing and accreditation is easily discouraged by the possible ways these same people can circumvent to keep failing schools at a competitive advantage (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017).

The dilemma of access and quality is further demonstrated in the case of a Southeast Asian country, where the issue of access to education for ethnic and linguistic minorities has

been a concern part of the national educational administration's agenda. With the advent of

Education for All and the inpouring of development aids on education, the ministry has directed

its policy priorities and allocation of resources towards putting children in poor and

disadvantaged communities in schools. Despite net primary enrollment in the nineties

(UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016), predicaments abound. One of the interviewed experts

describes education for rural mountaineers as it takes place "where the monsoon is literally

cutting villages [from] the world for three, four months per year, and where ethnic minorities are

living":

> *The teachers who go teach in the schools get very little money—they have very little*
> *incentive to go teach there, and they are teaching in the [nation's main] language to pupils*
> *from ethnic minorities. It's the classical curriculum with a classical yearly schedule, and the*
> *classical Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports teachers—the same ones who teach in*
> *[the capital], and the same ones who would be teaching in [a poor remote area]—in the*
> *mountains. The teachers are the same and the pupils are not the same. The pupils don't*
> *understand the teacher.*

<div align="center">(Interview 1, personal communication, October 9, 2017)</div>

A different inequity dynamic is at play in the case of this country, where universal access

is identified as part of the national educational agenda and is enforced through national policy

and practice, but where issues in centralization hindered the learning prospects of disadvantaged

children. This issue is not uncommon across nations: a centralized curriculum delivered in a

major language of instruction, with centralized system planning and management catered

around it, is often argue necessary for education to promote national unity and identity (Lavoie

& Benson, 2011; Torres, 1998), but are often associated with inequity in school performance

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(Dronkers & de Heus, 2013; Zajda, 2011; Zajda et al., 2008). Quite different from the case of the

Caribbean nation mentioned above, where access to education is hindered and quality

squandered by market jeopardy, systemic corruption, and a failure on the part of the government

to deliver on one of its core services, this Southeast Asian nation highlights a case where

universal access is guaranteed, but the very *universal* in that universal access acts to hinder

quality for a disadvantaged group of students.

> [A]s a result those pupils fail. They have to work in the field with their parents, they don't
> speak the language of the teacher, and the textbooks never get there. So they have access, but
> no quality education. Yeah, exactly, access and no learning even.
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

And issues such as these are tangled in the web of public policy. For technical cooperation

efforts to recognize them is one thing, to successfully address them is another. Pushing for state

regulation in the Caribbean case in the face of poor government capabilities will do little help,

while strengthening capacity amidst endemic and systemic corruption will take a lot of time and

efforts. But to leave the market unregulated and swamped with private for-profit providers while

hoping for miracles from a few quality faith-based schools is an equally undesired solution. In the

case of the Southeast Asian nation, for IIEP or similar agencies to convince the government of

the inequalities certain groups of students are experiencing is in itself a towering task. On top of

that, issues of national identity, national curriculum, and language of instruction are often

institutionally embedded in laws and constitution, a level above and beyond the power of the

administration. To complicate matters further, making the move from access to quality—in

research, policy, and practice—is hard, and has been hard for a long time:

> *And nothing is easy—I'm saying that—I think it's going to be inequities—well, inequities are going to be around for a while. But the trend is that more children go to school—it's already an achievement but […] today some people pretend that oh all we have to think about quality, but everybody—you know people like [a senior expert here] didn't wait fifteen years to start working on quality issues—quality was already on the agenda high fifteen twenty years back with the start of national and cross-national learning assessment studies.*
>
> *That there is something very clear about whether pupils are learning or not, it's just that it's a lot more difficult to address quality and learning than to address access. It is difficult to address quality because you have to understand what the drivers of quality [are], and quality is not just the only aspect of inequity.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

What the preceding statements suggest is clear: inequity will continue to exist, in one

form or another, but there have been more or less uniform trends in the global reaction to

inequity. The reason that quality has not been part of a strong argument in such trends does not

lie in the relative low priority of quality to access, but rather a technical one: it has always been

more difficult to measure and address quality. Technical cooperation work on equity is often

more complex, demanding, and politically sensitive, as will be demonstrated in the next

discussions in this chapter. The complexities in international cooperation work involving quality

of education indeed dates back much further within the IIEP line of work, or in the individual

works of its experts. One of them in particular worked as a consultant in a World Bank-funded

assessment study of fifth-grade reading and mathematics in a Southeast Asian country dating

back to the late 1990s and early 2000s (World Bank, 2004). The study employed complex and

elaborate methodological tools to measure the quality of teaching and learning in relation to

student performance, which were later revisited and reflected upon in a journal article (Saito &

van Cappelle, 2010). The expert, in a separate interview, acknowledged the difficulties

quantitative methods carry in their attempt to effectively measure education quality (*Interview*

2a, personal communication, June 4, 2014). This in part explains the overemphasis on access in

global education policy when few efficient and reliable options for measuring quality could be

effectively utilized by the global educational research community.

Access, resources, outcomes

My discussions with these experts on the complex and multi-faceted dimensions of the

access—quality dilemma boiled down to viewing equity through the ongoing stages of education.

The dilemma itself captures two stages on two opposite ends: equity in access and equity in

outcomes. Equity, argued one senior expert in the Training department, should thoroughly

reflect the three stages of access, process, and outcomes. Approaching equity from just one of

these stages lack falling into the false dichotomy (and false dilemma) of access versus quality. He

emphasized that by discussing the shift of focus from one aspect of equity (access) to another

(outcome), emphasizing the often-neglected stage of process (or resources):

> *Well I think what people are doing now is it's a shift in—shifting the lens from looking at*
> *participation to looking at learning outcomes and then once you've—once you've done your*
> *analysis of learning outcomes and which groups are not doing well—it might be due to*
> *location or it might be gender, etc.—you look at it through all these different lenses—and*

then you try to develop some kind of strategic response to it and that strategic response will vary often—maybe for cultural reasons but often also for political reasons—it will vary.

When it comes to process, that's also very important […] because then you're looking at an area which is quite neglected. And perhaps institutes like ours don't look at it so much, but you have to get down to looking at what's actually happening in the school in terms of relationships between different actors and you've got to look at what's happening in the classroom.

So to have to really achieve inclusion and meaningful inclusion for example you've not only got to ensure that children with disabilities are in the class, but you've also got to ensure that they have the right support to learn effectively and that's a big challenge.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Looking back on the cases of the two countries mentioned above, we could see different forces addressing problems in access to education (privatization in the Caribbean case and public policy in the Southeast Asian case), but since they only address one aspect of inequity (inequality of access), they ended up failing to address other aspects (inequality of process and outcomes), and in extreme cases even exacerbating the status of inequity, as in the case of the Caribbean nation. What this expert also suggests is a shift in the way the global development community views and addresses equity issues in education: shifting the focus from getting children to school (access) to improving their learning performance (outcomes), and in the process addressing inequalities in the education that they receive (resources), albeit a murkier territory for policy experts to navigate—perhaps the very reason they are often neglected in the first place. Only by paying proper attention to process will equity policy adequately address the quality question.

The challenge for institutions like UNESCO-IIEP to bring the focus onto the process and outcome stages—by which the focus will be brought into the classroom and onto activities

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involving teachers and students—is indeed big, as they have not yet developed the technical and

institutional capacities to partake that kind of work, not to mention the barriers of institutional

mandates that they need to overcome to lend themselves legitimacy in pursuing such work. The

latter proves to be a stronger obstacle to overcome, as the IIEP leadership has on more than one

occasion emphasized the mandates of the organization not to pursue such matters as pedagogy

or teacher education.

Access or quality or access and quality?

The dilemma of access and quality precedes a challenging policy situation whereby

priority must be decided between getting children to school or providing them with quality

teaching and learning. For the entirety of the global *Education for All* period, greater attention

and resources had been directed towards the former, in part because of the huge global gap in

school attendance to bridge at the start of the initiative (UNESCO, 2000, 2002); in part because of

the ease and difficulty with which progress monitoring and reporting impart on access and

quality, respectively (Saito & van Cappelle, 2010); and in part because of the complexities of the

policy contexts where decisions are to be made. A senior expert in the training department

reflects on the dilemma in the historical context of EFA (*Education for All*) and MDG

(*Millennium Development Goals*):

> *I think equity is an extremely important concept, and I think in terms of MDG 2 [i.e.*
> *achieve universal primary education] a lot of people now say maybe it was a mistake to*
> *push so hard for every child to go to primary school and then and then lift it to basic*

education that everyone should participate and complete because the resources weren't there and therefore the quality was sometimes too low.

I don't tend to agree with that because again something I haven't used—the term haven't used—is human rights, and I do strongly believe in the right to every child to have a basic education and the education should be of quality. I think looking back we should have been pushing the quality agenda more; there should have been more advocacy around the need for quality basic education.

<div align="center">

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

</div>

This reflection adds another layer of complexity in evaluating the dilemma in global educational policy. On the one hand, there is an acknowledgement that an overemphasis on getting children to school may have diverted and/or diluted the necessary focus to assuring that quality education be provided in the process, as with the case of the Southeast Asian country. On the other hand, there has always been tremendous pressure to recognize and materialize education as a basic human right (UNICEF, 1989; United Nations, 1948), especially at the dawn of the EFA era when large numbers of children in the developing world did not receive basic primary education (UNESCO, 1990, 2000). The debate thus arguably goes beyond technical or pragmatic policy choices, but underlines ideological implications surrounding the concepts of education and equity (see Chapter 2). The position of education as a basic human right, coupled with the compelling argument for quality education as a driver for economic development discussed in Chapter 2, paints yet another dilemma of competing ideologies that perhaps should not be contradictive in the first place: both are used to make the call for greater equity in one form or another (improved access and improved quality), yet both result in perpetuating equity problems in one form or another, as demonstrated above and summarized in the table below:

Table 4. Snapshot of equity problems in the two country cases

	The Caribbean case	**The Southeast Asian case**
Context	Massive privatization, school deregulation, widespread corruption, weak government capabilities	Enforced universal access, centralized curriculum, stipulated language of instruction, universal teacher training
Access	Access hindered by privatization; poor children cannot afford schools	Universal access mandated by government
Quality	Aggravated due to lack of regulation, disrupted access leads to poor quality	Poor quality for disadvantaged groups since their disadvantages are not remedied.

This points to perhaps the common policy lesson for these countries and their technical cooperation partners: that access and quality must go hand in hand. Policy initiatives targeting universal access need to seriously take into account their quality implications, just as quality education would never be achieved with unequal and disrupted access. This is often easier said than done, however, for addressing quality in education entail complex technical difficulties, as admitted by the experts themselves in this chapter, as well as the complex politics of the field that hamper the work of technical cooperation, as discussed in the subsequent parts. Nevertheless, the dilemma remains a peculiar policy debate for many countries in the global post-EFA landscape.

Global agenda, local contexts

The dilemma of access and quality discussed above highlight another peculiar dilemma endemic to the work of international cooperation: the gap between the global discourse on education equity and the reality of local contexts where the work takes place. There is a well-developed and well-agreed-upon case for equity and equality at the global level, determining

much if not all of the global policy discourse, yet at the local level policy and practice are often

shaped and bent by the contextual complexities of traditions, customs, and politics. This contrast

is described by a senior expert in the Technical Cooperation department:

> *[There is] a sort of global discussion or [global] scenario, and then there is a question [of] how [that plays] out in individual country context.*
>
> *The global scenario is relatively straightforward: equity is a [major] objective. […] There is a general agreement [that] all children should have equal rights to education; there's general agreement [that] children and young adults and parents are in different positions, that some of them have very disadvantaged positions, including because of decades if not centuries of discrimination, and therefore there is a need for compensatory programs—there is a need for positive discrimination.*
>
> *To this general agreement here within the institute I think that [it]'s only particularly important that the role of the public service is precisely to support those who are the weakest in society, when the public service—knowing that no public service can respond to all the demands within society—it needs to put its resources first, or it needs to direct its resources to the [weakest].*
>
> *This is reflected in the SDG 4, this is reflected in international agreements, and it is a set of values let's say that we strongly defend—that's the global agenda, and that's not very difficult to agree to. The more difficult issue is then when it comes to specific country situations and I think there are [probably] questions of ideology, there are questions which are more technical.*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The ideological tensions that have been discussed illustrates the challenges and difficulties

the work of technical cooperation is likely to encounter in the field, when the transition is made

from the commonly agreed global agenda—and one relatively easy to agree to—to the

ideological, political, social, economic, and cultural complexities of the field. When all these

variables are added to the equation, seemingly simple and straightforward issues like universal

access (all children should have equal rights to education) or positive and compensatory

discrimination (public service should prioritize disadvantaged children and parents) become

complicated and difficult. The universal right to education is greatly impeded by corruption, a

weakness of government, and the political economy of private schooling as in the case of the

Caribbean nation, yet when it is somehow honored in the case of the Southeast Asian nation,

inequity still prevails in an absence of positive discrimination to help ethnically and linguistically

disadvantaged children. These difficulties and challenges do not stop at the contextual level,

moreover, but spill over onto the technical nature of the work, as will be explained in the same

interview further down this chapter.

The diversification of global support

The advent of the global agenda for education that came with the push towards *Education*

for All also brought about another unintended complication: the diversion of attention from

agendas already in place in many countries. Intended as a build-upon from earlier development

and international cooperation successes, the technical requirements of EFA and later SDG 4

nevertheless have added yet another line into the checklists of national educational agendas:

> *[Education for All] is one of the international agendas which countries are signing up to, and it is for many countries the same—like the SDG 4 now—a problem how then to deliver on the international agendas.*
>
> *It can have a distorting effect because it opens wide the door to international partners who have their own agendas. For instance, I remember how much effort and energy are planned for the EFA assessment process—the […] data collection grid [and] all these long checklists of indicators which countries were supposed to produce.*

These were not part of their own EMIS [Education Management Information System] systems for good reasons—for the best reasons in the world: they don't need them. They have their own system to manage, and it is not a management system for information—it's an information system for management. So a system functions in a certain way, is managed in a certain way, and needs the minimum relevant indicators to verify if management is going well and giving the signals for feedback—for the feedback loop—and for improving things.

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

In effect, the global move towards equity in education opened wide the doors for a flurry of international donors to tackle work on education in developing countries, and while EFA, MDG 2, and SDG 4 all serve in some abstract way as universalistic sets of common visions, guidelines and standards to which international cooperation work should adhere, they all complicate the education systems in these countries since they do not share the same repertoires of technical systems and toolsets directed at the same purposes. And thus by developing and utilizing different systems and toolsets, international cooperation technically diverted attention and resources away from national and local administrations of education, which could have been more efficiently and effectively mobilized:

So they [international donors] didn't much care about what was the key information systems in place already and how much they could use. They said, "Here is the system for EFA assessments. That's what you need" [and] it was totally [in] parallel [with] EMIS. People who have to do their own job have to spend time on something else.

Meaning if they do this, they need international expertise to learn how to do it: they need to set up a system. Is it linked or not with EMIS? In the best of cases it is. In the best of cases you set in place information—and you know. So it's groups of people doing the same job, and sometimes [it's] the same people and they can't do their main job.

So that is very problematic, and this is what international agendas open the door to, and many countries are afraid that it imposes something new. Many countries don't see that

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basically what they have is going in the right direction—that we're talking about reframing of something which is a national agenda.

The problem does not stop at the national level, which by itself requires a lot of additional commitments for countries. It also complicates work locally within countries due to the presence and involvement of a variety of global actors working on equity issues in education. With each global actor gaining access to a subregion and/or subsector and bringing in their own philosophies, approaches, knowledge, and expertise to tackle equity issues, equity problems in developing countries is further convoluted and complicated:

> *[In this Southeast Asian country there are] one hundred forty districts. So it went—again—then it went to a point where it became counterproductive—I think, in my personal professional opinion—because basically instead of investing on a regional basis, the donors—big donors—divided investments by districts […]—they defined poorest, poor, and non-poor districts—and each donor invested in the poorest districts.*
>
> *So the French had three districts in this province and the Japanese two more in this province and the Australians three more in the same province—they all had different approaches; they all had a different concept; they all had different investment styles. They produced materials which they did not chat with the next district—with a district next door […].*

With global development assistance identified as a key priority on the policy agendas of developed countries, the relatively easy access that they gain to the education development niches in developing countries in an absence of rigorous policy guidelines and frameworks, coupled with a lack of communication and poor technical capacity on the part of local governments, add complications to the education planning and management landscape. Such complications play

back in the further exacerbated status of equity, where the same or similar equity problems are

approached and addressed very differently across local contexts.

There have been, indeed, efforts to better coordinate these development projects, some

within the EFA and MDG frameworks. The "Delivering as One" approach within the United

Nations family was one example (United Nations, n.d.-b). In reality those efforts came with little

success, usually due to the complex nature of the fields, as observed by the same expert:

> *Well there was [efforts towards coordination] after the Paris Declaration of 2002—so many*
> *efforts in you know better coordination—you know about this One UN approach—better*
> *coordination. But then at the same time you have technical staff which is being withdrawn*
> *because you know of cost savings across the board, meaning you have generalists sitting in*
> *all these agencies spending their time coordinating, so who's going to the ground:*
> *consultants.*
>
> *And consultants are not committed in the long term—they're not long-term partners—so*
> *they all come with their own approaches, so we have a cacophony again. You have a better*
> *coordination among the donors but who's implementing—this is what calls the*
> *implementation in the end.*
>
> (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

The predicament is a real one. Although efforts have been raised towards better

coordination over the years, they at best only arrived at better channeling of administrative work.

The core technical work at the field, often carried out by consultants and which largely

determines the implementation of international development projects, again sees a technical

diversion and diversification as explained in this case. Furthermore, the overlapping nature of the

work donors carry out also makes intimidating the goal of coordination, complicated again by

the complexities of politics in the field. Take UN organizations alone, depending on context,

UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNESCO all at some point work on education in a given

country, and while UNESCO holds the "official" technical authority on work in education, its

access to the field and its voice on the matter usually carry less weight compared to others due to

its funding status: it is perceived more of a technical organization and less of a fund (unlike

UNICEF) or a UN agency that deals specifically with development aids (unlike UNDP). As these

organizations become more bureaucratic and less technical and contract out the core work to

consultants, coordinating efforts become increasingly less helpful.

The homogenization of global support

       The lack of guidance and oversight in the field being a problem, at the global level the

guiding resources and technical capacity seem to offer little help. The changing landscape of

global development assistance led to a growing diversification of development interests, which in

turn led to a homogenization of technical capacity on the part of development specialists. On top

of that the global discourse over time have also become increasingly more general and

ideologically homogenous. One interviewed expert noted the homogenization of global support

and assistance over the past twenty years:

> *It becomes all the time more integrated [and] complex, and the people working on this are*
> *less and less experts, you know. Now you have—I mean you can go wherever you want.*
> *Twenty years ago when we were doing fundraising with Swedish SIDA, with Danish*
> *DANIDA, there were education specialists sitting in Copenhagen and Stockholm and we*
> *talked the same language: we knew what we were talking about when we developed the*
> *project together.*

Now there is one social sector expert covering health, social security, education. How can you probably be a specialist in all these fields, and one person covering all the priority countries off of that donor? So we have to go directly to the country to work with them, and then you have again one person with a social sector specialist and not an education specialist, so this person will be working either with a junior or with a consultant from education for some time.

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

This changing structure of global development assistance places greater demand on contracting out core technical work on education to educational development experts. With its focus on developing and strengthening its expertise on education planning, this has come as a growing market demand for IIEP, albeit at a price: it also must increasingly identify and position itself as a technical organization and has to sometimes leave advocacy off the table, as will be discussed further on in this chapter. What is more, with its voice on technical matters increasingly specialized and isolated, the prospects of knowledge sharing and the transferring of technical know-how become more challenging and less sustainable:

So the dialogue becomes more general, more ideological, perhaps more international-agenda-driven and so I'm not so optimistic, but very often even including in this house I'm told that I'm looking too much backwards and not enough into the future. It's true we had more resources, we had more possibilities, now if I look at the sector studies that instead of six months they need to be done in a month—what do you think in terms of quality? Can— well will that happen? And in terms of sharing knowledge and know-how, in terms of transferring skills, it's getting worse, but otherwise we don't get our money, if we don't get our money we can't function.

So it's a sort of vicious circle. I'm not quite sure how to get out of that, but I think individually here it IIEP we are struggling to find a balance […] for each individual project.

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

To sum up, this trend in international development, set in place over the past twenty years with the growing influence of global projects on education, has led to both opportunities and challenges for IIEP, and has set the course for the organization to become increasingly technical and decreasingly political. Nevertheless, politics is inevitable when it comes to the field, when it manages work with both funders and donors on one hand and governments and education administrations on the other. This will be explored in the following part.

Educational planning and the politics of development assistance

When brought into the field, the problems of ideologies, discourse, and politics are coated with many more layers of complexity. As a provider of technical assistance, IIEP relies not only on its client countries to provide its expertise, but also on a group of donors and granting agencies to receive the necessary resources for its work (see Chapter 7). The following dilemmas swarm the work of IIEP as it engages itself in the highly sensitive and political web of global development assistance.

A technical agency in a political niche

The first set of pressures comes from donors and funders, who, on many occasions, have their own research bases and do not need to rely on UNESCO or IIEP for research in the field. Such organizations as the World Bank are better resourced: they are better funded, better

managed, and have a more authoritative say in their relationships with countries as a donor or

lender. One expert in technical cooperation describes:

> *The World Bank doesn't need UNESCO at all. In terms of research, [so] generally the World Bank does [very] good research and has so many people and resources behind it that UNESCO cannot [compare]. However, [when] it comes to interpreting these research findings there are two phenomen[a] that happen regularly: the first is World Bank ideology, so there are facts that they have found out, and they tend then to opt for one interpretation—private schooling as an example.*
>
> *The other is [when] you have good results from the World Bank and all the other agencies take them and sort of shortcut—use shortcut—simplified interpretations of these results. I have just the [Global Monitoring] Report 2015 which I'm using extensively for education and demography. They've done fantastic research—we have done it as well here—and they have come up with a very smart concept; but from there to generalize—that is not what the World Bank says in their research but I'm sure that's what's going to happen, including by many World Bank research—certain profiles—demographic profile[s]—implying certain education policy responses. It's not in their research but it will probably in a few years from now be applied that way everywhere.*

<div align="center">(Interview 4, personal communication, October 20, 2017)</div>

The authority that global lenders and donors like the World Bank exerts, however,

sometimes acts as a barrier for its programs and projects, due to the perceived power inferiority

of the borrowing countries (Samoff, 2012; Wanner, 2015). This problem, coupled with the World

Bank's strict procedures for managing and supervising grant and loan aids (*Interview 4*, personal

communication, October 20, 2017; Klees, 2012), tends to push countries further towards

organizations perceived to be more technical and less ideologically driven like UNESCO. Coming

from such a background, UNESCO and especially IIEP quickly gained the reliance and the

business of these donors:

[…] Working at UNESCO headquarters, our hands are very much bound by administration. Working in the field, you have a lot more freedom. UNESCO is not as regulated as UNICEF is—it's not a fund—[it] doesn't have to manage funds; we [are] supposed to be a technical organization. So you can find the worst and the best: you can have niches—you can create niches where you have excellence.

When you have that, World Bank colleagues are the first ones to come and to jump into the boat and to want to work with you […].

[… So] we have been working with the World Bank for example on very interesting research—country research—and then on number of related workshops with ministries on the integration of budgets and planning.

[… So] at that time, you know, the World Bank was very interested in working with us.

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

The need for a politically neutral agency then becomes apparent and pressing in a global development assistance landscape increasingly characterized by donor—recipient power dependence. Just as the interviewee acknowledges, UNESCO and specifically IIEP take the opportunity to "create niches where [they] have excellence" (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017). It is also important, if not imperative, for IIEP to maintain its image as a purely technical organization, which means avoiding voicing its ideologies and political views to the best it can. This imperative is not necessarily solely in response to demands for technical consultancy but is determined in its relationships with client countries as well. This comes up in an expert's answer to my question of whether IIEP has the authority to impose visions or strategies in its work with countries:

[First,] we don't want obviously to impose a vision—that's indeed correct mainly because […] we will not be held politically accountable for what a government commits to do. The government will be held politically accountable, not we.

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Technically maybe we have some accountability, so when we support an education sector plan and technically it's a massive document and [utterly] unbelievable, and utterly unfeasible, yes there it would be argued IIEP did not do its work properly. [...] I mean we're not necessarily accountable as I say for [particular] choices that are made which are policy choices, for which, as indicated, the government will be politically accountable—first point.

Second point, [...] in order for any education sector plan or policy or strategy to be implemented, you do need internal convictions and internal commitment. And we've seen too many examples—not necessarily in this area but for instance [about] fiscal predictability and all that sort of thing—we've seen many examples where governments, in order to obtain funds, or simply just to be looked at benevolently by donors, the government commits on paper to things under pressure, but afterwards they never do. So it's not necessarily very helpful, neither effective, to put pressure when the pressure has not translated into internal conviction.

Thirdly, we are a relatively small place. We don't have financial [authority]. We cannot— we cannot put much pressure beyond the moral pressure, which only weighs as much as somebody's conscience.

[...]

That's why we stress values—that's why we can put some pressure—but as I say if on the other side of the table you have somebody whose conscience is light, the pressure is very light. But even the World Bank, for instance, or the IMF who have significant financial pressure have not always succeeded in getting governments to change course.

<div align="center">(Interview 5, personal communication, October 25, 2017)</div>

The position that IIEP thus takes in a landscape heavily infected with political sensitivity

is to portray itself as a technical provider with a set of values bestowed on them that they strongly

emphasize and defend. Not only does it lack bargaining grounds in its relationships with donors,

the positions it takes to its work with client countries are not equipped with the authority to

impose visions or strategies. But to this point where IIEP's values and principles as a UN/ESCO

entity may be threatened or compromised, there are real needs for effective coping strategies.

IIEP, though itself not as political nor as value-centric an organization as UN/ESCO—its

grand/parent organizations, has welded into the latter's values and visions as a source of legitimacy and sometimes soft power (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017; Wanner, 2015). In a follow-up interview five months after my field trip ended, this expert informed that IIEP was at that time working on formalizing a set of values and visions that they defend as an organization—a set of guidance for its experts to engage in the highly political work of technical cooperation (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018).

The dilemma of competing ideologies

The dilemma of access and quality is inherently connected to a larger and much more complex dilemma—the dilemma of competing ideologies—which also has to do with the different ways equity is conceptualized and approached through policy. The dilemma is quite thoughtfully raised in my conversation with a senior expert in the training department, who explained how different ideologies often lend different understandings and approaches to the same terms and concepts, and how such differences often dictate the policy priorities and interventions:

> *[I]f you look at the different political parties—for example in the U.S. over the years—that they're quite comfortable using the term equity, and they interpret it in different ways, but essentially they see where there is some kind of common ground amongst people: those people see equity is as related to fairness.*
>
> *Now certain political groups essentially see it as equal opportunity so if a child has the opportunity to go to a decent school then you're doing as much as you should for that child: you just have to give them that opportunity, and it can be through things like privatization of education although there's a lot of research now which suggests that privatization is not good for equity. So it can be interpreted in many different ways you know.*

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If you have more of a sort of socialist type approach to inclusion, normally it means you believe in investment in public schools or state schools, and that the schools where children have got more challenges—maybe a lot actually—invest more money per capita in those schools than you would in the other schools, so it means like positive compensation to try to address the imbalances.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Looking back on the case of the Caribbean nation at the beginning of this chapter, this dilemma becomes apparent. The choice for public policy to address the precarity of inequity in access to education in this country, given the context, is very much an ideological one: it very much depends upon the world view of the policy makers and the consulting experts to determine a cooperative solution. The expert who raises the case, weighing on the potential dangers of an unregulated market, offers a glimpse into his viewpoint:

[…] For me [to define equity is] to relate to the question of whether education is a public good or not. I believe in the role the state has to play [to make] an even playing field for everybody, because if it's not the case, then education becomes mass merchandise like any other product.

And as usual only those who have the money can afford to get good education; those who can't get second-, third-, fourth-best education for the children, and therefore they are doomed to remain [in] the same [socioeconomic] strata. So in my view there should be [an] interventionist—or interventionistic—role of the state in the field of education to make sure that all citizens in country have equal educational opportunities.

And that implies having some special efforts made for those who are starting from lower. Otherwise if we focus just on those who get relatively easy access, then others who are— especially as I mentioned before: girls, people with handicap, and somehow all of these features—will never get to a quality education; so the investment must be very conscious.

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

This ideological debate penetrates every aspect of the work of IIEP, where in their interaction with countries they often encounter ideological conflicts. This ideological conflict is

identified as a debate between social responsibility on the part of the state and personal

responsibility on the part of the learners and parents, a reflection on the differing notions of

justice captured by Amartya Sen (2009) in Chapter 2:

> *[The ideological question]—the large question—[is] how much individual responsibility is*
> *there, and how much social responsibility is there. That's a long-standing question and it's*
> *at the heart of most policy choices—all of the discussions on positive discrimination to a*
> *large extent—it's how much of the responsibility for the present disadvantaged positions of*
> *people: is it a personal responsibility or how much of a social responsibility.*
>
> *It's [an] ideological debate and it does it does play out from time to time [when] we have to*
> *support a country with education sector plans because that leads to specific questions on*
> *what—to whom do we give scholarships? Do we give scholarships indeed on the basis simply*
> *of achievement [in] secondary school for instance, or do we give scholarships with a*
> *preferential treatment for those specific disadvantaged groups who claimed that the social*
> *discrimination that they have suffered from for years justifies these scholarships?*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The expert in this interview draws specifically on a specific issue in their international

cooperation work with a country, namely whether the distribution of scholarships be based on

needs or on merits, to underline this debate. Their own non-neutral stance in ideological debates

acknowledged, the extent to which they characterize their arguments, however, lies not in

ideological preference but in the strength of the arguments, which very much depend upon the

social and political contexts of their work:

> *[…] Well, that's an ideological discussion—important and one that we one that we need to*
> *be aware of, and I think one where each of us individually can have a position, but we are*
> *to some extent of our position—if ever we enter into such a debate at a local level—should*
> *be—I'm not sure if it can ever be neutral—but should be where our own ideological*
> *preference should not be an argument.*

The arguments should lie [in] the strength of the argument, if you understand what I mean. What I mean is that if in a particular country context, [if] a particular government which has legitimacy argues that this is the particular policy, we'll follow.

Just saying something [on] scholarships to continue with this thing—scholarships should be given on a meritocratic basis. We can always highlight what will be the implications, but we should not—we should not—we should not impose a position simply because we disagree ideologically. But this doesn't happen all that much—this doesn't happen all that much.

The political issues are more ideal—what I'm talking about. There's a little bit in there linked of course to technical issues, to political issues—that's where we do from time to time have a real confrontation: who are the groups that the government will recognize as being disadvantaged, and that it will want to focus its positive—let's say it's helpful—policies on.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The situation described in this interview portrays a peculiar dilemma on the part of IIEP itself in its cooperation with countries. This ties back to the competing forces of legitimacy and performance discussed in subsequent chapters. As a UN/ESCO organization, on the one hand, they enter their work on various ideological positions that must conform to their parent and grandparent organizations. On the other hand, the political and ideological contexts of the countries where they work often regulates different registers and protocols. The irony finds its way into their work, especially in technical cooperation, when these two sets of values and circumstances are at odds with one another. In an interview, one expert who was recently dispatched on a mission to a country that has just undergone broad social, political and economic reforms contemplated on the potential problems she might run into given the country's context. The country, through a series of swift and surprising political reforms, had just recently reverted its closed-door policy and opened its doors to international cooperation and development prospects, which drew both praise and an inpouring of development projects from

the international community. At the same time, however, there were rising ethnic tensions that led to a humanitarian crisis heavily criticized and condemned internationally. Just before a group of experts at IIEP was dispatched on a cooperative mission to strengthen the sector planning and management capacity of the country educational administration, the United Nations released a scathing report condemning the nation's government handling of the situation, which led to a mass emigration crisis. The expert laid out insights into how the values that she carries and transmits as a UN staff member and her own personal convictions met the reality of the context where she will be working:

> *I'm going to [country] next week and I'm really confused as to what and how I will carry out the work there—you know with all of this going on with the [ethnic tension] crisis. The government has made it a point to forbid talks on the subject, and we have been advised not to bring it up to avoid confrontations where necessary, but I find it difficult, especially since I'm also Buddhist. But we also realize that this might be the only good chance that we have to help teachers and planners there, and they have not had this kind of chance for a very very long time. My plan is to play it by ear—perhaps to not bring it up in our work with the ministry—at government level—but to address it in our work with local teachers and planners.*

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

That sometimes put the work of IIEP in a difficult dilemma: it has to choose between advancing values central to its own identity and not risking the hard-earned chances it has to access and advance meaningful work for the common good. This dilemma also represents a legitimacy—operation conflict that characterizes the organizational existence of IIEP, where protecting and promoting values central to its grand/parent organizations (UN/ESCO) lends legitimacy to its organization transactions and conducts, while its ability to adapt to and navigate

the political climates and contexts where it works to a large extent determines both the processes

and successes of its work (see Chapter 7).

Navigating tensions: the politics of technical cooperation

How then do the experts navigate such tensions? A senior expert in the technical

cooperation department describes such an approach:

> *[In] a certain country where there are evident ethnic tensions, this [ethnic inequity] cannot be discussed openly. What can be discussed are of course gender differences, because these are relatively evident, regional—differences between regions—maybe sometimes a little bit social [differences], sometimes a [little] bit of language groups, but language and ethnicity is of course very close. But usually [when] a government feels that ethnic differences are particularly sensitive, mainly because of the fear of separatism, or simply because a government—a specific ethnic group within the government—wants to control—[to] continue to control the power, it is difficult for us to emphasize that this is the main problem.*
>
> *[And] the position we tend to take then is one more of values than specific policies—people defend the value of non-discrimination; we will defend the importance of equality and the usefulness of equity-focused approaches—in more general terms. But we will not necessarily insist that this specific problem that the government does not want to discuss be discussed if it with would not allow us to go ahead with supporting this government, because the position of then moving out and saying it's no longer our business is not necessarily the most constructive position.*
>
> <div align="center">(Interview 5, personal communication, October 25, 2017)</div>

As evident in this answer, the approach that IIEP employs to navigate these difficult

political dilemmas has been one of compromise and go-around. The experts pragmatically

avoided tensions where countries draw a firm line, but do not forsake their institutional values

nor the ideological grounds with which they came into the work. As clarified in the exchange

below, they also consciously and continuously try to positively influence governments through their work, and they do so in good faith and for good reasons: they come into the work often not in the staunch position of a donor nor with the authority to have some say over the governing decisions of the states, but rather in the modest roles of technical consultants often perceived by states to (should) be apolitical. When faced with the choice to be able to advance the work with concessions and compromises, or to risk having the chance to work at all, it makes calculated sense to opt for the former:

> *So it's a [very] tricky situation but my personal view is that you still have got to work with [those] governments and [part of] our role I think is to start to subtly leverage governments—to influence governments—so that they improve rather than saying we won't work with you.*
>
> *So sometimes the conditions of working with the government are essentially set by the government, so for example if you take [a country where ethnic tensions are evident], we can still be looking at issues of equity: we can be raising issues of different ethnic minority groups; we can be looking at issues of disability which are very neglected in [this country].*
>
> *At the same time, the government will not really allow us to bring the [ethnic crisis] into the discourse and that is highly regrettable, but at least if we are doing something useful for equity for other groups within that country, maybe we can also in time persuade the government to take more positive approach towards the [oppressed minority] people in a more inclusive approach.*

(*Interview* 6, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

And this work-around approach can be effective. The expert recounts an incidence where technical cooperation in education worked to address corruption issues in a country, where the alternative question was whether UN agencies should be present in highly corrupt countries:

> *[We] developed […] a school-based textbook program, so we trained all school committees in managing textbooks. [It's] a very good way of reducing corruption within a country because the school committees managed textbook supply, so rather than standing on the*

podium and criticizing the government for corruption, you do something systemic to try to reduce corruption. And I think we can do the same thing in terms of educational planning: if we can demonstrate that bringing other ethnic minority groups—making the education system more inclusive for them—brings good results, maybe that can persuade the government to take a more positive attitude to the [oppressed minority] for example.

Not being there is not a solution, so we just have to negotiate the best position we can, given the values of the of the UN human rights and so on.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

The problem, however, would be much easier if it were just a legitimacy—operation dilemma. It also spills into the technical aspects of IIEP's work. In some cases, making concessions to political demands from these countries does not exactly help, given the technical nature of the work they are conducting:

But that can be a difficulty at times, and we've worked in [countries where] these ethnic tensions are quite evident, but where it's very difficult to have to have them appear in the education sector plan, partly for political reasons, but [also a technical one].

Because obviously—because—I mean it's a cycle there—it's the chicken and egg: because the government does not want this issue to be very visible, no data [are] collected on it, and because no data are collected on it, it's very difficult to make it visible. Because there are no data, it's not visible [and] there are no policies.

[And] that's what for us technically a difficult issue, and yeah when you have little data or no data, or when the few data that are being collected are collected outside of the formal system—let's say outside of the ministry, not the public administration but through NGO's—and so it's very easy to de-legitimize this from a technical and political point of view. But even for socio-economic disparities which in many cases may reflect ethnic disparities, and it's not easy, because those data are not always available.

The easiest—the data that are most easily available—are gender—boys, girls, both sexes—and location, because that's—I mean—the school is somewhere: you can't say hey the school was in a different province, and in you can't say hey this is uh—I mean—most children know if they are boys or girls.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The exchange highlights the familiar situation where politics infiltrates and hinders the technical work that IIEP pursues in the countries. When much of the work it conducts relies on up-to-date and reliable data, the complex political situations it finds itself in oftentimes obscures the validity and reliability of the data it collects. Obtaining data from alternative sources —often less authoritative and less legitimate—does little help. The technical aspect of the difficulty IIEP finds in contexts such as this also emphasizes that it is impossible for them to approach their cooperation with countries from a purely technical standpoint: there is always politics involved, and how IIEP negotiates and manages such political constraints and tensions largely determines the successes or failures of its work. This situation is further complicated by the role IIEP identifies for itself as a provider of technical assistance, which to some extent stands largely in contrast to that of UNESCO as "a standard setter" for global education policy:

> *Now you still have to keep in mind that there is a difference between […] UNESCO and IIEP, though we are part of UNESCO. Not everybody agrees with what I will [say] and sometimes I don't agree with it either, but UNESCO is also what we call the standard setter: UNESCO also has a normative role. UNESCO [has] this whole SDG [Sustainable Development Goal] 4 agenda which [allows] it really to play a role of advocacy much more than we [IIEP] do—well or more than we do—not always more effectively but okay more than we do.*
>
> *We at IIEP, we are more into technical assistance, technical support, guidance, advice, but probably it a little bit less in norm-setting and in advocacy—a little bit less. And—or as I say—we may defend different values, but not necessarily specific strategies; we may defend visions but not necessarily specific interventions.*
>
> *So so—I know it's a little bit of a—I mean there is of course a thin line, but that's the way we try from time to time to get on to it […].*

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The dilemma exemplifies the underlying tension between legitimacy and performance, as will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. The more-or-less solidified role of IIEP as a provider of technical assistance limits its authority in issues concerning values and ideologies, for which it often refers to and echoes its parent and grandparent organizations. This on the one hand may make it easier for the organization to navigate and avoid potential political tensions, but on the other hand may also lay out difficulties and hindrances to the technical side of their work. The non-advocacy characteristic of its image may also hinder the impact and sustainability of its cooperation with countries, which in many respects are the very goal of technical cooperation.

Conclusion

The chapter summarizes and describes several problems and dilemmas that IIEP face in its core activities, especially in the work of technical cooperation. The sources of such problems and dilemmas are inherently varied. They can come from the intricate political landscape of global development assistance, where the interests of both donor and developing countries may complicate the technical realities in which IIEP situates it work. They can come from the complex social, political, and economic contexts of the countries in which its works. They can come from the competing sets of ideologies and discourses that lend rationale, legitimacy, and resources to the work of education planning and addressing equity problems in education. These problems and dilemmas require IIEP to employ different strategies to resolving conflicts and

disagreements: often they require taking a stand and defend values and virtues; often they require making concessions and compromises for the sake of advancing the work.

The greater dilemma, however, is that these problems and dilemmas both complicate and guide the work of IIEP, arguably adding to its repertoire of knowledge and understanding of problems in education equity across the world. They aid the comparative focus that lies in the technical DNA of the institute, and yet stress the case where national contexts can lend different shades and meanings to the same equity issues. They present a set of social and technical constraints that the organization must disentangle to push forth its work, but these same set of constraints may also benefit the organization into emphasizing its own organizational identity and devising a coping strategy that roots into the legitimacy—performance dynamics, thus emboldening its organizational learning in navigating tensions in the field.

CHAPTER 6. THE INSTITUTE

This chapter explores the organizational structure of UNESCO-IIEP and how it is related to the concept of education equity that permeates the work of the organization. It examines the technical core of the institute, which encircles the core activities of technical cooperation, training, and research. It describes how the institute, as an organization, allocates, manages, and distributes resources around and towards its core activities, and how the technical and social spaces are shaped within its organizational boundaries. The chapter argues that UNESCO-IIEP, with the mobilization of its core resources around technical cooperation, training, and research, allows for a solidification of its technical knowledge and expertise through mutually enhancing processes of work. In relation to equity, this structure in turn allows for a deep, multifaceted understanding of equity across issues and country contexts. The other organizational features and resources are structured and utilized to support the work of this technical core.

Introduction

From the diverse dimensions and aspects of education equity discussed in Chapter 4, this chapter moves on to describing the organizational features of UNESCO-IIEP. These features are characterized with a strong and well-connected technical core that makes up the key activities of the organization, encircling technical cooperation, training, and research. The elements of the technical core are interlinked by the institute's requirement for its experts, technically referred to as program specialists, to perform duties in all three areas of the core: though housed specifically within distinct units, they are each expected to design courses and implement training programs,

take part in technical cooperation projects based on their technical capacity and expertise, and produce research outputs. This feature of a strong technical core and tight connections allows the institute to effectively function with weak decoupling (J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1978) and directs its survival strategy towards strengthening this core.

The strong coupling of the technical elements at IIEP is streamlined through the ways technical activities are combined and weaved together, the combined roles that the technical experts—most of whom program specialists—play, and the distribution of resources among these activities. Although each of the core activities is led by a distinct team with its own plans and agendas, they are all considered shared responsibilities among program specialists and highlighted in their job descriptions. The triple roles that the program specialists take also afford shared vision and expertise across the core activities.

Beyond the core activities of technical cooperation, training, and research, other arrangements and resources at the institute are directed towards its functional and social aspects. These include technically oriented resources, such as IT, library, and publishing services; leadership and administrative resources such as communications, personnel, and finance; as well as social and communal services, such as the cafeteria, the staff-run coffee stand, and the institute wellness programs. These resources and arrangements surround and support the core activities of the institute, emphasizing both its formal and social images.

In relation to equity, the organizational features of IIEP give sense to the diversity and complexity of the many conceptual dimensions of equity discussed in the previous chapter: the

technical arrangement that spreads personal expertise across the three aspects of the technical

core helps convey the depth of many conceptual dimensions of equity, while the combined

technical responsibilities that each expert takes enrich their understanding of equity issues and

problems that is grounded in practice, teaching, and research. The institutional and social

arrangement within the institute allows for a good mutual learning and sharing environment that

reinforces shared organizational knowledge and expertise.

The technical core

The body of work at the core of UNESCO-IIEP's activities consists of three main areas:

technical cooperation, where it engages with donors and aids-receiving countries on designing,

preparing, and implementing education planning and management programs; *training*, where it

designs and delivers annual and on-demand training programs on education planning and

management; and *research and development*, where it develops and strengthens its capacity and

expertise by contributing to knowledge dialogues and fora on education planning and

management. At IIEP, these three elements of the core are housed within three technical

departments in the building. At present, the institute carries out a sizeable number of technical

cooperation, training, and research programs, which are briefly described in the table below:

Table 5: Programs in technical cooperation, training, and research at UNESCO-IIEP
(Information extracted from IIEP, 2017)

Technical cooperation	Training	Research
Preparation of strategic plan: IIEP works with	**Advanced training programme (ATP):** flagship,	**Gender equality:** IIEP initiated the gender

Technical cooperation	Training	Research
countries to draft education sector plans according to their budgets and needs. IIEP also provides national or local workshops with education planners to design and use simulation models to address the needs of education systems.	annual, Master-level program in education planning and management, consisting of a 3-month online and a 6-month residential phase	mainstreaming project of its training materials to generate impacts through trainees responsible for making policy about gender equality in education. IIEP was also involved in a pilot program (2012—2013) and a comparative case study on gender equality on learning outcomes and learning environment.
Sector diagnosis: The Pôle de Dakar supports African governments in the production of Country Status Report (CSR), which provides a detailed analysis of a country's education system to support effective policy making.	**Education sector planning course (ESP):** focused course on areas of education sector planning, such as education sector diagnosis, plan preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Combines a 12-week online phase and a 13-week residential phase.	**Teacher careers:** IIEP conducts research on teacher career reforms in Columbia, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Lithuania, Mexico, USA, Peru, Scotland, South Africa, and Thailand to provide policy makers and governments with a variety of policy options with regards to the organization and management of teacher careers.
Financing of systems & plans: Supported by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), IIEP Paris and Pôle de Dakar work with UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) to develop methodologies tom improve national reporting on financing flow. The work is conducted in 8 GPE countries (5 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2 in Asia, 1 in Central America).	**Specialized courses programme (SCP):** six specialization courses in 2 streams: *Educational Planning and Analysis* (EPA) and *Educational Planning and Management* (EPM). SCP is also part of the ATP.	**Cities and Education 2030:** IIEP is launching a new research program to examine the growing role of cities in education planning and management in the contexts and demands of SDG 4.

Technical cooperation	Training	Research
Monitoring and evaluation: IIEP offers support to countries in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of their education sector plans.	**eLearning:** IIEP Virtual Campus offers online courses and MOOCs for education professionals on education planning and management. Participants receive an IIEP-UNESCO certificate upon completion.	**Learning assessment data:** IIEP's research project that explores how countries in Sub-Saharan Africa use learning data in planning and what factors lead to its use.
Tools for planning: IIEP provides, at the request of ministries and agencies, tools and skills to support the monitoring and evaluation of sector plans, such as Education Management Information System (EMIS), simulation modeling, micro-planning and school mapping, and capacity assessment.	**IIEP Buenos Aires training:** Offered in Spanish at IIEP Buenos Aires office. Includes the *Regional Training Program in Education Policy Planning and Management*, as well as online programs on *Digital Policies in Education, Teacher Policies*, and *Educational Evaluation Policies*.	**Governance and quality assurance:** research project launched in 2014 to generate knowledge and provide evidence-based policy advice to national and institutional higher education leaders on existing innovative and cost-effective solutions for internal quality assurance (IQA) systems in universities.
Conflict and disaster risk reduction: IIEP works with ministries in crisis-prone countries to ensure crisis-sensitive planning processes. IIEP also works with governments, donors, and organizations to develop capacities for crisis-sensitive education planning.	**Pôle de Dakar training:** Pôle de Dakar and University of Gambia offer Sectoral Analysis and Management of the Education System (SAMES) to African official, covering the first year of a full Master's degree program.	**Open school data:** research program to promote citizen control over the transfer and use of financial, material, and human resources of education systems. IIEP spearheaded and reviewed 14 school report card initiatives to encourage transparency and accountability in schools (2014), conducted a study tour on My School initiative in Australia (2016), published 6 case studies on Asia and the Pacific (2018), produced two regional reports (SSA and Latin America) (2019), and

Technical cooperation	Training	Research
		held a policy forum in Manila (2018).
Supporting training centers: IIEP works with national training institutions in education planning and management to develop their capacities to deliver their own training offer for stronger impact.	**Tailor-made training:** IIEP provides ongoing in-country short courses and workshops (1—4 weeks) at the request of member states.	**Open government in education:** IIEP research project that seeks to promote more responsible, effective, and innovative education planning with focus on citizen involvement, with exploratory work conducted in 2018, and a workshop held in France in 2019.
		School grants: comprehensive research conducted in collaboration with GPE and UNICEF on the design and implementation of school grant policies in Eastern and Southern African countries, East Asia and the Pacific, and French-speaking countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.
		Demographic shifts in Asia and education policy: research conducted between 2015 and 2017 on demographic change in Asia and its implications for education policy, focusing on 3 country cases of Malaysia, Republic of Korea, and India.
		Youth participation: IIEP research program designed to assist ministries of education in engaging with young people as a stakeholder in

Technical cooperation	Training	Research
		participatory planning process.
		Planning for teachers in times of crisis and displacement: a multi-country, multi-level research program to identify successful teacher management policies, strategies, and practices in refugee contexts.

During my time at the institute, I was able to catch a glimpse into each of them, through a combination of observations, conversations, interviews, or direct involvement in their activities, to be described hereafter.

Technical cooperation

The technical department is the biggest department of the institute, with a team of fifteen people and is expanding. Its offices occupy most of the fourth floor of 7-9 rue Eugène Delacroix, and its overseas missions are noted on the schedules and programs of the whole institute.

The main task of the department is to work with donors, governments, ministries, and country-level education personnel to provide consultancy and support on education planning. The major mode of operation usually involves a tripartite model whereby IIEP works upon requests of donors to support an aids-receiving country within the provisions of development aids. In other cases, however, IIEP also works upon requests from individual countries to provide

its expertise and consultancy on education system planning and management. As succinctly

recounted by the head of the department, the work of technical cooperation at IIEP entails:

> *So the work of technical cooperation—the main task in technical cooperation—is to support countries at today request usually to help them produce education sector analyses, education sector plans, or to help them use the tools that they may need in order to prepare education sector analyses and education sector plans.*
>
> *The set of project[s], or rather the eclectic set, we have at the moment about twenty projects. Some of them are long term projects in the sense that they are 2-3 years, really aimed at strengthening ministry in the preparation of an education sector plan or strengthening a training institute. Some of them are short interventions focusing for instance [on] doing a specific training workshop sometimes or developing—improving—the education management information system or developing a local level analysis of education systems, a bit linked to what we call school mapping micro planning, so relatively growth sort of projects.*

<div align="center">(Interview 5, personal communication, October 25, 2017)</div>

The technical cooperation projects at IIEP go through a formal initiation procedure,

whereby country ministries and administrations of education, through different channels,

contact IIEP with plans for technical assistance. A request will then be made for consideration at

the leadership level of the institute, after which communications between IIEP, the country

representatives, and relevant stakeholders to discuss how the case could be supported. Once the

relevant parties have reached an agreement, the formal cooperation begins. The head of the

technical cooperation at IIEP describes the process:

> *So how it works usually is that an individual in many cases who knows us will one way or another convince the decision makers that IIEP is the place to go to, and then a request will arrive here; it can go to the Director's office or to me or to one of the colleagues. We will discuss internally how we will respond to that request, and then we decide if we go ahead or not, and we sign the agreement.*

As for the sources of such initiations, they can come in different ways. Over the course of its half-century history, IIEP has worked and built relationships with many countries and governments. Its training program, which started from the beginning of its organizational history, has produced as many cohorts of educational leaders, planners, administrators, policy makers, and practitioners the world over. It is often from this alumni network that initiations are attempted and requests are made (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). During the time I was there, I was twice consulted by the Technical Cooperation Department for help drafting up a response to such requests from my home country, both from the legislative (National Assembly) and executive (Ministry of Education) levels.

Furthermore, IIEP's technical expertise and its reputation as a premiere institute on education planning has also won the trust of many funders and donors in the global development assistance landscape. It is often these donors and funders who request IIEP's assistance in their work supporting developing countries (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017). IIEP's support to these agencies may involve direct work with the national and local governments in the recipient countries as hired and dispatched by the funders (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017), or to provide training and capacity building to the education support teams working for these agencies, as with the case supporting EU education specialists detailed in Chapter 4.

Its status as a UNESCO affiliate also renders its legitimacy in matters involving the

technical jurisprudence of UNESCO, such as global education monitoring as part of the pre-2015

Education for All and the post-2105 *Education 2030* initiatives (UNESCO, 1990, 2000; UNESCO

et al., 2015). This explains the expanding list of clients served by IIEP, as well as its expanding

technical cooperation team. Towards the end of my field research, as the start of the 39th

UNESCO General Conference drew near, the institute received visits after visits of country

delegate attending the conference. These delegates were from countries in technical cooperation

projects with IIEP, or those who had collaborated with the institute in the past.
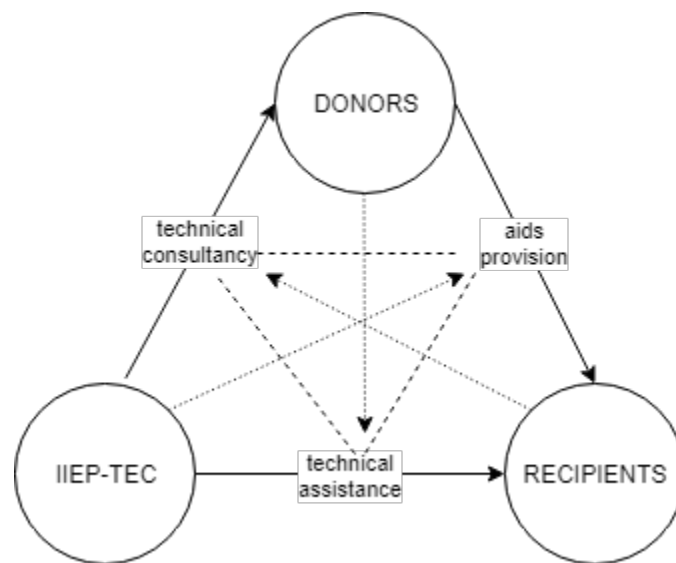
Figure 4: IIEP technical cooperation (TEC) model

Figure 6 describes the technical cooperation model of UNESCO-IIEP, whereby it

provides technical consultancy to donors and funders and technical assistance to country

recipients. This tripartite model highlights the technical role of IIEP in education development

assistance. Besides providing direct services to both donors and recipients, IIEP can also facilitate

the aids provision process by connecting donors and recipients, but this would happen less

regularly in technical cooperation.

Beyond the work that IIEP carries out with individual countries, IIEP has in the past

provided technical assistance to unions and groups of countries, or technical allegiances among

countries. One notable case was the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring

Education Quality (SACMEQ). Established from a joint initiative with UNESCO-IEEP at the

onset of the *Education for All* program in early 1990, the organization has since grown to provide

solutions to education planning, management, and quality monitoring among Southern and

Eastern African countries (SACMEQ, n.d.). An expert recounted her former involvement with a

SACMEQ project back in 1994:

> *[In] 1994 [I started] to work with the network called SACMEQ—the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality—which is a large-scale learning assessment network. And almost all my work and the time was [related] to the creation of this network and then doing the implementation of the large-scale learning assessment of the grade 6 in 15 African countries, and that continued until 2014.*
>
> *The project [was] the reading, mathematics, and HIV/AIDS knowledge of the grade 6 level. So SAQMEC [is] an intergovernmental organization, nonprofit of course, which was created by IIEP. And it started with about seven countries as the members, and we built the capacity of the ministries of education in order to run the learning assessments.*
>
> *That means to review the curriculum to be tested, to write the test questions, and then to design the samples, and then to go to the schools and collect data, enter and clean data, analyze data, report, writing, and then how you negotiate with the policy makers about what is happening […], so that whole cycle is [essentially] capacity building.*
>
> *So—well—the IIEP's role was to build the capacity, not necessarily to use the data. But then we needed to let them use [those] data to write some report[s], but without IIEP's intervention it was not possible for them to actually use the data, so we were also writing some articles together and then doing more capacity building about how to write and how to do the analysis.*

And in the countries that reported there's always regional differences, there's gender differences, the difference between the socioeconomic levels, groupings, and the school locations—one at a time. And then also we try to combine those variables and then try to see the gender differences in different socioeconomic [groups] or in different school locations.

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

It was through this big collaborative project between IIEP and SACMEQ that the questions of equity—especially gender equity—were raised. The large-scale survey and assessment program that laid out the foundation for their joint analyses and reports addressed gender equity through different lenses and dimensions, as will be discussed in depth by the same expert in chapter 6. Throughout this initiative, IIEP's role—starting out—was that of technical assistance and consultation, with an aim of developing and strengthening the consortium's capacity over time.

The collaboration lasted until 2014, when IIEP decided it was time to reduce its involvement and to support SACMEQ in strengthening its capacity as an individual organization (*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). Nevertheless, the initiative, and the collaboration resulting from it, was a success and an important lesson in large-scale technical cooperation at the institute—one that is yet to be replicated in the history of global educational development cooperation. Reflecting on the collaboration, the expert noted the technical reasoning that ensured sustainability as the program developed and scaled up, which was the mark of success for large-scale technical cooperation programs:

The important thing about the SACMEQ was right from the start they were using a scale which can be used throughout time, so basically some of the items were just the same

throughout the years. Well, the core items were the same, and then some other items were of course different.

And so by using [a] kind of item response theory thinking—it is possible to think of it as a kind of a theoretical big test bank, and then in 2000 we take fifty here, in 2007 we take thirty-six here—different countries can come in and we can take these, but then behind all of that, all the items are connected as a kind of a big theoretical test.

And it was more than a training program. It was technical assistance—not at the country level, but it was a regional technical assistance project. And so we tend to gather all of the countries together, and then we give training and the techniques and then they go and we accompany them when they do the data collection, and we do the things together, and that was something that was happening. It's a big huge project.

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

The success of this initiative could easily be traced back to its technicalities. It also addressed one of the major problems that IIEP faces in its work with countries: the unavailability of data for equity analysis. The "big test bank" that SACMEQ developed in cooperation with IIEP allowed its analyses and reports to dig into and discuss equity issues that would otherwise be at least misleadingly assumed. One of such instances, the intersection of gender and socioeconomic variables, is discussed in Chapter 4.

Although the work I was assigned to during the stay at IIEP did not involve technical cooperation projects, my conversations with the experts in the department provided a vivid glimpse into how the work in the department is conducted, or more precisely, how IIEP's work in the field takes place. The following vignette, taken from one such conversations, describes how a formal planning meeting, a typical part of IIEP's work in country sites, would go. As we shall see in this example, the institute's work in the field is often met with contextual problems that complicate their approach, and which often overshadow the focus of equity.

I'll give a concrete example of a policy dialogue—let's say—that I was involved in [in] a specific country.

And we have worked together with the ministry. We have an analysis of the education sector and its challenges that is ready. We organize a [participatory] consultation with a lot of people because the ministry decides that—okay—the ministry staff has to be there, at least representatives of teacher unions, or teacher associations, universities, some of the professional—let's say employers organizations, some of the different churches—different religious groups will be present because they also have a number of schools and they're interested—and local government.

You bring these people together. Local government include[s] people from different ethnic groups because it's a country that is ethnically diverse. We bring these people together—a hundred fifty to about two hundred people—for discussion. We organize it quite well to treat a discussion and so on. We organize it quite well with different working groups and so all in different plenary sessions.

Now what actually happens is that among these groups, the ones that actually can most easily express themselves are university heads—the heads of universities, the vice chancellors or whatever, or the deans because these are the people who know the language. They know—you know—they have the technical jargon, but also they are used to talking to a big group of people and so on.

And so… And as there were thirty universities, all universities were invited because you can't decide your own, and so in a group of one hundred fifty, thirty people it's already quite a bit. Obviously the higher educated—I mean compared to let's say the disadvantaged groups who live far away, who might have been represented by one or two people—it's a completely unbalanced, even if there were good arguments for that representation.

And then once people participate in meetings it is not always those who have the—it's not always those [who] should be listened to the most who are the ones who will talk the most. [Whatever] the result that actually [were], that whole process became biased to some extent towards listening mainly to the university staff, for reasons that you know—yes so the representation is unbalanced.

[…] It was well run, quite well directed also, but it was quite unbalanced in the actual representation but especially in the people who could talk. So these are some of the political problems but also sometimes practical problems [which] translate into significant issues afterwards.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The vignette above reveals not only a glimpse into how technical cooperation between IIEP and recipient countries takes place, but also a hint into the problems facing the work, as in this case the power dynamics that shapes policy planning, especially at national and local levels. Another issue raised in my interviews with members of the technical cooperation team involves the difficulties stemming from a lack of data that is often the results of complex political and technical dynamics in the field (see Chapter 6). As the case above indicates, the difficulties for education sector plans to sufficiently address the needs and problems of under-represented minorities also stem from their under-representation in policy debates and planning meetings. For the work of technical cooperation to be mindful of this gap is a challenge, especially when the context of the field often delegitimizes this issue, due to both ignorance and expediency, which is why, in laying out the strategies for technical cooperation, issues of accommodating the needs and raising the voice of disadvantaged groups are stressed:

> *[Another issue is strengthening] the voice of those who are not sufficiently heard precisely because they are among disadvantaged groups, so that's more of a political issue to some extent. But it would mean—though it's not easy to do—but that would mean that in the more consultative, participatory process around plan analysis, around plan design and so on, or around education planning and management, that that we actively look for those groups whose voice at the moment is not heard because they are disadvantaged.*
>
> *But that of course it's the technical issue; it is easier to solve than the political issue. That to me seems already two major issues.*

> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The approach pursued by the institute is precisely a technical one: to expand the sets of data available for education planning, and to analyze them in a way that includes many voices

from disadvantaged groups. Acknowledging as they did that it would be difficult to tackle the

political side of the problem, the technical solutions are nonetheless clear and promising:

> *This being said, I think I would say there are several issues. There are some of the more technical issues: it is indeed widening our database on those categories—those groupings on which we don't have sufficient data, or maybe so that would be—as I mentioned already—socioeconomic groups, sometimes ethnic groups, sometimes languages groups and so on, or maybe even if because sometimes those data exist but they're not easily available, they're not well known and so on.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *So probably it might not always be necessary to do much new data collection, but simply analyzing the existing data in a in a richer manner. And that that still is for me an important issue because usually when discussing equity—as I had said already—we can do this quite easily on boys and girls, a bit on locational equity if that's the right term, but not on other issues which in a number of cases are become much more important, in particular socioeconomic disparities—they remain very important, and that would be the first issue.*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The solutions do not stop at the technical, however. As the previous chapter illustrates,

the political complexities of the field also strongly characterize the work of technical cooperation.

For IIEP to navigate such tensions and complexities often requires more than just technical

solutions: it also needs to exercise political tactfulness, to make concessions and compromises,

and often to defend certain values and strategies. It is also worth noting that the technical identity

of IIEP also provides a set of constraints that it often must work with: Its technical authority is

rigidly bound within education planning and management, with issues of curriculum, content,

pedagogy, and teacher training—issues organically relevant to the work of sector analysis and

planning—often the demarcated territories of other functional departments and institutes. This

constraint is rightly acknowledged as our conversation cast a look into the future of technical

cooperation at the institute, and remains rightly a challenge for equity:

> *Now we surely need more data on some issues, we need more knowledge, we need more analysis, we probably need further thinking. One challenge we face is that we—as an institute—we tend to focus on planning and management, not on content, and that can be a challenge.*
>
> *You may have, for instance, as many boys as girls going to school and going throughout the whole system, but maybe the content of the education system remains a content that promotes some form of discrimination. We—to some extent—we don't touch that. We do it a little bit but not much, but that's partly because you have to choose: you can't be an expert in planning and management AND curriculum. It's a bit difficult.*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Equity, in this technical approach and under these institutional circumstances, lies at the

very limits of its technical mandate. It is thus a challenge for technical cooperation work at IIEP

to further the impact it may have on equity, and this challenge is widely acknowledged among its

team of experts.

Training

Training is another core activity of the institute that has been regularly conducted ever

since its founding. The year 2017 marked the 52nd session of the *Annual Training Programme*

(ATP), which has been delivered annually since 1965. Besides its flagship ATP, which is delivered

from September through October of the next year, IIEP also provides ESP courses to equip

education planners with knowledge, skills, tools, and methods to work with practical issues in

education sector planning and management. The institute occasionally hosts thematic summer

school program, which attracts education planners from all over the world, and the time I was there in 2017 happen to coincide with a summer school held exclusively for female planners. Apart from these training programs at UNESCO-IIEP main office in Paris, the institute also provides training courses in its two field offices in Dakar, Senegal and Buenos Aires, Argentina, as well as tailor-made in-country training at the request of member states (IIEP, 2014d).

The ATP—the flagship training program from IIEP—is held annually from September through October of the next year and is delivered both distantly in the participant's home country and onsite at IIEP head office in Paris. In October 2017, the African and Malgache Council for Higher Education (CAMES) officially accredited this training program as a full Master's program in education planning and management, recognizing its completion certificates as degree equivalents (IIEP, 2017g). This accreditation highlights the methodological rigor and practical applicability of the program components, as well as serving as an incentive for prospective participants.

Participants to the program usually include ministry personnel, educational administrators, policy analysists and planners at different levels, and professionals or students interested in education planning and management. Applicants must meet five criteria in order to be admitted, including a three-year minimum experience in educational planning and management or related fields, a bachelor's degree or equivalent, fluency in either English or French, office computing skills, and availability for career continuation in public service after completion (IIEP, 2017h). For these reasons, candidates for annual sessions are usually

recommended by country ministries. The 2017 cohort included ministry participants from Niger, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Vanuatu, among others. Participants are financially supported by their own country sources, and in some cases IIEP may play a part in coordinating and recommending available funding sources to participants upon request. Except for one scholarship per year for a female planner, IIEP does not give out financial aids for scholarship packages of its own (IIEP, 2017h; *Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017; *Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017).

The ATP is componentially structured, by which it can be divided into four individual components that function as standalone programs on their own. Admitted participants begin with the *Education Sector Planning* (ESP) courses, which last from September through March and consist of a 3-month online learning phase that they participate from their own countries, and a 3-month residential phase that they undertake on site in Paris. This is followed with three specialized courses (SCP) of their own choosing, in two specialization streams of *Educational Planning and Analysis* (EPA) and *Educational Planning and Management* (EPM). The residential phase completes with a tutored project, which participants carry out in May and June, and upon returning to their home countries they will design and conduct their own research project between July and October, by which time a report will be turned submitted to IIEP.

> *I arrived at IIEP at the beginning of June 2017, which marks the start of the last residential month of the 2016/2017 ATP. Participants had completed all the coursework requirements and were in the middle of conducting their tutored projects, which were mostly designed as research proposals to be conducted when they get back to their own countries at the end of June. They had been in Paris since January and had gone through five months of intensive*

coursework. Throughout their stay, they also participated in few official activities as part of the ATP program. They had had a visit to the François Mitterrand National Library of France in March, a study tour to the Regional Education Authority of Lille from February 26 to March 3 and were about to take an official tour of UNESCO headquarters, which I also joined.

I got to know some of the participants during lunches and social time in the building. Many of them were in the library for most of the time. I asked them questions about the selection process, their roles, positions, in duties in their home countries. Almost all of them came from ministry offices in their home countries and were nominated and supported to the program by national ministries of education. About half of them spoke English and part-took in the program using English, while the other half spoke French and conducted coursework and research in French. Male participants outnumbered females, which led me to raise questions of diversity and equal opportunities when most of the participants were nominated by country ministries.

As part of their tutored projects, ATP participants had to give a presentation of their final work, in which they will defend their research proposal in terms of design, methodology, and conceptual framework for implementation in their home countries upon approval by the committees. I had the chance to attend three of such defenses, two in English and another in French, which I struggled to comprehend. I could clearly sense the seriousness in the work presented and the rigorous demands of the assignment through the way the sessions were carried out, with robust questions and discussions from faculty advisors and committees.

I also attended an end-of-program feedback session, in which the head of the Training department presented the results of the end-of-program surveys. The participants seemed mostly satisfied with the quality of the program, although all of them did complain about the rigorous demands and the heavy workload within a short amount of time, for both the online learning and the residential phases. All of them reflected positively on the extracurricular activities within the program, especially the trips to Lille and to the NLF. Most took satisfaction of their living experiences in Paris and the social atmosphere in the institute, with a noted desire for more cultural diversity, especially directed at the cafeteria.

The ATP came to an end at the end of June, with a graduation and certificate conferment ceremony held on June 30. The ceremony was well-attended, with delegates from the UNESCO Executive Board and the IIEP Governing Board. The event proceeded with remarks and speeches from IIEP Director, Chairman of IIEP Governing Board, Head of the Training Department, training faculty, and a participant representative, followed by the conferment of completion certificates. The event marked the end of the residential phase of the ATP and gave the IIEP Training team a month of preparation for the summer school to commence in August.

The second major training event that took place in 2017 was the *IIEP Summer School*

lasting between August 7 and August 25. Besides the recurring ATP program, IIEP also from

time to time offers specially designed summer schools based on themes relevant to education

planning and management. The 2017 summer school was exclusively designed for and targeting

female planners. It was the first time in IIEP history that the institute only recruited female

participants for the summer school. This stemmed from the observations that countries usually

prefer to nominate and send male planners to the ATP, and female planners do not have as many

opportunities to participate in IIEP training programs (*Interview 2*, personal communication,

October 16, 2017)—a fact that I could attest to in my observation of the 2017 ATP.

In the theme of "Policy, Planning, and Leadership for Sustainable Development," the

2017 Summer School aimed to connect education planning, management, policy, and leadership

skills with the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), of which SDG 4 on

education lays out the targets and indicators for world nations to meet by the end of 2030, in the

context of global sustainable development (United Nations, n.d.-a). The SDGs have served at the

global level as the vision for development towards 2030 and have been reflected in national

development plans and strategies across the world.

The 2017 summer school consisted of a two-week online phase followed by a one-week

residential phase at IIEP head office in Paris, with a participation of 32 female planners from 23

countries. The participants were all government officials working on education planning and

management at different levels. The program was designed to bolster their knowledge and

capacity in education planning and develop leadership skills. Besides taking IIEP courses on the

subject, they also participated in a leadership skills seminar, went on a narrated tour of the

UNESCO headquarters, and joined a webinar on institutional capacity and leadership for

gender-responsive education with Nora Fyles, the Head of the United Nations Girls' Education

Initiative (UNGEI) Secretariat (IIEP, n.d.). The summer school was free of charge, with all the

costs coordinated by IIEP and institutional partners, and participants selected on a competitive

basis (IIEP, 2017c).

The summer school was very well received and well participated by the female planners,

who gathered from all over the world for the residential week in Paris. They worked hard and

participated seriously in the summer school program, reflecting positively on the content of the

training and relating them with their work back in their home countries. As explained by one

participant in the excerpt below, the training program drew a connecting line between their

work, the knowledge and skills required for the work of education planning, and the visions and

strategies laid out in SDG 4, as well as the gaps that come in between the three:

> *Lucy Gaithi, a Senior Economist in Kenya's Ministry of Devolution and Planning, said that the Summer School helped her to deepen skills in the SDGs' data requirements.*
>
> *"I've participated in the preparation on the SDG implementation data report, in terms of the progress we have reached so far. One of the things that I look for by doing this course is getting more insight into how to identify the information needs for SDG 4."*
>
> *Even during the online phase, Gaithi started to internalize a SDG-centred perspective: "During the online course I interacted with the Ministry of Education and I realized that*

they actually have a gap because while we generate a lot of statistics, they are not actually meeting the needs of the SDGs."

The course material on projection and simulation models were of particular interest to Gaithi. She says that one problem often confronted by countries progressing toward SDG 4 is that they are not able to properly cost an education plan. In its essence, educational planning is about choosing priorities, and of course, as Gaithi said, "you need to cost those priorities."

On the latter, she added, "[The simulation process] is amazing, it's something that I'm really taking home."

(IIEP, 2017f)

From my observation and from conversations with experts, trainees, and fellow interns, training—especially residential training programs in Paris—can be viewed as the signature activity of IIEP. Beginning as early as the foundation of the institute, training has come to be associated with IIEP's organizational image as a training institute. Even as IIEP has later shifted and expanded its strategies to pay more attention to research and provide direct technical assistance to countries and governments, training remains at the center of its day-to-day work: the team of trainers who facilitated the 2017 summer school and the ATP consists of experts not just from the training department, but from research and technical cooperation teams as well. Moreover, as one expert remarked, "when you look with a finer-grain analysis, a lot of the work done through [technical cooperation] projects is actually training" (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017).

IIEP also has a firm base on which to develop its training programs. There are growing global needs, especially from developing countries, to develop and strengthen capacities in educational planning and management at various administrative levels, while resources to meet

such demands at the institutional level the like of IIEP are both scarce and scant (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). With the advent and growing influence of global educational initiatives such as *Education for All* and *Education 2030*, there has been a steady supply of participants in IIEP training programs from regional, national, and local ministries and educational administrations. Because of its inherent focus on working with governments, ministries and central planning agencies, IIEP has over the years built up a network of partners, trainees, and alumni that only helps strengthen and expand its trainee pool, but also fortifies its status and reputation as a premier training institute in the global context (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017).

As is the case with technical cooperation, the training work of IIEP is also embedded in its web of relations with donors and beneficiaries. Since most of technical cooperation work involves capacity building (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017), it is in effect on-site training. Apart from those programs, IIEP provides regular training activities at its headquarters and regional offices. While selected participants are responsible for funding and financing their participation in these programs, IIEP does gives out limited numbers of scholarships, usually channeled from donor's funds. Special thematic training, like the *2017 Summer School for Female Planners* are fully financed and coordinated by IIEP, whereby it coordinates funds from donors and allocates them to selected participants. There is thus—though somewhat less visible—a coordination for funds

and resources among these stakeholders similar to that described for technical cooperation,

which can be illustrated with the diagram below:
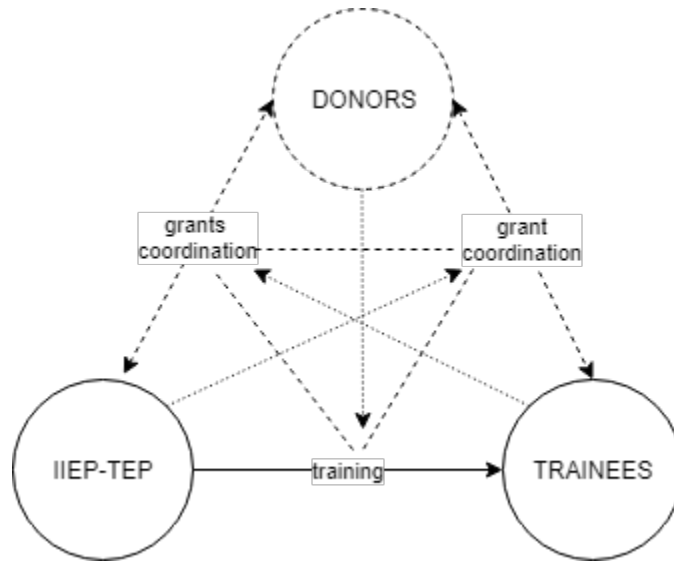
Figure 5: IIEP's training (TEP) model

Research

Compared to technical cooperation and training, research activities at IIEP seems more

gradual and does not involve as pressing a timeline, but that is not to say that the work is by any

means less important or less recognized. The first observation would be that it is hard to separate

research work from its sister activities. Research blends in as part and parcel of the training and

technical cooperation work, as the work itself demands a transfer of IIEP's technical expertise

into policy actions or recommendations and/or a consolidation of knowledge into training

activities and materials (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017). Research at IIEP

can be viewed as a thorough activity that is organically related to and benefits both technical

cooperation and training. The outputs of research at IIEP can be lessons learned and studied

from technical cooperation and training contexts that will be redeveloped into toolkits, case

studies, policy guidelines, or training materials that institutionalizes IIEP's organizational

knowledge of its core technology. An expert from the research team describes the institute's

major research activities and their outputs:

> *So out of all we've been doing on a specific topic we really are able to put out what can be of interest, of importance, especially for decision makers for instance, and we also try to turn some of the lessons from our research as part of our training work, which means [for] those people that come for our training programs.*
>
> *As sensitized to some of the lessons that we have drawn from our research, we also do some training activities in different parts of the world based on the major outcomes of our research, and when we provide technical assistance we can only be relevant if our advice is—I would say—enlightened by what we've been learning ourselves through the who the research.*
>
> *And we also on a regular basis organize policy fora where we bring together not only our researchers but also decision makers, policy makers, educational managers, sometimes civil society representatives really to discuss the outcome of our research and what kind of lesson they can draw from this type of research for their own exercise.*
>
> (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Such is the major feature of research at IIEP. Unlike other research organizations, the

research output at IIEP is not heavily publication-oriented. The experts here, though well-known

and whose works are well received in the fields of comparative and international education, do

not identify publication as their major research production output. Rather—geared as it is

towards more practical uses, and for reasons very practical—research at IIEP helps enrich its

organizational knowledge and learning, adding a unique feature to its image as an intellectual

organization:

But as you know [publication is] not the only way. For instance, in many of our research one of the outputs is to turn the research into all the types of tools like a [set of] guidelines, or toolkit that are much more specific and much more practical, more policy-oriented.

[…]

So it's clear that if we were doing research only for publication, the research team at IIEP would have closed down very long time ago. And so we keep on doing some research only because research is very well integrated within the overall mission of the institute, and which is also what makes our institute quite unique because we have this combination of applied research training and capacity building.

And so we can only do some types of research with the assumption that this is going to be of use to what we do in terms of training and in terms of support to countries. That's the way we conceive and we design our research. Publications are important because that's clearly a way to reach a large audience and especially all the people that we have trained throughout the world in ministries of education and they our aware of what we're doing now, but this is only one intermediary step as part of our overall function and mission.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

In other words, research products at IIEP finds its immediate use back into the cycle of work at the core of the institute's activities. This is not to say, however, that the reputation effect does not come with its publication. As modest and humbled as these experts are in describing their work, IIEP has solidly established itself as a trusted knowledge output on education planning and management, with its publications gaining acclaim across academic circles worldwide (Burnett, 2011; IIEP, 2019a). Its team of experts have also contributed to respected journal and book publications in the field (IIEP, 2014a).

The support model for research activities at IIEP is also closely related to that for technical cooperation, since often part of the technical cooperation package would involve research and evaluation conducted by IIEP experts. The technical cooperation work in the field also constitute the context for much of the research work at IIEP over the past decades. Besides

institutionally funded research, which is budgeted and financed by the institute, the expertise and

reputation of its program specialists also earn for themselves research grants from outside donors

that in many ways align with the central work of IIEP and benefit its knowledge repertoire. In

this sense, research and development can be highlighted as more strategic and sustainable,

inducing the incentive for the institute to both strengthen and diversify its research capabilities

(*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). The figure below illustrates the

relationships between IIEP, donors, and country stakeholders in the research process, and how

funds and resources are coordinated among them:
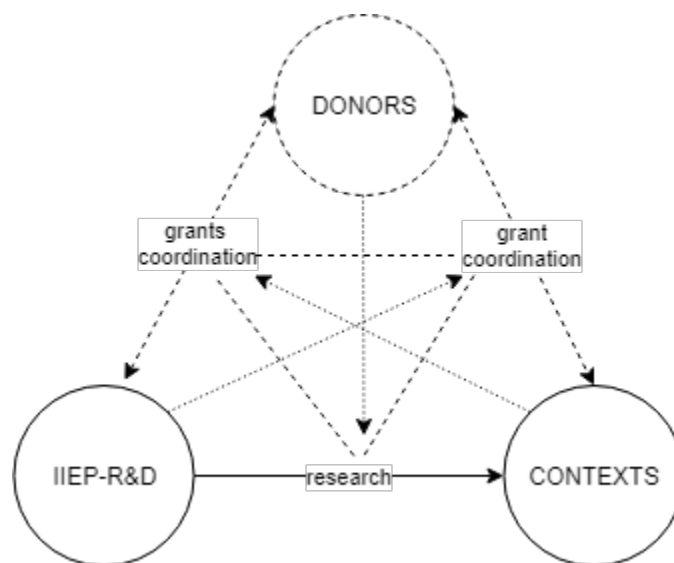
Figure 6: IIEP research (R&D) model

The ongoing research projects, at the time I was there, included key projects on open

schools and open government, focusing on accountability and transparency in education

planning and management (IIEP, 2014e, 2019b). These projects stem from a long-run program

dating to 2003 that focuses on ethics and corruption. The expert most directly involved in this

program provides an overview of it:

So the work on ethics and corruption is something that started in 2003—let's say—and that is still going on, but with many different projects under the big headings of ethics and corruption. When we started, for instance, we've got quite a lot on the issue of Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys—the different types of tools that can be used to assess corruption issues in the systems—on Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys, on the Report Card Surveys.

Then we try to focus on strategies that have been implemented by countries to improve transparency and accountability in different domains. Then we have a special project on the issue of teacher codes of ethics and teacher codes of conduct. Then we had this specific project here on the issue of proper incentives, and now I'm working on another topic [that] is related, which is on the issue of open data within education systems.

So it's a kind of broad umbrella—on transparency, accountability, anti-corruption issues—we have been working on now for more than fifteen years, but within this big umbrella there has been many different sub-projects—if you will—that have been developed and during this this general umbrella.

So we've been working on many countries—I won't be able to tell you exactly—but for instance we think we've made organized training activities in something like sixty countries. And when we did the synthesis report related to this issue we also mentioned something like sixty countries, and then for each of the project that I mention on teacher code, on pro-poor incentives we worked on different countries in this one maybe there are seven and eight countries included; now I'm working on the issue of open that are where there are six countries from Asia that are included.

When we work on the issue of PETS we had a comparative study of what was done in four different countries, so according to the topics we've been working on many different countries. And also in terms of training we've been doing a lot of training activities, and more or less you know regions of the world—in Africa, in Asia, in Central and Eastern Europe, and I would say maybe a bit less but also a few activities and research work in there in Latin America and Central America, but the big focus I would say being on Asia, Africa, and Eastern and Central Europe.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

It can easily be told from the snapshot above that the projects mentioned had a direct output on technical cooperation work, and a good part of it came in the form of training. That, in essence, is how research work at IIEP blends in with the other aspects of the technical core. By

structuring their work in this way, research at IIEP is deeply embedded in practice and finds its applied way back through training to wide audience, arguably generating greater impact than it would otherwise have the institute characterized itself as a pure research institute.

Research work at IIEP does not stop at the macro national and regional level; it also seeps into different layers of education systems, bringing an effect not as easily observed in training and technical cooperation. One highlight project often mentioned at IIEP involved a 1994 citizen-led initiative in Mumbai, India that aim at improving access to and participation in primary education for children through different routes into the mainstream system (Chavan, 2000). The Pratham project achieved great successes and its lessons were widely disseminated through a collaborative research study with IIEP. The case was described and analyzed in an interview:

> *[Another example is] the project Pratham in India, and the project at the time was not as big as it is now today and [not as] known and recognized as it is today.*
>
> *And so we had a case study which is a very interesting one that was written by Madhav Chavan who was—as you know—the founder of the Pratham project if you're familiar with this initiative. And he did a beautiful case study for IIEP trying to unpack the process of development of Pratham at the time, and showing that Pratham, which is kind of citizen-led movement, was organized around three pillars: one was the municipal authorities in the city of Mumbai that were in charge of the government although schooling system, one was Pratham which is was this kind of civil society-based organization, and the other one was the private corporate sector.*
>
> *And at the center of the nexus between those three types of actors were the citizens themselves that were mobilized in different ways through this program, including young ladies who were the one recruited to provide classes as part of Pratham. And so this was a very interesting project because the idea was to provide opportunities for one of the most disadvantaged [communities] from the city of Mumbai to have access to education and not develop a kind of parallel system apart from formal education as part of civil society-based*

initiobutives, but through different ways to find strategies to ensure that those kids go back to the mainstream education system.

And so they had a system of bridge courses so that those who have left school early for instance could come back to the school system. They had some specific early education programs to facilitate access to education to those kids when they were very young and facilitate then their integration in primary schools.

And they had also some programs within the formal schools to try to reduce potential [dropouts] from the system. It was very interesting because it was a civil society-based, but with the school at the heart of what they were trying to do. [It was a civil society-based program], but very much working in collaboration with the government authorities and not thinking itself as opposed or along what has been done within the formal system, but really being kind of aligned to the formal education system, which contributed to [its] success. Because of that they were able to spread throughout the city of Mumbai, which is, as you know, [a] big city, and they were able to spread [to other parts] of the country and then even [to] other places and to other countries.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

The case also highlights a distinctive characteristic of IIEP's research work, that is the programs and initiatives it engages with most often finds their ways back to the mainstream system and not creating parallel systems within countries. This emphasis on facilitating central planning and capacitating central system administrations goes hand in hand with the focus of its technical cooperation and training work, often directed to governments and ministries as its main targets. While this to a certain extent restricts the institute's reach to lower, micro levels, it arguably helps reaching concrete goals more steadily and creates more sustainable policies and longer-lasting impacts compared to other initiatives from non-governmental organizations, with the Pratham project a prime example.

At the core of such initiatives is IIEP's potential to prepare the institute to reach beyond its organizational mandate and explore territories outside of system planning and management,

in which process bringing in opportunities for collaboration. Much as IIEP is widely recognized as a premier training and technical cooperation institute under the UNESCO umbrella, the organizational mandate it carries prevents it from providing a wide range of activities. Within the problem space that IIEP is mandated to operate, there is not much room for approaching pedagogy, curriculum and content, or teacher training—areas that are organically related to system planning and management. This to some extent hinders the institute's capacity to create even broader impact with the work it is heralding, as frequently acknowledged by its experts (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017; *Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017). Research opens a way to tackle this problem, as it drives the work of experts beyond the confines of system planning and management to explore areas that fall within the territories of other UNESCO institutes. Acknowledging that IIEP does not have the mandate to work on teacher training, for which there is "another institute in Addis Ababa called IICBA (the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa), whose mandate is teacher training for Africa," one expert explains how IIEP works with teachers:

> *We do a lot of work on teachers, but we don't train teachers; we do research on teachers, and out of this research we [bring] in materials that is used to train ministry staff in order to manage different aspects of related to teachers such as the management of the teacher force. We work a lot on teacher career path—how to motivate teachers through giving them professional opportunities to keep their motivation high. So we do a lot of work on that, but we don't do teacher training as much as we don't write curricula.*
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

It is also from collaboration with other organizations and participation in global programs that IIEP develops its research capacity outside of its institutional mandate. The collaboration with SACMEQ (see Chapter 4) allows its experts to bring the focus of analysis down to the classroom level, addressing issues around teacher—student interactions and classroom learning, areas often criticized to be out of reach in macro planning. Moreover, aligning research work to the global agenda and in collaboration with partners allow IIEP to both manage within a relatively small team of about ten researchers, many of whom have to take on training and technical cooperation duties. Such constraints force the institute to select, design, and develop its research portfolio strategically, and that in turns open the door to more organizational learning:

> So you see that doesn't make many people working on research, and so we have to accommodate also the number [of] research topics according to the junior staff that we have in-house. So that's why we always try to move, to look at [the] strategic topics that we believe can make a difference for tenures in maybe two—three—five years' time, and be in a position to share these new trends, new evolutions going on, new methodologies, new tools that can be of help for them, and then integrate them as part especially of our training and technical assistance work.
>
> And that's a way for us to keep up to date with the knowledge, with the evolution and developments happening at country level which can be quite different in different parts of the world—in different countries. [There will also be a rollover of a] clearinghouse—you know—of international platforms where we try to collect to identify interesting new trains interesting experiences that we believe can be of interest to other countries—of course not to replicate but to learn from the experience of other countries that have been through the process.

<div align="center">(<i>Interview 3</i>, personal communication, October 16, 2017)</div>

That capacity for the institute to learn and grow through its work is a unique feature that separates IIEP from other organizations. Because research at IIEP is tightly connected to technical cooperation and training, it has become a valuable source of planning and management knowledge for governments and ministries, adding to the institute's reputation and status as a premier research institute in the domain (see next chapter). The research and training functions also aids technical cooperation in ways that identifies IIEP as not just a service provider, but a knowledge generator and disseminator.

> *I think one of the reasons [for IIEP's resilience] that we have this capacity to keep this kind of intellectual function within IIEP and not to [be] a service institute where we just only respond to requests and so on. But because we keep on having this kind of intellectual function of applied research at the heart of what we're doing, where we are not only consultants selling our services in the area of planning and management, we keep on having something to say to the planning world, so this makes a big difference.*
>
> *And also what makes a big difference is that we have this kind of direct connection with ministries, especially because they know what we're doing. They know our publications, but also we have trained many of these people, and so they feel familiar with IIEP, they trust the institute, and so this also makes quite a difference compared to other organizations.*

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

The dilemma, however, is that this outstanding feature of research at IIEP is coupled with a mounting challenge for the institute. Because of the way research expertise is located within individual experts, many with almost lifelong reputable and respectable careers on single issues, it is hard to build up a strong research team that meet both the diversity of IIEP's work demands and the depth and sophistication that it can bring into the work. The research team has been the slowest expanding team within the institute, and for good reasons. It is competitive to bring

established scholars to IIEP—an institute with a budget the size of a small university—and it takes time and resources to grow the junior staff to the level that would be expected of their senior colleges. This adds a layer of complication to the institute's strategies in the years ahead, especially when many of the senior experts are nearing retirement (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018).

Organizational structures and resources

With the technical core structured around technical cooperation, training, and research and driving most of the activities of the institute, the remaining the organizational features at UNESCO-IIEP seem to also be centering on the core. Technical talks and activities almost always fill up the organizational spaces of the institute building, be it in the auditorium, in the classrooms, in the library, in the cafeteria, or at the vending machines. My numerous exchanges, observations, discussions, and participation in the activities there would not be justifiably recounted in the brief descriptions below, with the only interest to highlight how organizational structures and resources at IIEP are optimally organized and utilized to support activities at the core of the institute's work.

There are two "levels" of structures and resources —whose spatial references make the headings below—in this analysis. The former—the non-core technology—is the traditional, concrete, and formal components that characterize IIEP as a functional organization, such as its leadership, front office, finance department, IT, publications, and communication teams. The

latter encompasses the social spaces, entities, and activities that make up the social and—to an extent—cultural life of the institute. These are the cafeteria, the health and wellness program, the coffee stands, and the ways people within the institute communicate.

Les étages supérieurs

The physical structure of IIEP merits some introduction. Converted from a former *hôtel particulier*, the building on rue Eugène Delacroix is divided between IIEP's headquarters (7-9) and a middle school (Collège Janson de Sailly, 13-15). This seven-floor part of the building houses the offices, workspace, training facilities, and social activities of the institute. Each floor is reserved for a specific team or department, so that by the announcement of the destination from the elevator (in parentheses hereafter), one would have a clear idea who or on what issue one is to meet or work with. The fifth floor (*cinquième étage*, in fact the seventh floor, the tallest platform in the building) houses the directorate, with offices of the director, the deputy and associate directors, and their meeting rooms. The fourth floor (*quatrième étage*) is where the library is located (northside), together with the technical cooperation team, the largest department in the institute. The research (east wing) and training (west wing) teams shares most of the third floor (*troisième étage*), alongside two conference rooms. The second floor (*deuxième étage*) is occupied by the IT team, the financial departments, and the administrative staff. Interns share the first floor (*premier étage*) with the publication center and the communications team. The ground floor (*rez-de-chaussée*) is the common gathering space, which includes the reception desk and

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waiting area, the cafeteria, and the courtyard garden. The main auditorium and the parking

spaces occupy the basement (*sous-sol*).

In this sense, *les étages supérieurs* (the upper floors) alludes to the technical and

functional departments of IIEP. Besides working closely with the training department and

frequent trips to the library, my trips to these floors are less frequent, save for the few all-staff

meetings and trainings, a few quick communications with the IT team, my work with the

publication in an intern's capacity to prepare materials for the summer school, and my extensive

interviews with experts from the technical departments—both for this study and for the gender-

mainstreaming project. From these experiences, my general observation and understanding is

that their activities are guided by and subsumed in what happens in the technical core: research,

training, and technical cooperation. The IT team is busy with setting up and running the learning

portal, maintaining the internal communication platform, and assisting other departments with

technical issues. The finance department gave a training session on financing projects and using

its software (IIEP Finance Department, 2017). The directorate hosted an all-staff meeting in

September where staff received an update on the institute's financial conditions, work progresses,

and future strategies (IIEP Director's Office, 2017). The library mostly serves the onsite staff and

residential training participants, with the online library continuously updated and expanded. The

publication team maintains regular monthly bulletins in addition to publishing products from

research, training, and technical cooperation.

Perhaps the two most notable non-core activity at IIEP are the gender mainstreaming program (see Chapter 4) and the policy fora, a meeting space for researchers, policy makers, and educational practitioners to discuss policy issues related to educational planning and management (IIEP, 2017b). A spinoff program from the policy fora that took place during my time there and has since recurred thematically annually is the quarterly strategic debates, a series of policy debates centered on issues in education, usually with the guest participation of renowned scholars and practitioners (IIEP, 2018d). The events take place at IIEP office in Paris and are broadcasted live in English and French.

Of the two debates I attended during my time there, one touched on the issue of privatization in education, with Dr. Frank Adamson, Senior Policy and Research Analyst at Stanford University as the speaker and Dr. Manos Antoninis, Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report as the discussant. The debate was moderated by Dr. Suzanne Grant-Lewis, Director of UNESCO-IIEP. The debate centered on findings from Dr. Adamson's recent studies on education reform movements in several nation, which addressed the question whether "the education sector is better served by a public investment approach that supports each and every child than by a market-based, competition approach that creates winners and losers" (IIEP, 2017d, 2017e). The discussion led by Dr. Antoninis and moderated by Dr. Grant-Lewis attempted to connect findings from the studies with issues that arise in global education monitoring, both through the established channels of UNESCO and through the work of IIEP (IIEP, 2017e). The debate highlighted IIEP's interest and initiative in bringing together research

and practice, creating a venue for policy lessons from academic studies to be connected to the work of global education monitoring, which was both a key focus and a key function of UNESCO.

Besides the more seasonal activities of policy fora or strategic debates, the day-to-day work of the non-core departments at IIEP is also strongly informed and guided by activities in the core. The main task, for example, of the librarians during the ATP or Summer School was to assist on-site trainees with finding and using training resources and materials, and to accommodate their working spaces. The publication department, likewise, was occupied with publishing outputs from research, training, and technical cooperation, be they books, manuals, handbooks, bulletins, policy guides, or brochures and flyers. All these activities add another layer of support to the core technology of IIEP, making visible the interconnections between research, training, and technical cooperation and ensuring organizational resources are directed to their success.

Le sous-sol et le rez-de-chaussée

With the upper floors dedicated to technical and functional activities of the institute, the basement (*sous-sol*) and the ground floor (*rez-de-chaussée*) designate the common and communal spaces of IIEP. The basement contains the main auditorium, where major events and ceremonies are held. It is also the main venue for IIEP training activities. The ground floor consists of the reception area, where members are greeted every morning and guests are received;

the cafeteria, where institute leaders, specialists, employees, interns, trainees, and sometimes even outside diners would meet for lunch and discussions, and which is highly regarded not only for its *cartes du jour* but also the quality of the conversations. Next to the cafeteria is the garden, where outdoor activities often take place during training months, or where, during other times, non-smokers would enjoy some fresh air or smokers a drag. The rest of the first-floor space includes meeting rooms, a children's room for employee's children to play while they wait for the parents to finish work. There are also vending machines—one for snacks and one for coffee.

There are also communal spaces elsewhere in the institute, most notably a staff-run tea and coffee corner on the fourth floor, which offers coffee closer to Parisian standards than the vending machine does, and which attracts many more customers and conversations. There is also a wellness room with a massage chair on the first floor, where staff (mostly interns) would enjoy the perks of working for a health-conscious organization on slow afternoons, and where yoga lessons are sometimes provided by a local teacher. The staff-run wellness program is also very popular. They invited Matthieu Ricard in for a talk while I was there.

It could be noted that the communal atmosphere at IIEP was very friendly and informal. People, no matter how busy or unbusy, make time for greetings and small conversations in the elevator, at the coffee corner, or in the cafeteria. Over lunch one could (over)hear questions about how someone's kids are doing at school and about what training activities are planned for the ministry of a country in the Caribbean. People greet each other with smiles, handshakes, and *la bise* (French greetings) and use informal pronouns (*tutoyer*) to address one another. Most

experts and employees alike are very approachable and friendly, sometimes even joining interns

at lunch or giving them tips on what to do in Paris.

This sense of community and informality highlight a strong organizational culture at IIEP

that is, among other things, non-hierarchical and unbureaucratic. People connect and are

connected more by shared work and not by work-relations. This feature, coupled with the

relatively small size of the institute, explains why everyone knows each other's work well, and

how that builds back to a strong common shared knowledge of the institute's collective work,

shaping an organizational identity that few others resemble (*Interview 5a*, personal

communication, March 27, 2018).

Discussion

Intersecting and complementary: a tightly coupled technical core

The descriptions above of the core technology of IIEP portray a tightly knitted and inter-

complementary technical core where technical cooperation, training, and research activities cut

across and build upon one another. By placing the locus of expertise in individual experts and

organize their work around the three core activities, IIEP reinforces a model whereby practical

work in the field (technical cooperation) is constructed from and in turn internalizes knowledge

and training practices at the institute. Technical cooperation work with countries also provides

the context for research work to be developed, which in turn serves to better guide and inform

work with countries, governments, and ministries. The relationship between research and

training is also complementary, with the former inciting and incentivizing research work, and

the latter consolidating learning and knowledge into training platforms, resources, and materials.

The figure below summarizes the interrelation of the three aspects of IIEP's technical core:
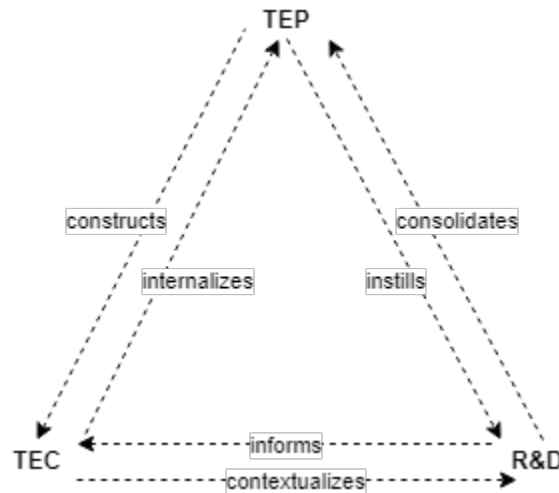
Figure 7: The relationships between technical cooperation (TEC), training (TEP), and research (R&D) at IIEP

From the perspectives of organizational theory, a strong, tightly knitted technical core is

an essential feature of a tightly-coupled system (Galbraith, 1973; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977,

1978) and organizational goal integrity (Hasenfeld, 1983, 2010). By structuring its activities

around the three aspects of the core, it is possible to share and distribute resources across them,

securing a return on organizational knowledge and learning and enforcing the image of an

intellectual organization (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). This model

also works to tie knowledge generation closely to practical experiences in the field, while

ensuring that work in country contexts is deeply grounded in rigorous theoretical and

methodological frameworks developed through research and consolidated through training. The

relatively flexible administrative procedures and the triple roles each program specialist assumes

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also work to guarantee a smooth flow of resources between these three channels, making project

funding more thematically oriented rather than activity-earmarked.

With research, training, and technical cooperation thematically and capitally linked, there

is a greater chance for the institute to efficiently distribute its resources and maximize effects.

Many of the research initiatives it is engaged in, such as MyPROJECTS, BE2 (Building Evidence

in Education), the Learning Portal, or PETS (Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys), go back to

serving direct work on training and technical cooperation. The potentials for organizational

learning brought forth with such initiatives are particularly significant in the context that IIEP

has moved from "a very small size institute with a relatively modest portfolio that could be

basically kept in the minds of our team leaders" to an important actor in educational planning

and management on the global stage:

> *So these days we are—and we have been for nearly three years now—pushing [for] a new project portfolio management tool. We already have a version in place—it's called My Projects—it's a project database. And these days we are—we've been—preparing for several months to jump forth from that almost homemade solution to a bigger off-the-shelf project portfolio management solution.*
>
> *And that's gonna take still quite a bit of effort because if you want to make use of that, the information needs to be there; [and] who provides information is the program specialists— the project managers. And IIEP is a little bit in a transition: the people who are who are the project managers were not recruited as a project manager—they were recruited initially as thematic specialists—which is a very good thing—you need to know which I'm talking about.*
>
> *But managing projects, especially many big projects, is—you know—it's a job: it's also a trade that you need to learn; so this transition and implementing this new solution for us will take some time, some sensitization, some change management, some training.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

Another affordance of IIEP's organizational model is the high level of practicality of its core technology—educational planning and management. IIEP achieves this by grounding its practice in rigorous methods and delineating clear boundaries around it—making sure it does not deliberately venture into other domain territories such as teacher training—while developing a strong set of tools and methods to support work in the core. The triangular organization of research, training, and technical cooperation also serves as an internally triangulating mechanism, in which actions, activities, ideas, and innovations are triangularly tested and triangularly supportive.

The high level of practicality associated with the core technology that IIEP develops is in turn closely aligned with its technical environment. With IIEP's strong hold on education planning and management, especially among developing countries in the context of international and global development assistance, the tools, methods, techniques, and principles it advocates are almost universal within this niche (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). When the core technology is clear and closely aligned with the task environment, operational complexity, confusion, and chaos in the environment are reduced, making it easier for the organization to adapt (Donaldson, 2001; Hasenfeld, 2010; Perrow, 1967; Scott & Davis, 2007; Thompson, 1967; Woodward, 1965).

The triple roles that each expert fulfills also allow them to be well informed and knowledgeable of the common work at the core of the institute. Unlike most specialized organizations, where expertise is located within departments, the experts at IIEP—at least the

ones I interviewed—show a good general understanding of the missions, strategies, and activities within the institute. They also seem to know each other's work well, frequently referring to other colleagues and their expertise in my conversations with them. This builds back to a strong organizational culture and identity where experts are connected through their shared work (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018).

Implications for equity

The organization principles of IIEP, as well as the arrangement of its core activities, allow for both a diverse array of insights into the dimensions of equity, and the depth that goes into each of such insights (see Chapter 4). Throughout my conversations with them, equity surfaced through issues in gender equality, in disability, in economic inequality and the socioeconomic gap, in system leadership and administration, or in accountability and corruption. Since each program specialist is expected to be fully engaged in all three aspects of the institute's core activities (research, training, and technical cooperation), they gain a full understanding of equity issues and problems that is grounded in both practice and context. Such knowledge is also practical in the sense that it is policy- and action-oriented. Moreover, because of the depth of expertise that each expert brings into their study of education equity (some of them have spent decades researching a single area in which they have gained widespread recognition), IIEP exercises an authority on knowledge of many issues and dimensions of equity in education. It is fair to say that few organizations with extensive knowledge and expertise on global education

have contributed as significantly on issues of transparency and accountability, crisis-sensitive planning, or gender equality in education.

That combined depth and diversity of understanding equity nevertheless does not come without caution. With expertise located in a number of prominent experts—or "big names" as one of them referred to—IIEP runs the difficulty of expand its research base to include other equity issues in education planning, and the risk of losing such depth of expertise when those experts move or retire, the latter of which is not far in sight (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). This puts the institute in a strategic mission to expand both its research base and its research team to the level of expertise expected of its current reputation. This, I daresay, is one tall challenge whose fruition is hard to be seen in the immediate future.

Conclusion

The observations and interviews have therefore presented a case of the tightly-knit technical core of IIEP, in which the three aspects of research, training, and technical cooperation are weaved into the work of its core staff in an inter-related, mutually supporting way. This strong technical core, coupled with the institute's long history and relative prominence within the global circle of work on education planning has lent IIEP a distinct organizational identity, shaping an organizational culture defined by a relatively small size, a strong, a well-defined technical focus, a stable team of dedicated and experienced experts, as well as the legitimacy it inherits from UNESCO and UN, its parent and grandparent organizations.

This organizational identity is tremendously helpful in presenting and positioning the institute in its work contexts, both drawing on and lending legitimacy to itself. The work of IIEP is thus characterized with consistent and well-defined themes that align with both UN/ESCO foci and the technical expertise of its staff, creating what some of its staff members refer to as organizational integrity (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). The downside of it, on the other hand, is a strong force of stability that would breed into a resistance to change. In my follow-up conversation with one of the experts when we met at a conference five months after I left, he noted that IIEP was at that time thinking of expanding and developing its research themes—an important requirement not only to keep in line with the evolving conversations around education and equity on the global stage, but also to strategically sustain and expand its organizational image. The task, however, would be challenging without a capacity to significantly expand its current research team, where expertise was located within the "big names" and "it would be hard, if not impossible, to associate these big names with some other topic" (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). That challenge is further coupled with a prospect that a significant portion of its staff is nearing retirement: many of the "big names" he referred to has been at the organization for close to 30 years.

This sees IIEP (the organization) and equity (the focus) in another dilemma. On the one hand, there is a continually growing focus that brings with its conceptualization diverse and complex demands, while on the other is an organization at the prime of its maturity and reaching

stability. The question put forward at IIEP leadership board meetings would be how to diversify research interests and human resources planning in the next 10-15 years, when most of its current senior experts would retire (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). That would lead to yet another dilemma given the administrative structure and the institutional contexts IIEP finds itself in: hiring decisions are coordinated with and initiated by UNESCO, and with the ongoing mounting challenges the mother organization faces, despite the fact that the daughter institute (IIEP) is self-sufficient and doing better financially, such a coordination may not meet the most of IIEP's interests and demands. For the present, with the many expertise demand slots opening and the few big names it has available to fill in, the tradeoff is depth and rigor on the one hand, and a diverse, complete range of research foci on the other.

The technical DNA of IIEP also bears its fair share of the dilemma. With the core of its work structured around technical cooperation, most of the research conducted by IIEP experts are action research, often at the requests of country ministries. Consequently, although such research projects may have quite an impact in terms of policy and governance, they are not often widely known within the academic circles. Furthermore, among the distinctive characteristics of technical cooperation is to work with governments that are generally weak: the more capable ones are either better resourced and equipped to address their own problems or prefer other forms of partnerships with other NGOs or the private sector. It is within this politically complex and resource-limited space that IIEP often has to experience drawbacks and make concessions or compromises (see Chapter 5), and quite often part of such concessions and compromises would

be to prioritize policy-oriented actions over an academic research orientation. Moreover, in a world of research communication where knowledge sharing and dissemination is fortified around academic reputation, the nature of the research work conducted by IIEP does not necessarily lead to a high level of impact, and in many cases would mischaracterize the organization as somewhat quasi-academic.

CHAPTER 7. THE ENVIRONMENTS

This chapter moves beyond the organizational features of IIEP to examine its relationships with other actors in its environment. It first explores the institutional environment, in which IIEP interacts with UNESCO—its parent—and other organizations within the UN family. The transactions within this sphere provide IIEP with its legitimacy resources, on which it draws to position itself in cooperation with countries and donors. The technical environment is examined next, in which IIEP's relationships with donors, clients, consumers, and competitors determine its performance and survival. Although IIEP depends to a certain extent on UN/ESCO's values and visions for legitimacy, the unique characteristics of its operational niche, the strength of its technical capacity, and the broadening network of its clients and alumni have in turn fortified IIEP's reputation in the world of education planning and management and thus amplified its legitimacy. The source of legitimacy in the institutional environment, on the other hand, provides both a compass and a set of constraints for IIEP to navigate the difficult dilemmas of tensions and politics of the field, as discussed in depth in Chapter 5. Connected with its core technology discussed in Chapter 6, the tightly connected technical core, coupled with a relatively stable technical environment allows IIEP to develop its strategies around its core activities, thereby solidifying its capacity and emboldening its legitimacy.

Introduction

The previous chapter discusses the core technology of IIEP and the functional and social

arrangements within the institute that lend resource and support the technical core. This chapter

examines the relationships between IIEP and other actors to describe the environments that

surround its work. It draws on frameworks in organizational theory that discuss organizational

legitimacy (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Scott, 2013; M. C. Suchman, 1995) and performance (Hannan

et al., 2003; Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984). By drawing connections between the institutional

and technical environments, it aims to highlight IIEP's struggles and strategies for legitimacy and

performance, which speak directly to the tensions in the field of technical cooperation, as well as

the navigations around such tensions as laid out in Chapter 5. It also explains how its legitimacy

and performance are dependent upon one another: how its legitimacy as a UN/ESCO institute

increases its perceived capacity to compete in the market for education planning and

management, and how enhanced performance in the niche of education planning and

management strengthens its legitimacy.

The institutional environment of IIEP is characterized by its interactions and exchanges

with UN/ESCO and other institutions with shared values and visions in the global educational

governance landscape. It is marked by IIEP's subscription to a dominant discourse and ideology

on education and equity, and by its active role and participation in a global education agenda.

The technical environment, on the other hand, is characterized by a well-defined niche of

education planning and management where demands are numerous and competition is scarce. It

is marked by IIEP's authority on a dominant design for education planning and management

incepted and institutionalized through its work in the technical core. These two environments

interact with IIEP's organizational features and activities, rendering visible its social and

technical images.

The discussion that follows investigates the interaction and interference between the

institutional and the technical, where keeping up with visions and values may interfere with the

technical aspects of its work. There are also competing tensions between the institute's technical

legitimacy (i.e. the capacity and reputation it gains from its work) and its legitimate technology

(i.e. the technical mandate it carries), where it has to be tactful not to overstep other

organizational mandates and sometimes to sidestep its own. Highlighting these complications

underscores IIEP's strategies for survival and growth within a relatively stable niche.

The institutional environment

The following section discusses elements in the institutional environment surrounding

IIEP. As a UNESCO institute and by extension a UN member organization, it takes on the

institutional legitimacy and the shared visions and values of its mother and grandmother

organizations. Furthermore, as an intergovernmental (sub)organization (IGO) that operates

within the global landscape of global development assistance, IIEP also embodies the

institutional aspects of that environment, such as a shared vision of development and the shared

language of international development assistance. The institutional layers that blanket the

organization are illustrated in Figure 8, with layers ordered by institutional proximity. Whereas

the boundary for each layer is hereby clearly depicted, it is in effect much fuzzier.
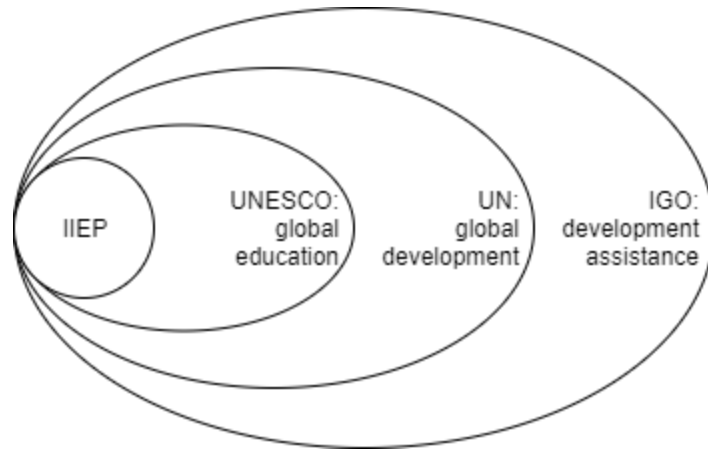
Figure 8: The institutional environment of IIEP

IIEP and UN/ESCO

Mandate, autonomy, coordination

The relationship between UNESCO and IIEP is rather delicate. On the one hand, as a UNESCO institute, it is formally under the oversight of its mother organization. In fact, in terms of governance and regulations, UNESCO exerts substantial authority on IIEP. Administratively, human resources decisions and accounting regulations at IIEP are coordinated with UNESCO through its governing board (UNESCO, 1963). The text of the founding document also specified IIEP members as UNESCO officials and made provisions for its assets to be vested to UNESCO upon the institute's termination (UNESCO, 1963, p. 17). On the technical side, research outputs and publications at IIEP are expected to be in line with UN/ESCO's official missions, values, visions, and positions on global and international issues (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017).

On the other hand, IIEP enjoys substantial freedom from its mother organization. As a

Category-1 institute, it has the freedom to develop its own visions and strategies, plan and

implement its agenda, and carry out its day-to-day work (IIEP, 2003). Even though it receives

financial support from UNESCO for its operations, such support has over the years become less

significant as IIEP extends its outreach to global development programs for program funding.

UNESCO's funds accounted for 10 percent of IIEP's budget as of 2016, while funding from

external donors made up the rest (IIEP Finance Department, 2017).

That IIEP enjoys substantial autonomy from UNESCO while being an integrated part of

the organization was built into the institutional design at the creation of the institute (IIEP, 2003;

UNESCO, 1963). The 1962 working group on the creation of the institute, favoring a flexible

governance structure that preserves "a subtle and productive balance between independence and

serving the goals of its parent institution," made such recommendations to the 12th Session of

UNESCO General Conference, and true to their visions the structure "has conferred the

necessary blend of flexibility, agility, and strength to carry out its mission" (IIEP, 2003, p. 8).

Such flexibility, agility, and strength are demonstrated in an independent governing and

decision-making apparatus (the Governing Board) and its financial independence that allows the

institute to be funded from "any appropriate source," yet IIEP is not detached from the legal

framework of its mother institution:

> *UNESCO created the Institute as a quasi-autonomous body—within UNESCO's legal framework yet outside the UNESCO Secretariat. The Institute was given its own Statutes and a Governing Board with authority over the Institute's policies, programmes and budget.*

In addition, a set of rules was prepared to address the IIEP's specific needs and circumstances. The Institute was given the authority to receive financial support from any appropriate source, and wide latitude to manage its own administrative affairs in accordance with UNESCO's rules and procedures.

(IIEP, 2003, p. 8)

The instrumentality of this structure is mutually acknowledged between UNESCO and IIEP. The institute's 40th anniversary brochure observed that "[t]he technical competence of board members means that decisions can be taken quickly and effectively within the framework of UNESCO's general policy," while Koichiro Matsuura, the former Director-General of UNESCO (1999-2009) remarked:

I have come to appreciate that IIEP, while enjoying its institutional autonomy, can act with loyalty, imagination and vigour to serve the overall goals of UNESCO and, in a cooperative spirit, contribute to realizing UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy… UNESCO's key standard functions are to act as a laboratory of ideas, a standard-setter, a clearinghouse, a capacity-builder and a catalyst for international co-operation. IIEP has an exemplary record in fulfilling each of these functions within its specialized field of educational planning and administration.

(IIEP, 2003, p. 9)

Highlighted in the excerpt above is the idea that IIEP fulfills UNESCO's normative functions as "a laboratory of ideas, a standard-setter, a clearinghouse, a capacity-builder and a catalyst for international co-operation." While many normative functions can be associated with UNESCO's stated mission as an advocate for peace, many of which ideal-centric and value-laden, the standard functions associated with IIEP are obviously more technical. From such an understanding, it is only natural that the interviewed experts reiterated that relationship. An

expert from the Director's office underlines that detail of IIEP's history and provides the

contextual reasoning for its autonomy:

> *IIEP is a hundred percent part of UNESCO. It's not an independent organization. It is an institute that was created specifically to be one hundred percent part of UNESCO, but with a specific mandate and with administrative and intellectual flexibility, and not independence but autonomy that it needed; this is—to use a commonly used expression—the DNA of IIEP.*
>
> *If you look back at the foundational texts of IIEP back in the early 60s, the idea came from Philip Coombs, the first Director—Education Secretary in the US before being the first director here—and René Maheu who used to be Director-General of UNESCO at the time. The idea was to create an institute—a part of UNESCO—that would not be dragged into the bureaucracy of UNESCO and have the means to support member states at the time where countries were becoming independent.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

The mandate specified to IIEP upon its creation is "to promote instruction and research

on educational planning in relation to economic and social development" (UNESCO, 1963, p.

15). The economic and social development aspects were emphasized early at its creation,

reflected in the inclusion of representatives from other UN economic and social organizations in

the composition of IEEP Governing Board, and reflecting a humanistic and utilitarian worldview

of education at the time.

The flexibility, agility and strength notwithstanding, the structure also poses several

difficulties and challenges for IIEP to cooperate and coordinate with UNESCO. One such

problem is the coordination to reduce or avoid duplication, as there also exist other UN/ESCO

institutes and offices that perform work on education, and the technical autonomy that IIEP

enjoys sometimes make efforts towards that end challenging.

So as for the relationship with [UNESCO], it depends. It can be seen in many angles, but what the headquarters and IIEP are trying to do is to try to avoid duplication—that there is—technically—I mean—at least according to the regulations, if you like, or to the internal organization circulars, there shouldn't be two entities doing the same thing in two different places; otherwise it would be [counterproductive], there would be competition.

As a matter of fact, there's a division of headquarters that does similar work, but which is more focused on policy orientation—not really doing the planning with the member states. It's more about being a repository of policies offering some digests of policy—what works, what doesn't work, this [or that] kind of support—so there was no real overlap.

[...]

Our relations are very good with the UNESCO offices in general, but [trying] to do well in general [is] sometimes also difficult. But what we try to do is to involve as much as we can UNESCO offices, especially national offices, when they start working with the country. Any member state is allowed to draw directly upon IIEP to ask for support, and IIEP is allowed by statute—its mandate, its statutes literally—the statute to respond to these needs: it's why it was created. But we try to avoid duplications and to stepping on the toes of other national offices. Sometimes they take a little bit offence that that member states do not go through them to ask us to work with, and that's a little bit of criticism that [some] field office directors sometimes take it badly.

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

The specificity of the mandate, while on the one hand affording IIEP a clear domain of work to develop and affirm its expertise, on the other prevents it from encroaching the territories close to—and in many cases logically connected to—education planning that are the technical mandates of other institutes and offices, many of which do not necessarily enjoy the same level of capacity and resources. Issues such as curriculum and teacher education have surfaced in my conversations with the experts, as laid out in the preceding chapters. The approach has been for IIEP to coordinate closely with these institutes and offices, especially when their presence in the countries IIEP work with is respected. At the time of this study, IIEP has maintained cooperation and good working relationships with such other UNESCO institutes as the Institute for Lifelong

Learning (UIL) and the International Bureau of Education (IBE), but in terms of coordination, a

lot depends on opportunities, and there is admittedly room for improvement:

> *We also have very good relations with IBE—the International Bureau of Education—who are in Switzerland, but to be frank and to say that we have fully coordinated joint activities [in] the country for instance with other institutes, that would be exaggerated.*
>
> *So there is this room for improvement there, which, you know, it's also a matter of opportunities. We don't always choose the opportunity: it's not every day that a member state comes and says, "Look, we need to work with this, and we would like to bring together IBE, IIEP, UIL."*

> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

That there exist such opportunities is indeed remarkable, given the complex dynamics of

the education planning market in which IIEP operates, which will be discussed in detail later in

this chapter. Nevertheless, coordination with other UN/ESCO entities remains an important

strategy for IIEP to conduct work with countries, given its special status and its relationship with

UNESCO.

Global agenda

Cooperation and coordination with countries aside, IIEP also designs and implements its

research programs in cooperation with other institutes and offices. The ongoing programs of

research at IIEP bring together a host of key global organizations with whom IIEP collaborates

and shares duties and resources (see Chapter 6), and many of whom are UN/ESCO agencies,

centers, institutes and national offices. For instance, a large multinational research project on

school grant is conducted in collaboration with UNICEF and GPE (IIEP, 2014f), while a study on

educational demographic shift in three Asian countries is coordinated between a group of IIEP

experts and national research teams brought together by their national UNESCO commissions

(IIEP, 2018c). This practice of global and international collaboration traces back to past research

and technical cooperation programs at the institute, highlighting, among others, past

collaborations with SACMEQ on gender equality, and ANTRIEP on school evaluation for quality

improvement (Grauwe & Naidoo, 2004). The *Building Evidence in Education*, an international

research network of which IIEP is a part, exemplifies such a current collaboration:

> *We participate in the international research network like BE2—Building Evidence in Education—which is a network that brings together development partners, international organizations having some research activities in the area of education, and they meet once or twice a year. And so that's also the opportunity to share and to learn from the other research projects developed by other organizations or agencies and so on.*
>
> *And of course we do [all of this] within the UNESCO umbrella, so we follow the 2030 agenda and a number of priorities that have been set as part of the agenda, and so we're also fully aligned with the main priorities of UNESCO. So these are all our kind of general environment within which we select [a] few topics of research for the forthcoming four-year period.*

<div align="center">(Interview 3, personal communication, October 16, 2017)</div>

Being part of "the global agenda" is essential in collaborations such as this. Ever since

global coordination began with the *Education for All* movement in 1990, IIEP has actively

participated—as a UNESCO member institute—in the global education governance agenda

(IIEP, 2018b). The institute's connection with key actors in the movements that followed—

notably as part of the Fast Track Initiative during the *Education for All* period (2000—2015),

which later became the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) going into the post-EFA

Education 2030 period—also helps identify itself as a recognized actor within the global agenda.

The extent to which IIEP aligns its core work with the missions and visions of this global

agenda is significant. This is central in the institute's most important documents. The *10th*

Medium-Term Strategy, in laying out the principles of the Education 2030 vision, connects them

to its strategy in that context:

> *IIEP sees its role in this regard as helping Member States to translate these principles into policies and plans and successfully implement them. Specifically, it will offer assistance with integrating the [Sustainable Development Goal] 4 agenda into credible national policies and plans, identifying and analysing relevant data, strengthening coordination among a wide range of partners, creatively adapting tools, and updating [monitoring and evaluation] practices.*
>
>   (IIEP, 2017a)

Not only is the institute actively bringing the goals and visions of the global agenda into

its work; through my conversations with the experts there, it seems IIEP is also looking to

proactively address problems, issues, and gaps in the global visions as well. One expert in the

Training Department detailed the department's plan to take the lead in advancing adult

education in potential collaboration with another UNESCO institute:

> *And the other area [of focus] which we we've also been developed is something on lifelong learning and adult education because they tend to be—again—another very excluded group. It was excluded during the EFA era because [adults] they're not very good at advocating for their own needs, because often they are people without much power, whereas children with disabilities [another focus area] often have parents who have influence and so on. The adult education thing is really dropped off the global agenda so we're going to do something with the [UNESCO] Institute of Lifelong Learning [UIL] in Hamburg on adult education.*

That proposed collaboration did come to fruition in May 2018, when together UIL and IIEP launched an online distance course on lifelong learning (IIEP, 2018e).

Visions and values

IIEP, since its inception, has embodied a set of visions and values that are intrinsic to UNESCO, to the United Nations network, and largely by association, to the global community. Established in the early 1960s at the end of the independent movement following the Second World War and the beginning of the reconstruction period, when sweeping transformations were taking place in science and technology, economic development, politics and culture, the institute came at a time when "[these] new developments and aspirations had far-reaching implications for education around the world" (IIEP, 2003, p. 5). Among the ideas that characterized the global visions at the time of the institute's inception was the view of education as a fundamental human right and its nexus to national economic development, the latter of which was later on reconciled and nuanced with a holistic individual development view (IIEP, 2003, pp. 5–6). Even though problems facing countries and the global community in the years to come would vary in scale and nature, these core visions and principles have remained relevant (UNESCO, 1990, 2009a, 2010; UNESCO et al., 2015).

IIEP was also founded on a basis of respect for member states' self-determinism in designing and planning their education systems, thus stressing its role as supportive and

consultative and not pushing for a universal plan or system design. IIEP clarifies planning, in contrast to control, as "the application of human intelligence and scientific methods to the efficient pursuit of any nation's chosen goals, within the framework of its own particular system of values and institutions" (IIEP, 2003, p. 7). This principle stays true in the way IIEP conducts its work with countries as recounted in my interviews, which is also the spirit of the global agenda: getting countries and governments on board to achieve common goals rather imposing a specific governance model globally (United Nations, 2019).

The visions and values of the global education agenda are reflected in the guiding documents of IIEP. Both the *9th* and the *10th MTS* refer to the post-2015 development agenda and UNESCO's eight-year *Overarching Objectives* (IIEP, 2013), as well as the United Nations' *Sustainable Development Goals* and *Education 2030* (IIEP, 2017a). These global visions and values view education as a basic human right, that "[no] child, youth or adult should be excluded from learning opportunities that will allow him or her to live decently, access and exercise their rights, and engage in civic life" (IIEP, 2013, p. 2). This view, as one expert observes, is "relatively straightforward [and] not very difficult to agree to" (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). The *Education 2030* agenda brings forth a shift of focus "from basic education to lifelong learning, from an emphasis on schooling to a more inclusive focus on learning" (IIEP, 2017a). This too has been well reflected in the agenda of IIEP, with the proposed collaboration with UIL mentioned earlier (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017).

Much as IIEP embraces these visions and values, there are still differences in the ways the institute and UNESCO approach them. Chapter 5 explores the tensions IIEP experts often encounter in their work with countries. In one expert's insights into navigating such tensions, these differences came to be acknowledged:

> *Now you still have to keep in mind that there is a difference between […] UNESCO and IIEP, though we are part of UNESCO. Not everybody agrees with what I will [say] and sometimes I don't agree with it either, but UNESCO is also what we call the standard-setter: UNESCO also has a normative role. UNESCO [has] this whole SDG [Sustainable Development Goal] 4 agenda which [allows] it really to play a role of advocacy much more than we [IIEP] do—well or more than we do—not always more effectively but okay more than we do.*
>
> *We at IIEP, we are more into technical assistance, technical support, guidance, advice, but probably it a little bit less in norm-setting and in advocacy—a little bit less. And—or as I say—we may defend different values, but not necessarily specific strategies; we may defend visions but not necessarily specific interventions.*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Evident in these observations that the visions and values of a global agreement and agenda on education has been built into the DNA of IIEP. The institute's missions and—to a large extent—its work draw upon and defend these visions and values as its guiding principles. They have in fact served that guiding roles expediently, but in some cases they have also presented the institute with a set of tensions that it must muddle through to advance its work. Nevertheless, these visions and values present important resources for the institute to wield legitimacy within its institutional environment.

Relationships with other organizations

Beyond UNESCO, IIEP also holds relationships with others within the UN umbrella (UNICEF, UNDP, UNGEI, UIS, GPE, etc.) and other international organizations working on education and/or related areas. The research programs on open school and open government in education work in collaboration with Transparency International, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (IIEP, 2019b; *Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). IIEP also receives funds and grants for its programs from the World Bank and the European Union—its long-time donors (IIEP Finance Department, 2017). IIEP's location in Paris, where many other influential actors in the global education field are also headquartered, brings it into contact and interaction with such other organizations as the OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) or the IAU (the International Association of Universities). As a UNESCO affiliate, IIEP received frequent invitations to OECD events during the time I was there, and in return I have met with guests from OECD during official UNESCO events.

The institute also maintains relationships with a number of higher education institutions with strong international education development programs in Paris (e.g. the Sciences Po, HEC Paris, the Université de Paris network) and elsewhere in Europe (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, UCL) with which it holds regular exchange, from invited talks and lectures to regular supplies of consultants and interns.

From my observation, the relationships that IIEP maintains with these organizations are

on a basic level collegial and amical, sharing with them general visions and values of a global

agenda on education as discussed above. Its relationships with certain organizations with their

own agenda on international education development, such as the World Bank (WB), the

European Union (EU), or the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are more intricate. As will be

explained below in the technical environment section, these are potential competitors with their

own resources, research capacity, and policy agenda who exert significance influence on

developing countries, IIEP's main clients. They, however, are also major clients and partners,

who often turn to IIEP for technical assistance in their in-country programs. Despite ideological

differences and divergent values between IIEP and some of these organizations (*Interview 4*,

personal communication, October 20, 2017), IIEP often finds itself working for, with, or

alongside these partners due to the complex dynamics of international development. These

relationships are often initiated on a supply—demand basis, and can be from either side:

> *So we have been working with the World Bank for example on very interesting research—country research—and then on number of related workshops with ministries on the integration of budgets and planning. […] So at that time, you know, the World Bank was very interested in working with us. We did the research on that; we found out what was happening what was not happening. […]*
>
> *[We also] worked a lot with the Asian Development Bank. How this came about, we just were looking for combining requests from governments for technical help with funding that we don't have so we applied. We did a tender. We had to do three or four and then we got through with the first—you just gain experience by doing it. And so then we got the first one, the government had a choice between several partners and wanted UNESCO as a more neutral partner rather than the Japanese or the Australians or you know or the Finns, and it worked well. So then the Asian Development Bank was happy too, so when we submitted the second tender it was easy, and the third was easier, and so on.*

For IIEP to maintain these intricate relationships often creates tensions within the institutional environment, and the institute often has to strategically navigate those tensions. The institute does this by sharpening its technical image and to some extent softening its advocacy role (*Interview 5*, 2017; *Interview 6*, 2017; see also Chapter 5).

The technical environment

Besides its institutional environment, IIEP also operates within a technical environment characterized by the technical know-how of education planning and management (EPM). Figure 9 below depicts IIEP's interactions and exchanges with actors in this space. It works mostly with member countries to assist them with developing and evaluating education sector plans (ESP) and carries out this assistance using the core technology framework of research, training, and technical cooperation described in the previous chapter. This EPM model is built upon the mechanisms of global educational governance and global development agenda, most notably through the global *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) framework, of which educational goals and targets are committed to with the ratification of the *Incheon Declaration* (UNESCO et al., 2015). In this environment, IIEP works mostly with aids donors and recipients, targeting them as both clients and consumers. The Technical Cooperation department, the fastest growing department within the institute, was created and expanded to adapt to relationships and interactions within the task environments.
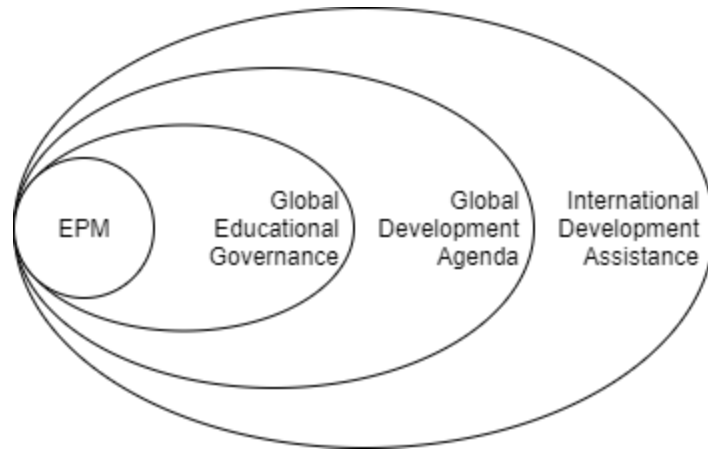
Figure 9: The technical environment of IIEP

Educational planning and management (EPM)

Since its inception in 1963, IIEP has always grounded its existence in the business of educational planning and management. Even the creation of the institute, which came about from the report findings of the Committee of Consultants on the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP, 2003, 2018a; UNESCO, 1963), were specifically tied to "[the promotion of] instruction and research on educational planning in relation to economic and social development" (UNESCO, 1963, p. 15). The core specifications of its functions were originally research and training, with technical cooperation evolving as a means to incorporate these two activities within the mode of international development assistance (UNESCO, 1963).

Within this functional mission, the relatively vague concept of education planning and management affords the institute the space to dictate and characterize its work, and the freedom to adapt to the needs and contexts of the countries with which it works. As a terminology, education planning and management (EPM) is specific enough conceptually, yet vague enough

operationally: it spans a whole range of issues, with problems and priorities vary across contexts. This affordance, however, is coupled with a risk for mission creeps, for which, if not careful, IIEP may find itself within the territories of other UNESCO institutes and agencies:

> [E]ducational planning and management can be interpreted in many ways, and even in the narrower interpretation of the terms, it's already a very, very big domain. I mean it's very wide what can be slipped under education planning and management: just a whole area of governance, the whole area of equity, whole area of equity which is related to access, everything which is related to technology, and you know information systems for instance. It's very big, so there's this constant risk of mission creep. We have to be very careful.
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

This duality of conceptual specificity and operational ambiguity lends itself to the actual work of the institute in countries. Acknowledging the risk of such mission creeps, in terms of both organizational mandate and capacity, an expert describes the workarounds in training and technical cooperation without necessarily overstepping the mandates of other agencies:

> [Bringing the focus down to the classroom and learning process is] quite a challenge for us as we discuss these things quite a lot. Because obviously different agencies—you've got to have a particular focus, and if you allow your scope to expand too much it then becomes somewhat vague [or] you may end up doing things which you're not particularly well equipped to do.
>
> So what I don't think IIEP will get into is looking at issues of pedagogy in the classroom or perhaps curriculum, but I think where we do come in is where you're looking at the planning of education. For example, if you're looking at a new education sector plan, normally it would be for a period of five years or something, and if they're trying to improve the quality of learning then you have to look at the sub-sectoral planning—if you like—the different areas within the plan such as curriculum development, textbooks, teacher training.
>
> And therefore, we get closer to the classroom through looking at those issues. So, for example, we know in teacher education that if you just have courses which are not linked to the school—which are not school-based to some extent—you're not really going to change

teacher behavior. So we have to think about that when we're advising people how to do a sector plan, and we also have to talk about how you address issues of teaching and learning.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

Weaving the issues that lie outside of its mandates into the language of education planning and management is an effective approach that IIEP experts have sought. This is further afforded by the wide interpretive domain of the field (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017) and the prescribed role of experts as researchers. By identifying research problems within the thesis of education planning, IIEP experts have shed light onto such issues as government and school accountability, school-based textbook management, education planning for gender equality, or education planning for teacher education institutes. Individual experts' research portfolios have also touched on problems of school atmosphere, learning environments, and classroom pedagogy.

We see in one such case how that can be done, as the following expert conducted a classroom observation study in an African country to explore issues in gender equality:

We don't do anything [on] teacher training and classroom [pedagogy], but then I was actually doing it because I had a little bit of [grant] money and I kind of "twisted" everybody. And I just went to [that country] and get a very quick observation in two times in August and October—in 2013 or something—and then [it] took several years to write everything and it's still sitting in the publication office.

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

This example again proves the versatility of the triple roles each program specialist takes. In this case, the research angle of the expert's job allows her to venture outside the realm of the institute's mandate. Coupled with that is the fairly open and collegial atmosphere from an

administrative perspective that affords the expert the freedom to design and conduct her own

research program. This pays back in an enlarged IIEP knowledge repertoire that is sometimes not

necessarily bounded by its mandate of educational planning and management.

Niche, reputation, competition

One can learn from these examples that the institutional mandate of educational planning

and management, while on the surface may seem constraining as it ties IIEP's activities to a very

specific set of issues, in actuality affords a lot of space for the institute activities to elaborate. The

paradox of area specificity and domain ambiguity allows the institute to tie its research under the

auspice of educational planning and management to the individual expertise of its program

specialists. In this regard, IIEP has effectively created a niche—closely aligned with its resources

and whose core technology it continues to shape and define—from which to build its prestige.

And that is thanks to IIEP's flexibility as a technical team doing work in the field, as opposed to

the bureaucratic constraints that their colleagues at UNESCO headquarters often face:

> *[W]orking at UNESCO headquarters, our hands are very much bound by administration. Working in the field, you have a lot more freedom. UNESCO is not as regulated as UNICEF is. It's not a fund: [it] doesn't have to manage funds; we [are] supposed to be a technical organization, so you can find the worst and the best. You can have niches—you can create niches where you have excellence.*

> (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

The excellence that IIEP garners from a team of well-regarded experts and a relatively

open technical domain in which it has the freedom to navigate evidently adds up its reputation.

Herein lies the peculiarity of IIEP's success: it builds upon the legitimacy of its mandate to fortify

its standing as a capable technical provider. And that, again, stands in stark contrast to its mother

organization, whose image as a bureaucratic organization often bears much of a critique:

> *I think we do have the legitimacy, but within the UN, and in the world as a whole, legitimacy cannot only be built on mandate. It is one of the difficulties UNESCO as an organization has: UNESCO as an organization has for instance the mandate to work on Education for All—now on SDG 4, but in many cases there has been a feeling that UNESCO's mandate has not been accompanied by the necessary technical skills, the necessary human capacities, the necessary financial resources. And therefore, regularly in countries the mandate of UNESCO has been contested by others, and the legitimacy of UNESCO has to some extent been lost.*
>
> *I think in IIEP we are still—although we are part of UNESCO, we are—to some extent in a better situation. We have [a] mandate for sure, but we've kept that legitimacy mainly because we have good technical skills, and we usually succeed in delivering [not only] what we promised but in that time constraints that are imposed upon us.*

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The peculiarity intriguingly characterizes IIEP's approach to legitimacy. On the one hand,

it draws legitimacy from UN/ESCO as a member institute with a clear mandate to position itself

in its work with member states. On the other hand, it stresses its image as a competent technical

provider while—in many cases—blurs its other legitimate role as a standard-setter, as described

in Chapter 5. Legitimacy, for IIEP, is both institutional and technical, and that is both beneficial

and problematic. It distinguishes IIEP from UNESCO and puts the institute in a somewhat

strained relationship with its mother organization, whose financial and organizational struggles

in recent years have been well documented (Klees, 2012; Wanner, 2015). This also shows that

while legitimacy can provide the organization initial capital, it is sustained and developed by a

reputation that comes from proven performance. Its presence in the field of global EPM is also

marked by the relatively small number of other providers, few of which has the institutional

leverage to work directly with countries and ministries as IIEP does:

> *That does not mean that there are no others in the world who can do work on educational planning as [well] as we do. They do exist. You have Oxford Policy Management; you have Cambridge International and so on; you have different consultancies, and they do equally good work—I think—in many cases.*
>
> *But it's true that—I think—we have been able to build a collegial relationship with many ministries, which may be some of those agencies are a little bit less, some of those consultancies are a little bit less. And in any case, there was more demand for this sort of work than we can provide—than we can respond to—so the existence of others as such [is not so much of] a competition at the moment.*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The relationships that come together as a result of this institutional leverage, as will be

described below, characterize much of IIEP's task environment.

Relationships

With countries

Along the way of its development, IIEP has solidified its ground and strengthened its ties

to countries, governments, ministries, networks, organizations, and other stakeholders within the

technical realms of educational planning and management. As the aims and functions in the

1962 UNESCO Resolution indicated, IIEP works mostly with countries to help develop and

evaluate their education sector plans (UNESCO, 1963). At the height of the postwar global

reconstruction project, this implied assistance mostly to third world countries (IIEP, 2003).

Through research, training, and direct technical cooperation with those countries, this has consistently been the core mission of the institute.

The center of these relationships lies in IIEP's connection with countries that it collaborates with to develop education sector plans. This collaboration is coordinated through research, training, and technical cooperation. Ministries of education from these countries regularly send their staff to IIEP's training programs, and often the IIEP expert teams work with ministries on an official capacity on developing education sector plans as part of development aid agreements with donors. The collaborations have been for the most part carried out in the mechanisms of international development aid, but increasingly the work has been brought together under the provisions of global educational governance, especially on globally important issues, during and after the *Education for All* period:

> *[S]ometimes you need an international agenda to push forward very important issues. Think of countries now—I mean—there are [gender equality] issues in [Southeast Asian countries] and the government doesn't like to acknowledge them, but you have countries like [a South Asian country] where it's so incredibly important; [Another South Asian country]—I mean where half of the population—you are just losing the IQ of so many parts of the population you know for education, training, labor markets.*
>
> *And so there are some of the international agendas I think have been very important to push some issues to create awareness, but it's not [just] that: it is creating awareness and very often it also involves a lot of additional commitment for countries.*
>
> (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

The technical environment of IIEP is thus characterized both by the mechanisms of global development aid and by the language of global educational governance. IIEP depends on aids relationships between donors and receiving countries to provide its assistance, but also buys

in to the visions and values of global educational development. This is the point where possible

tensions arise, as the political contexts in those countries are often at odds with the values and

visions articulated by the global agenda (see Chapter 5). The mechanisms of both global

development assistance and global educational governance sometimes put IIEP in difficult

situations in laying out its work with countries, where the politics of development aids and the lip

service of the global agenda often obscure sincere efforts for collaboration:

> *[I]n order for any education sector plan or policy or strategy to be implemented, you do need internal convictions and internal commitment. And we've seen too many examples— not necessarily in this area but for instance about order and elements of education delivery, about fiscal predictability and all that sort of thing—we've seen many examples where governments—in order to obtain funds, or simply just to be looked at benevolently by donors—the government commits on paper to things under pressure, but afterwards they never do. So it's not necessarily very helpful, neither effective, to put pressure when the pressure has not translated into internal conviction.*

> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

It is the complexity of these relationships that requires IIEP to deal tactfully with each

country in each particular context. It does help to rely on values as a source of moral legitimacy,

but even that reliance is often obscured by the unfortunate complexity of context. Herein lies the

explanation for "we may defend values, but not specific strategies:" in contexts where values are

inherently at odds with reality, especially in crises-laden societies, experts sometimes have to rely

on context to translate values into actions, and that is often a painful choice:

> *On contextualization, that's where the difficulty comes in actually, because obviously values—to some extent—value should not be negotiated. You can't say oh I'm only three quarters in favor of that particular value; I'm only three quarters in favor of honesty; or I'm*

only four fifths in favor of equality and so on. [A] value should not be negotiated; it cannot be negotiated.

But the translation of values into specific actions—there is maybe unfortunately a little bit of leeway, partly because people interpret values in different ways, [and therefore you have] contextualization, but it's at times a painful choice. […] Sometimes when you actually have to work in a country, the [local] context shows that values are not the most hopeful guide.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

With donors

IIEP's relationships with donors are a crucial part of its operation. Although countries can and indeed do contact IIEP directly for help with training, developing and monitoring education sector plans, or provide consultancy in accordance with its mandate, much of the resources for IIEP's work come from donor countries and organizations through the process of development aids. These countries and organizations can either grant these resources directly to IIEP to support its research work, or as part of development aids agreements with developing countries in which IIEP is selected as the technical support provider. Almost 90% of IIEP's income comes from these sources; UNESCO's financial allocation only account for 11% of IIEP's budget (IIEP Finance Department, 2017; *Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017).

In such a heavy reliance on external funders, IIEP is under pressure to continuously improve its technical capacities and thus its reputation as a key service provider. This takes emphasis off the institutional legitimacy privileges it enjoys as a UNESCO institute and onto the

quality of the work that it produces (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017).

This signal a strategy from the institute's leadership that focuses not only on just its mandate of

helping countries develop education sector plans, but also to produce and disseminate

knowledge that targets these donors as consumers, as explained by an expert in a leadership role:

> *Our theory of change is this: we want to support at two levels which shouldn't be [disproportionate]—I mean one is not below the other. We always produce, in terms of knowledge, training offer and dissemination of the knowledge and of the training; we act at the global level; we provide public goods that can be used by member states, but also by the donor community in order to provide better equity, better access, better management of education systems.*

<center>(Interview 1, personal communication, October 9, 2017)</center>

The targeting of the donor community as a key consumer group, as well as the growing

portfolio of the Technical Cooperation department, exemplifies structural strategies employed by

the institute in response to its technical environment. Nevertheless, not all of these relationships

come from that space. The institutional environment of global educational governance also

contributes to the strengthening ties between IIEP and its donors, who for the most part are also

active players in the global education landscape and/or the topics within its provenance. One

example of such partnerships comes from IIEP's project on *Open Schools and Open Government*:

> *[W]e have many partners as part of the project, so we've been working with a number of UN organizations that are also working on the topic, like UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] for instance, or UNODC [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime] that as you know have a mandate regarding the enforcement of the Convention against Corruption. Sometimes UNICEF [has] supported some of the work.*
>
> *And then getting out from these partners, we've been working quite intensively with the World Bank and World Bank institutes at some point, and then with many civil society*

organizations including of course Transparency [International], Open Society Foundations, and many other NGO's according to the topics where we've been working on.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

These relationships are inherently complex, as many of these donors are well capacitated and have their own well-resourced educational development programs and agendas. One of the reasons for IIEP to firm up its position as a key technical provider was because "technical agencies like the World Bank [have] scaled back technical competencies a lot" (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017). IIEP, to some extent, can provide them with technical support in the domain of educational planning and management, but it is often not the case that its service to these donors is uncontested. The relationship is, for most of the time, both cooperative and competitive, and that has implications—and challenges—for the institute to continually improve its technical capacity:

> *IIEP has maintained a certain level of technical capacity: you know that IIEP is extremely reluctant to have consultants do the job, that when we develop training or training materials we have to do the research ourselves—we have to do the writing ourselves—so that we can teach that we continued to learn.*
>
> *But at the same time, we are under so much pressure that—you know—if you open a totally new area of research—I'm witnessing this with the demography piece which I'm working on—it's not easy. It's not easy to find the time to do as much research, as much collaboration in the field, trying out the materials, trying out the approaches that you can say "Yes we have a new product." We are not staying within our comfort zones, but we have something new.*

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

For IIEP to maintain its technical capacity and its image as a competent technical provider places exceeding pressure on the institute: it is both costly and difficult to effectively

expand its team of experts to cover and addresses an expanding field of problems related to

educational planning and management, many if not all of which equity-relevant (*Interview 5a*,

personal communication, March 27, 2018). Expertise in education planning and international

development—the core spaces of the institute—requires tested capacity and experience, both of

which not exactly abundant given the relative smallness of the spaces. It also takes energies and

strategies to lead and train junior colleagues on strategized research agendas, as one expert points

out (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017). It is thus crucial for IIEP to make

the link between its niche and its strategies for survival and growth.

With others

Alongside the networks of partners, donors and clients that IIEP has collaborated with,

there are also informal human-centered networks that plays an important role in defining the

institute's identity and maintaining its reputation. The network of IIEP trainees—for more than

50 years of its training history—has spanned to include thousands, many of whom have taken

key roles and positions in local, national, and international educational administrations:

> *IIEP over the years of course has built a certain reputation. There are not that many
> agencies—agencies, institutions, whatever—who have specific skills and a mandate in
> education planning and management—within the UN agencies, we are probably the only
> one; many of the others are consultancy agencies—so we have built a certain reputation.*
>
> *We have quite a good network because many participants of our advanced training
> program go back to their countries become directors of planning or any other posts that
> allows them to help decide when support is needed to reach out to IIEP. And we also have a*

good network with development partners—UNICEF in particular, the Global Partnership for Education and also all of UNESCO offices.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Not only do these widespread alumni networks help expand IIEP's reputation, they often also tie IIEP's support back to countries it has worked with before. During my time at the institute, IIEP was engaging in various training and technical cooperation projects with countries with which it had formed ties since the 1990s. Furthermore, because IIEP works so often on educational sector planning with policy makers at the national level, the impact that it exerts on educational policy around the world does invariably exist. Aware of its reputation and its influence, IIEP strategically stresses the importance of these networks:

Networking is always very important. Networking is very important because within every institution—within the ministry—decisions are finally taken by individuals—individuals who may sometimes occupy positions of decision-making authority, or sometimes are not necessarily in those positions, but have a strong influence on who take those decisions—so the effect that you have good personal relationships is indeed very important.

(*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Another network that has been instrumental to the work of IIEP is its network of interns. These people, though briefly connected to the institute in preparation for their careers (or for other reasons such as this research), bring in ideas and insights that often facilitate the work of educational planning, and take with them valuable knowledge and experiences that few other organizations can offer. The way IIEP recognizes its interns is reflected in the informal yet collegial atmosphere between experts and interns. It is also customary for the institute to value interns' contributions in the form of returned consultancy contracts (*Interview 5a*, personal

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communication, March 27, 2018). It should also be noted that quite a few of the current staff members at the institute once started out as interns there as well.

Discussion

The business of legitimacy

The analysis reveals several interesting insights into the organizational legitimacy of IIEP and how it relates to the institute's performance. Overall, IIEP conforms to the image of a UN/ESCO member institute: it strongly aligns with and defends missions, visions, and values that are characteristic of its grand/parent organizations. When it comes to IIEP's mandate, the association is even stronger: the institute actively buys in to and strongly defends a global vision of education and development, actively partaking in the global education agenda led principally by the UN and its children organizations.

IIEP does not solely build its legitimacy institutionally, however. It also accrues, through the quality of the work that it provides, a strong reputation as a capable service provider in the realm of educational planning and management. This dimension of legitimacy, which derives from the technical performance of the institute, at times places it in stark contrast with UNESCO—its parent organization—which, because of the peculiar nature of its existence, is found to be more normative and bureaucratic (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). This technical legitimacy is also a significant source of life support for the institute: while UNESCO and many of its suborganizations are fraught with financial problems and the

politics of management and leadership (*Interview 7*, personal communication, October 26, 2017; Wanner, 2015), IIEP continues to secure and expand steady sources of funds for its activities (IIEP Director's Office, 2017; IIEP Finance Department, 2017).

It makes sense, therefore, for the institute to strategically build upon this technical dimension of legitimacy while actively associate with the institutional legitimacy of a UN/ESCO institute. The assertion that "IIEP is 100% UNESCO" (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017) frequently come up in my interviews, though differences between the two are often acknowledged. In one interview, an expert downplay the normative aspect of the institute in comparison with its mother organization: "We at IIEP—we are more into technical assistance, technical support, guidance, advice, but probably it a little bit less in norm-setting and in advocacy—a little bit less [compared to UNESCO]" (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). The institute's strategy statement identifies its normative role; however, this normative role is also purely technical, "helping to identify and develop current best practices and standards" (IIEP, 2017a, p. 3).

The legitimacy of business

Building from the legitimacy that it enjoys both technically and institutionally, IIEP seems to take a good steer of its business. The technical environment surrounding the institute is characterized with good command and control of its technical core, strong working relationships with various stakeholders, and a strong reputation deriving from the quality of its work. Because

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of relatively few competitors in this problem area, fewer of which have the institutional leverage

to work with governments and ministries as effectively as IIEP does, the realized niche of IIEP's

offering is very close to its fundamental niche, giving it greater coordination and control of its

activities and in turn increased fitness and return (Hannan et al., 2003).

Factors in the institutional environment, moreover, while formally require some

conformity in the technical activities of the institute, in practice exert little to no impact on those

activities. The interview experts mentioned problems of translation and interpretation and a lack

of shared language within educational planning and management (*Interview 4*, personal

communication, October 20, 2017), as well as the misuse of terms that are normalized even

within the normalizing institutions:

> [E]ven the UNESCO headquarters are misusing some of the terms [on gender equality], and
> we are using the UNESCO definition, and so UNESCO itself is actually not a doing a
> controlling of all of the publications that are coming from the different sections and the
> divisions of UNESCO, so basically they have a set of guidelines but it's not at all enforced.
>
> (*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

This shows an interesting contrast between the two environments: whereas legitimately

IIEP is expected to play a normative role of its technical function to "identify and develop current

best practices and standards" (IIEP, 2017a, p. 3), the normative elements in the institutional

environment in many cases fail to exert any influence on its technical work. In other words, its

core technical activities are effectively buffered from the normative and institutional elements

from the environment. There is therefore theoretically a desire on the part of the institute to tie

its strategies and resources to its core technical activities and divert or buffer them from

institutional aspects, in a process that Meyer and Rowan would term *structured coupling* (or

reverse decoupling) (J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1978). This tendency is more clearly illustrated

when tensions arise between elements in the two environments, as will be evidenced in the

following section.

Coupling, decoupling, and the ethics of legitimacy

The obvious affordances of both its technical and institutional legitimacies

notwithstanding, problems often arise when IIEP must negotiate between the two to navigate

tensions in its in-country work, some of which detailed in Chapter 5. The technical and political

contexts in the field sometimes require IIEP to make difficult choices, which may be antithetical

to the strategies and principles it holds dear as a UN/ESCO entity. Governments may give a blind

eye or pay lip service to equity issues that are not favorable to their public governance agenda:

gender equality, ethnic minorities, refugees, disabilities, anticorruption, and so on. For IIEP to

make the choice to work with these governments often require conscience searching,

concessions, and compromises (*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017;

Interview 5, personal communication, October 25, 2017; *Interview 6*, personal communication,

October 26, 2017). And even as IIEP chose to work with them, these political issues would

invariably bleed into technical problems, such as the lack of educational data for certain

demographics (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). Under such

circumstances, it may be reasonable for the institute to walk away from these governments,

especially when they are antithetical to the values and principles it strongly defends as a UN/ESCO agency. In practice, it is not that easy, for the following two reasons.

First, IIEP does not have much of a leverage in negotiating work with governments. Unlike UNESCO, it is usually not in a position to set conditions for cooperation. As a technical assistance provider, its goal is to provide service to governments rather than to judge them:

> *[UNESCO] takes more of an advocacy role; I think in terms of IIEP—we've discussed this as well; we've had a global meeting recently—we tend to be less judgmental about what governments do because we really want to encourage government leadership, government ownership. So we don't want to be going to go to a country to say we want to help you with educational planning, but our support is conditional on the fact that you must have a policy which focuses very much on equity or inclusion. We don't make those conditions. So in terms of IIEP I think our approach is for it to be a little bit more subtle.*
>
> (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

The subtlety of such an approach manifests itself in the delicate distinction between UNESCO and IIEP, voiced by another expert. While UNESCO is widely seen as a standard-setter and stresses it normative and advocacy roles, IIEP as a technical provider sees itself as less active in such roles: "we may defend different values, but not necessarily specific strategies; we may defend visions but not necessarily specific interventions" (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017).

It can be inferred from these statements that there is a strategic choice on the part of the institute to forsake pressure from the institutional environment to accommodate demands in the task environment. This puts the organization in a curious contrast to the observation that Meyer and Rowan termed *decoupling*, where organizations, in contexts of uncertainty in the task

environment, often adhere to norms and rituals in the institutional environment for legitimacy and survival (J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This structured coupling, or *reverse decoupling* as it reflects a rationally strategic choice, also stands apart from organizational theorists' explanation that organizations with static and simple technical cores tend to be tightly coupled (Perrow, 1967; Thompson, 1967; Woodward, 1965), since IIEP's core technology is neither static nor simple (see Chapter 6). The assumption is that IIEP has a stable control of its core technology through its triangular model of research, training, and technical cooperation, and through its relative freedom to model and define educational planning and management, thanks to its prolonged expertise in the area and little competition in the global educational development space.

The second reason is a moral one and represents a contrast between IIEP as a UN/ESCO agency and other NGO's that work in the same space. Here institutional legitimacy plays a role. In many cases, IIEP chooses to work with governments that are not committed to equity precisely because they do not have the option to turn away as an UN organization:

> *We have at a certain moment worked with [an African] government to develop an education sector plan, which obviously was a government that did not have much interest in equity—evidently not. We nevertheless produced an education sector plan that puts equity quite visibly there, but maybe if I were an individual consultant, I would have withdrawn, I would have said "let's not go there".*
>
> *Once you are part of [a] UN organization with member states and a moral role, you don't have that choice. I mean the choice of course exists, but it's more difficult. But it's not only that: you do feel that hopefully if you intervene you can have a positive impact.*
>
> *But that "hopefully" is not always easy to achieve.*
>
> (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The expert pins the moral obligation to work with the government in this case on IIEP's status as part of a UN organization with member states and a moral role, but also with that is the hope that IIEP can positively impact the government with its interventions. There indeed have been successes in making these impacts, from developing textbook management programs that effectively address corruption in a corruption-rampaged country (*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017) to developing crisis-sensitive plans in countries with humanitarian crises (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017; *Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017; *Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). The invisible hands that drive progress in these cases come from both its legitimate image of a UN entity and its neutrality as a technical organization. Thus, even as other UN organizations have begun taking on more active advocacy roles, IIEP still leaves that option of hope open:

> *But I still think we can bring [advocacy] into the dialogue with government, you know. For example, if they're developing a sector plan which doesn't have any accommodation for children with disabilities, we should be saying well what about the children with disabilities here. [But] if they decide not to really put much into the sector plan around disabilities or migration or ethnicity or ethnic groups, I don't think we should say "I'm sorry we cannot support your planning process because you are inequitable."*
>
> *Whereas other agencies they might take that stance—some of the more activist NGO's and so on. Their cooperation [may] insist on certain things. Even GPE now insists on the sector analysis looking at issues of equity, and gender is very stressed in you know all the GPE plans, so there is still some areas where there was some kind of conditionalities, but IIEP— we tend to be a little bit more neutral.*

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

And that is because "not being there [in those countries] is not a solution":

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So it's a very tricky situation, but my personal view is that you still have got to work with that government, and part of our role I think is to start to subtly leverage governments—to influence governments—so that they improve rather than saying we won't work with you.

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

As the above reasoning suggests, framing this "tricky situation" in terms of choice and strategy runs the danger of obscuring the moral implications of it. It is not a solution for IIEP to choose not to involve, for by so choosing it chooses to forsake the potential benefits of a good sector plan it may bring to the education system as a whole in exchange for the principled dissent to how certain groups are treated. For IIEP experts to make these difficult choices reflects the image of idealists in a pragmatic role: they are not just defenders of visions, values, and principles as members of the UN network, but also defenders of the potential good that network is missioned to provide.

Conclusion

The chapter has thus far described the elements of IIEP's environments. There is the institutional environment where IIEP identifies itself as a UN/ESCO affiliate with a specific mandate to work with countries on educational planning and management in a global framework and discourse of education and development. There is also the technical environment where IIEP strategically manages its relationships with country clients, donors, consumers, partners, and competitors. Managing resources and navigating tensions from within and between these two environments have often found the institute with uneasy choices and strategic

questions about its identity and image. They also set a strategic coupling for IIEP to operate within the affordances and constraints of its mandate and context: to build a reputation through improved capacities and quality work on educational planning and management, while defending the visions and values of a unified global discourse and agenda for education and development. The specific contexts of the field provide IIEP with different strategies to navigate and advance its work: either by forgoing certain institutional normative pressures or by attaching a moral requisite and hope of positive impact to less optimistic collaborations. In any cases, these interactions and exchanges between the two environments are crucial to understanding the actions and strategies of an organization that comes from a normative lineage and yet bears a technical *raison d'être*.

CHAPTER 8. EQUITY, LEGITIMACY, PERFORMANCE

This conclusion gathers and aligns the findings from the previous chapters to illustrate the case of how the organizational structures and environments of IIEP characterize the concept of equity that permeates its work. It argues that such a conceptualization is diverse and complex, and both the diversity and complexity are connected to elements in IIEP's structures and its environments. These structural and environmental elements present both a set of affordances for IIEP to situate itself and to compete in the global field of technical development assistance, and a set of problems for its operation and growth strategies. Furthermore, IIEP's conceptualization of equity and its problems and strategies around legitimacy and performance mirror the contrast between the arrangement-focused and realization-focused views of justice.

Introduction

The previous four chapters have brought together a description of the concept of equity as it surfaces in the work of UNESCO-IIEP (Chapter 4), the dilemmas and complexities associated with that concept characterized by the politics of the field (Chapter 5), the organizational structures of IIEP that explain the diverse conceptualization of equity (Chapter 6), and elements in IIEP's environments that give sense to the complexity of equity it faces in its work (Chapter 7). This chapter revisits and recapitulates these points, putting them in frameworks both drawn from organizational theory and suggested from the analyses of this study. It reviews the conceptualization of equity in the organizational context of IIEP, align those

with discussions of the institute's niche and its legitimacy, and tie them together from a perspective of organizational theory, in which the dimensions and dilemmas of equity is sensitized with the negotiation between performance and legitimacy, and with the competing and complementary views of justice.

Observations and discussions

Equity

The concept of equity that surfaces from the work, talks, and texts at IIEP mirrors and confirms the concept of equity that exists in the space of global educational discourse: that equity takes roots in the humanitarian, egalitarian, and utilitarian perspectives of education, that these perspectives do not necessarily contradict but complement one another, and that they can each be based upon to make the case for equity depending on the particularity of context. This corresponds to Amartya Sen's realization-focused view of justice: that different problems and contexts demand and call for different approaches to equity (Sen, 2001, 2009). This equity conceptualization recognizes its many dimensions, tied to the problem areas that IIEP's experts identify with. This allows for equity on a general level to resemble and echo the global discourse and agenda, while on a deeper level to reflect the complex nuances and intricacies that are more contextually based and locally linked. The intersection and interaction of these dimensions give sense to the complex dilemmas around equity—true to the political nature of the concept (UIS, 2018). Often these dilemmas involve IIEP dealing with the complexity of politics in the field, and

often they also involve the institute operating within the technical constraints of educational planning and management. Both these dimensions and dilemmas are thus inherently tied to IIEP's organizational structures and technical identity.

The choice for the institute to address equity both as strategic themes and through the technical aspects of its work speaks to the complementary views of justice raised by Sen (2009). On the one hand, it identifies as part of its missions and visions to materialize, through its work, an idealistic vision of justice shaped embedded in institutions and social arrangements. On the other hand, it has to manipulate specific strategies and interventions within the constraints of technical cooperation to leverage governments and bring about positive change, making do with concessions and compromises in the process. This very reality brings with it questions of the morality of equity and justice (Rawls, 1999; Sen, 1999, 2001, 2009)—questions that torment not only the institute and its members but those interested and involved in its work.

IIEP's conceptualization of equity also incarnates in the institutional and technical identity of the institute. It shares the humanitarian visions and the egalitarian values of equity and justice, rooted in its image of a UN/ESCO member, while its technical focus, expertise, and capacity on educational planning and management has to a very large extent shaped the notions and discussions of equity among its members. These notions and discussions for most of the time come in the form of quantitative measurements and statistical analyses of system planning, but often they also come from rich observations and deep reflections of the work it shares with its clients and partners, and of its status and relationships with UN/ESCO and its sister institutes

and offices. Equity is thus embedded and built into both the institutional and technical DNAs of the IIEP, shaping and in turn shaped by its operations and interactions in these spaces.

Legitimacy

The analysis in the preceding chapters lays open insights into the institute's affairs with legitimacy. IIEP champions and builds upon its legitimate image of a UN/ESCO entity, aligning its visions and values with those of its grand/parent and—by extension—of the global community. In addition to that, it operates in a space where legitimacy comes not only from its status but from the quality of the service it provides and from the technical capacity that it cultivates. Often these legitimacy dynamics complement one another and mitigate IIEP's work, yet often they are at odds and aggravate its plans, requiring the institute to maneuver its way through the politics of the field. This leads to a new and interesting question of moral legitimacy, where the source of legitimacy for the institute's chosen action is often morally guided.

There are two ways to understand and describe the legitimacy that IIEP fosters and draws on in and through its work. It can be analyzed using Aldrich and Fiol (1994) taxonomy, in which the institute strategically fosters both types of legitimacy: (a) cognitive, which is based on its technical performance and reputation, and (b) sociopolitical legitimacy, which derives from its status as a UN/ESCO affiliate and its shared visions and values with its superior organizations.

COGNITIVE LEGITIMACY

Organization
Technical capacity (knowledge and expertise) developed around the core technology

Intraindustry
Technical convergence around a dominant design on education planning and management

Interindustry
Market competencies targeting donors, clients, and interim linkages (e.g. GPE, alumni network)

Institutional
Means for diffusion and dissemination embedded in core technology

SOCIOPOLITICAL LEGITIMACY

Organization
Shared visions and values embedded in the social and technical foundations of their work

Intraindustry
Shared visions and values as part of UN/ESCO network

Interindustry
Shared visions and values in global governance and global development agendas

Institutional
Shared visions and values of a global discourse and ideaology on education and equity

ORGANIZATIONAL
INTRAINDUSTRY
INTERINDUSTRY
INSTITUTIONAL

Figure 10: The levels of IIEP's cognitive and sociopolitical legitimacies (following Aldrich & Fiol, 1994)

The layers of these two types of legitimacy are illustrated in Figure 10, where, at the organizational level, IIEP secures its cognitive legitimacy around a core technology of educational planning and management that involves research, training, and technical cooperation. It also builds, at this organizational level, sociopolitical legitimacy in developing an open, cooperative, and collegial work environment that is founded on the shared visions and values of its members. At the intra-industry level, IIEP shares on the one hand the shared visions and values of the UN/ESCO network, while on the technical side converge around a dominant design on education planning and management that justifies the core of its mandate. The interindustry layer of IIEP's legitimacy is cognitively rooted in the networks of relationships it develops with clients, donors, partners, consumers, and alumni, while socio-politically it buys in to a global education and development agenda that in many cases connects it to these actors. Finally, at the institutional level, legitimacy is embedded cognitively in the formalization of its technical know-how on education planning and management, and socio-politically through its part in shaping the global discourse on education, development, and equity.

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Another lens through which to view IIEP's legitimacy is through the tripartite framework of sociopolitical acceptability, status, and reputation (Edwards et al., 2018). This model makes clear IIEP's status as a UN/ESCO entity and the reputation it enjoys through its work in educational planning. The institute's sociopolitical acceptability is negotiated through managing relationships with actors in both its institutional and technical environments. The model can be illustrated in the diagram below.
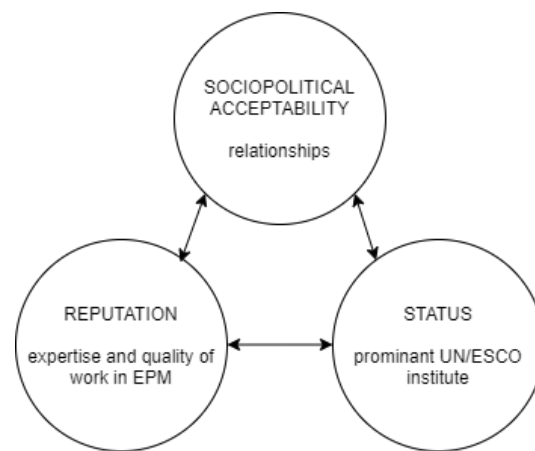
Figure 11: Components of IIEP's legitimacy (following Edwards et al., 2018)

Legitimacy, thus, is not just a matter of IIEP's status and sociopolitical standing: it is also closely related to the reputation that comes from its capability and the quality of the work it provides to its partners and clients. It characterizes IIEP's transactions and interactions not only within its social sphere, but also within its task environment. This point is closely related to and further demonstrated in the discussion of its niche that follows.

Niche

The frameworks of legitimacy thus described sets the stage for understanding IIEP's niche. As one expert rightly observes, IIEP's image as and operational conditions for a technical organization allows rooms for garnering its own excellence and carving out its own niche (*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017). This niche hosts a combination of factors, including the relatively scarce presence of technical providers of EPM, the consistent quality of service that IIEP provides, and the mechanisms of global development and technical cooperation work on education (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). In line with the legitimacy framework proposed by Aldrich and Fiol (1994), this niche is a function of the maturation of IIEP's cognitive legitimacy, with its expertise organized around a carefully developed technology of EPM, which is consistently provided to members of its client networks, and institutionalized through intensive research and development activities. Edwards et al. (2018) suggest a more straightforward interpretation of IIEP's niche, which is a combination of its reputation (i.e. the consistency and quality of the service it provides), its sociopolitical acceptability (i.e. partly from its technical mandate and partly from the relationships it builds with stakeholders), and its status (i.e. its being part of the UN network). Understood this way, for IIEP to strategize on its niche would require strategically investing in its institutional legitimacy, as pointed out in the preceding chapter.

The sociological study of niche (Hannan et al., 2003; Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984) provides yet another way to understand IIEP's action and strategy in its operational space. In this

framework, IIEP thrives in the *niche* of educational planning and management thanks to a

relatively small *population* of such technical providers, a large *audience* of donors, clients, and

consumers with a strong *taste* (or demand) for the service it provides (its *offerings*). The *appeal*—

or the strength of its service—can be *intrinsic*, lying in its organizational mandate of technical

cooperation, training, and research on EPM, or it can be the *actual* appeal of the status, resources

and technical capabilities that IIEP has built up over fifty years of its existence.
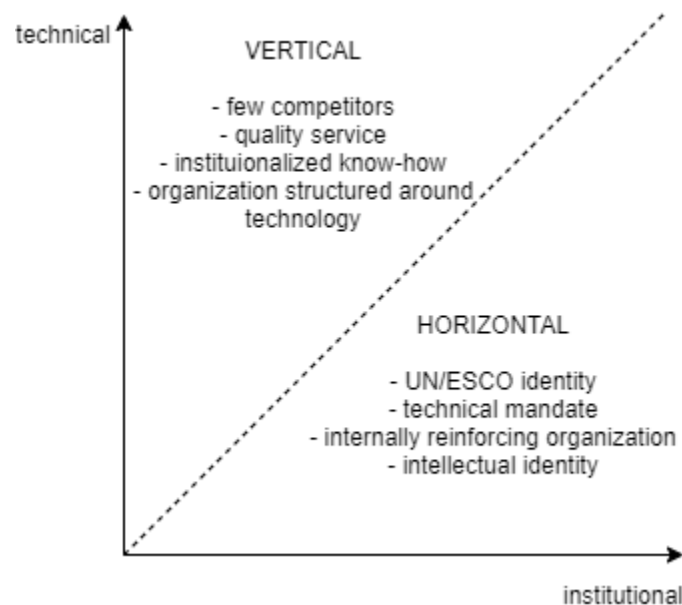
Figure 12: Dimensions of IIEP's niche

In other words, the niche that IIEP has managed to create for itself is twofold. It is both

the *vertical niche* of educational planning and management, built upon its mandate and its

technical capabilities, and the *horizontal niche*, in which it has to some degree of success branded

itself as an intellectual organization (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017),

building upon its institutional legitimacy and maturing its organizational structures. A

representation of this niche can be illustrated as Figure 12.

In this view, IIEP's vertical niche encompasses elements of its reputation or cognitive

legitimacy, by which it becomes a legitimate service provider mostly through a lack of

competition in the space, a strong, well-embedded, and well-established expertise on EPM, and

the consistent quality it has provided throughout its existence. Yet the niche is also determined

by its relative competitive advantage as a UN/ESCO affiliate, its clear technical mandate that

allows it to fully invest its resources and capacity, as well as its relative autonomy that affords

organizational learning and an intellectual image. This in turn relates back to IIEP's status and

sociopolitical legitimacy discussed in the preceding section.

The conceptualization of equity from an organizational perspective

The preceding discussions have painted a relatively clear picture of equity from the

organizational perspective of IIEP: that equity is faceted with dimensions and filled with

dilemmas. It can be approached, understood, and conceptualized from different angles and

dimensions, and often these conceptualizations compound, confound, and complicate one

another. There are two ways to explain this phenomenon. Firstly, the many dimensions of the

conceptualization of equity are related to the organizational structure of IIEP, in which expertise

is located in the individuals, each with a distinguished research agenda and most with a

reputation of decades-long experience in the problem areas they identify with. The individuality

of expertise penetrates all the aspects of the institute's work in the triple roles each expert take. This is further enhanced by a culture of cooperation and collegiality within the institute, as described in Chapter 6. These structures nonetheless posit problems and challenges for IIEP to develop and expand its scope of work, as will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The dilemmas of equity, on the other hand, are associated with the complex relationships, interactions, exchanges, and transactions that take place within and between IIEP's environments. As a UN/ESCO entity with a normative identity, the institute represents missions, visions, values, and principles that are relatively straightforward within the global development community and well-articulated in the global discourse on education and development. As a technical assistance provider, however, it often finds itself working in contexts characterized with competition, conflicts, complex politics, and sometimes a complete departure from those visions and values. Managing transactions and navigating tensions between these institutional and technical environments are crucial to the institute's operations and strategies, as they are closely related to elements in its legitimacy and performance spaces.

These explanations are built on the model of organizational learning in both internal and external environments advanced by prominent organizational theorists and succinctly summarized by Daniel Dauber and his colleagues (Dauber et al., 2012). Placing the focus on organizational culture, they developed an organizational learning model within the internal environment that reflects the internal relationships and systematic processes linking operations, structure, strategy, and organizational culture (Figure 13).
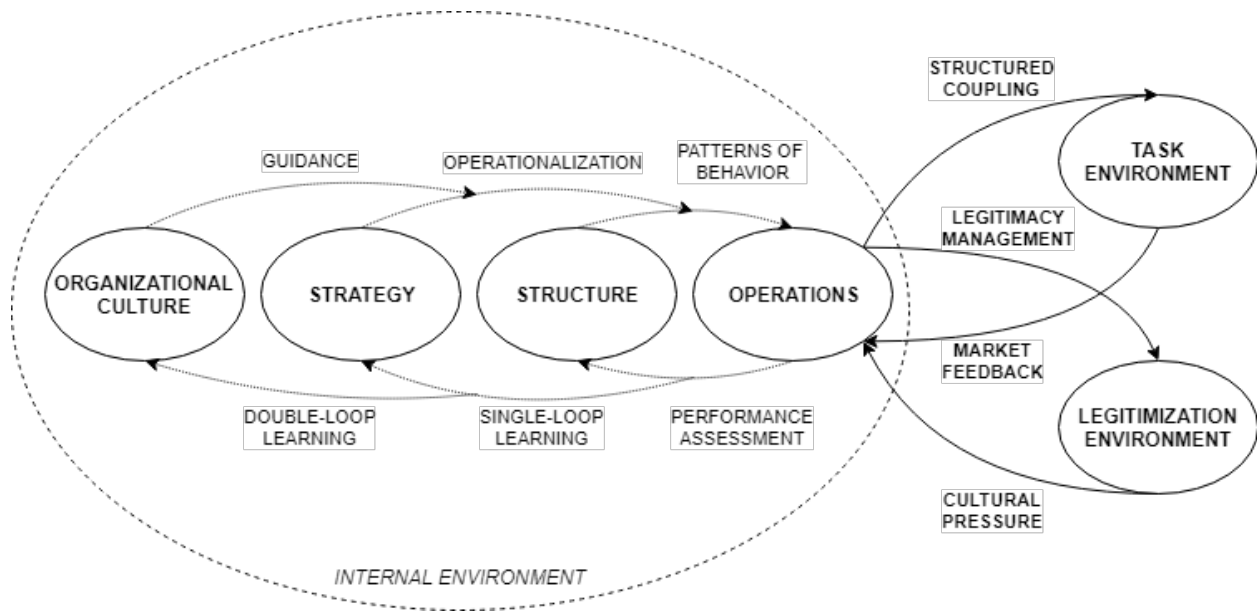
Figure 13: Organizational learning configurations: internal and external environments (adapted from Dauber et al., 2012)

In this model, organizational operations and behaviors inform structure, which develop "due to the need to organize behavior in a meaningful way and provide orientation for organizational members to set actions that comply with organizational strategy, organizational culture, and, as a result, accepted patterns of behavior" (Dauber et al., 2012, p. 7). This process of performance assessment then determines organizational strategies through a single-loop learning process of adjustment, the results of which are embedded in organizational culture through a double-loop learning process. In the other direction, organizational culture provides value guidance to the process of operationalization, in which organizational strategy determines patterns of behavior, which are the product of imposing structure over operations. The feedback and learning processes that take place internally are guided by happenings in the external spaces, namely market feedback from the task environment and cultural pressure for compliance from the legitimization environment. These analyses of the internal and external processes together

provide a useful guide to understanding the mechanisms that characterize IIEP's approach to

education equity and its strategies for coping with these mechanisms. Organizations strategically

respond to inputs from the environments through the process of structured coupling, whereby

they align their operations closely with feedback from the task environment, or through

legitimacy management mechanisms, in which they adapt their operations in line with responses

from the institutional environment—mechanisms which, in many cases, constitute decoupling (J.

W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

I base my explanation of the diversity and complexity of equity through the lens of IIEP's

work on the processes that take place in the internal and external environments, drawing

specifically on what Dauber and his colleagues suggested in this diagram. In the sections that

follow, I explain how IIEP's organizational operations, structure, strategy, and culture

characterize the diverse conceptualization of equity that surface in my research, and how

interactions, exchanges, and transactions between its environments add layers of complexity to

that conceptualization.

Dimensions: structures

The diverse dimensions of equity reflected in the work of IIEP can be explained in the

way the institute is structured and operated. Dauber et al. (2012) suggest a configurational model

for understanding organizational culture that speaks directly to this explanation (Figure 14). As

Chapter 4 makes clear, the operations of IIEP are organized around the core activities of

research, training, and technical cooperation. This tripartite organization of work allows for a full

organizational understanding and conceptualization of equity that captures all three practical

angles for each dimension of the concept, which is the territorial knowhow of each expert. The

broad conceptualization of equity as a sum of these diverse dimensions also reflects the collective

knowledge that the experts share as members of the institute.
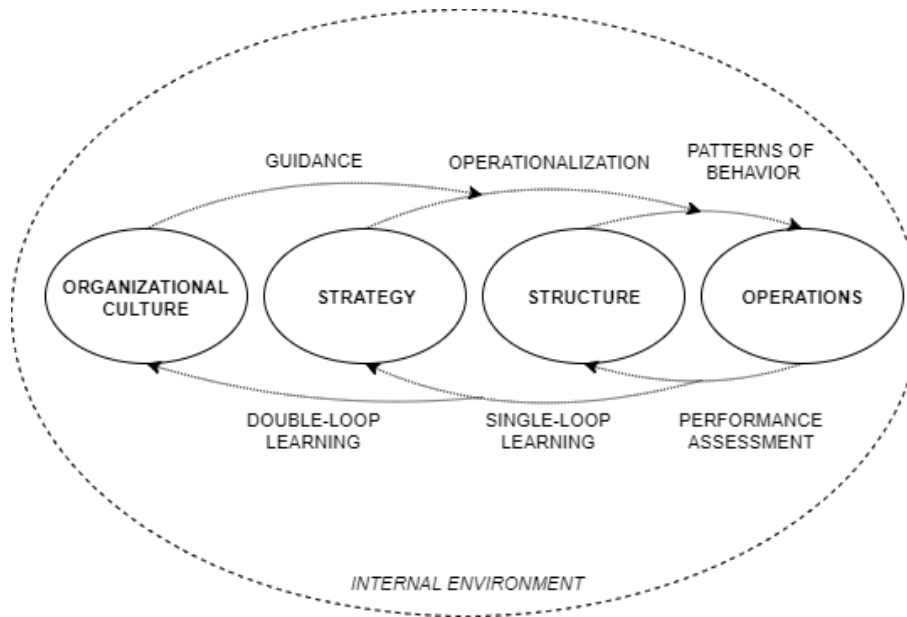
Figure 14: Relationships and processes within the internal environment (adapted from Dauber et al., 2012)

These tripartite operations are reflected into the structure of the institute, where experts

are housed in three separate technical departments of research, training, and technical

cooperation, but each of whom is expected to perform all three of these roles. The triple roles that

each expert takes allow each of them to deepen their conceptualization of equity from every

aspect of their work, building up a collective organizational knowledge of equity that encompass

many dimensions, from socioeconomic inequalities to gender issues to crises-sensitive planning

to accountability and anti-corruption. For each of these aspects of equity to be located in the

portfolio and agenda of each expert, there is an ongoing drive to continually deepen and strengthen organizational knowledge and capability, but that also places constraints on expanding organizational capacity and sustainability since it is difficult to recruit or develop experts in other problem areas, while many of the experts are nearing their retirement age (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017; *Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). The performance feedback that aligns IIEP's structure to its operations in turn informs its strategy, which is formally reflected in their strategic documents (IIEP, 2013, 2017a). These documents explicitly tie IIEP's growth to the tripartite operational model while laying directions to both diversify and intensify its knowledge of equity as it concerns educational planning and management.

These features of operations, structure, and strategy build into an organizational culture that manifests both internally and externally. Notable within the institute is the sense of collegiality and collaboration that infiltrates its communal life and work. Not only do experts know of and respect each other's work, they also have a strong sense of the collective knowledge that accumulates from their individual work. With experts in the technical cooperation conducting research and participating in training courses, and those from research and training departments participating in technical cooperation projects, knowledge is shared and spread across every aspect of IIEP's work, characterizing what they refer to as "the DNA of the institute."

This sense of collegiality also bleeds into other corners of the institute's building, represented in the way interns, trainees, and visitors are treated and valued.

Externally, IIEP's culture is reflected in a distinct organizational identity. Not only is this identity closely associated with the technical mandate it carries, but it also reflects a number of strong, well-defined themes that the institute builds it work around over time, yielding consistency and organizational integrity (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). This identity, on the other hand, also comes with challenges, one of which is the difficulty to diversify its research interests, presenting a tradeoff between depth and rigor on the one hand and a diverse and complete range of research foci on the other. It is also a key concern for the institute's leadership to diversify research interests and organizational expertise in human resources planning (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018).

This organizational culture is a result of IIEP's relatively small size and a history of development and growth around a focused interest of educational planning and management, which over time allows the institute to gather a strong a stable team of experts. As a UN/ESCO entity, IIEP also inherits a distinct organizational culture from its mother and grandmother organizations, highlighting to an extent certain visions, values and normative functions not characteristic of similar technical organizations.

The organizational learning that is embedded in IIEP's structure, strategy, and organizational culture in turn provides a set of guidance for the institute to plan its operations and conduct its behaviors. These tight connections, in addition to the tight coupling with its task

environment, creates a sense of strong coherence between IIEP's technical mandate and its social organization. This coherence affords the institute with a clear understanding and strong handling of its core work, in which the conceptualization of equity is featured with both diversity and rigor.

Dilemmas: environments

Beyond the multi-dimensional conceptualization of equity mentioned in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 reveals the dilemmas that layer over this conceptualization. Work in countries often finds IIEP grappling with dilemmas and conflicts over the many dimensions of aspects of equity, where access to education for disadvantaged groups on the one hand is often confounded with the quality of education these groups receive on the other. And even among these groups, issues of gender disparity are often compounded and confounded with racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic status, leaving educational planning and policy with no clear-cut solutions. The problems are further complicated by the politics of both global development assistance and the countries in which it works. These layers of complexity characterize the environments IIEP finds itself in, as discussed in Chapter 7, shaping its legitimacy and its performance.

In the following in paragraphs I propose an interpretation of the relations and exchanges between IIEP's environments and its legitimacy and performance spaces. These are described in terms of the flows of resources and exchanges, illustrated as arrows in Figure 15. IIEP, with its technical core of research, training, and technical cooperation, is depicted in the center,

surrounded by actors within its immediate institutional and technical environments, with those

it bears direct relationships with identified in the green layers. Beyond the two environments lie

the resource spaces of legitimacy and performance, from which IIEP manages its strategies and

operations for organizational survival.
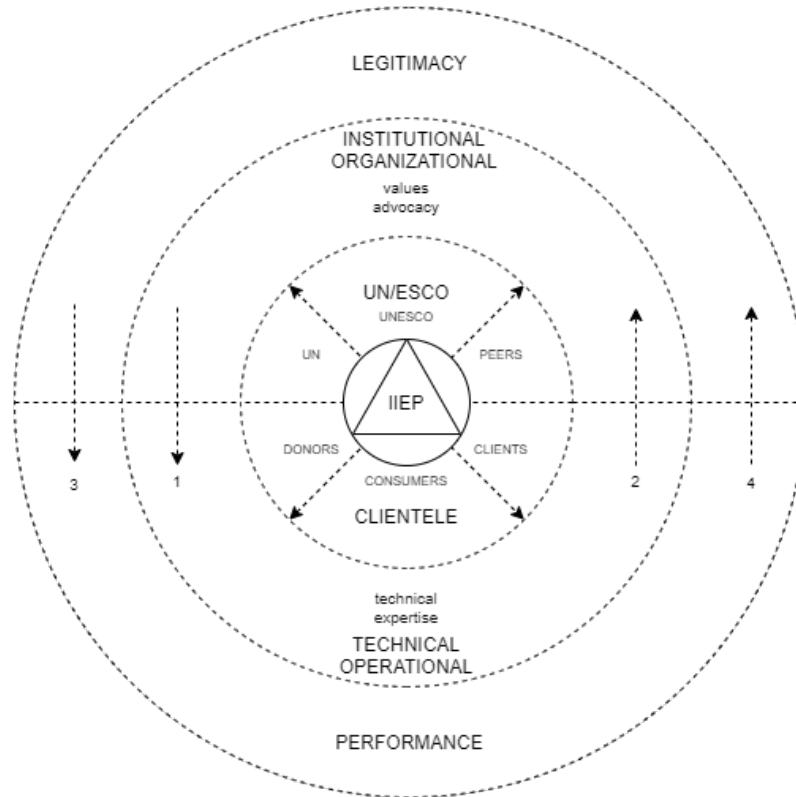
Figure 15: IIEP's environments and operational spaces

The diagram depicts the actors, relationships, and transactions that take place within and

between the environments. Within the institutional environment, IIEP is related to and interacts

with UNESCO and other organizations within the UN network. Highlighted in these

relationships and interactions are the visions and values espoused by the UN and in the discourse

of the global governance project. Within the technical environment, on the other hand, are

donors, clients, and consumers—organizations, governments, and ministries that the institute

works with on educational planning and management. Beyond these two environments are the

dual concepts of legitimacy and performance—the spaces from which the organization draws

and manages its resources. The four vertical arrows depict the directions of interactions and

exchanges between these spaces and environments.

First, exchanges from the institutional environment to the technical environment include

the agility, flexibility, and strength of IIEP's mandate, by which as a UNESCO institute it has the

leverage to work directly with countries upon request or other means of initiations without

having to go through the bureaucracy involving its parent organization (IIEP, 2003). These

characteristics of IIEP's mandate are tied to a global discourse and agenda on education and

development, which dictates the flow of resources and the mode of coordination between and

among global actors (Samoff, 2003; Spring, 2008). More importantly, IIEP as part of the UN

network comes from a lineage of key actors in global governance. Both UNESCO—its parent—

and the UN—its grandparent—are organizations founded on visions and values associated with

global peace and development. All these elements within the institutional environments put IIEP

in a favorable position to cooperate with countries and to initiate work with them on education

planning and management. The institute's contacts in the technical environment, to a certain

extent, draw directly from its status and standing within the global community.

Second, from the other direction are elements in the technical environment that influence

and characterize those in the institutional environment. These elements include, again, a flexibly

interpreted mandate that allows IIEP to easily manage and extend its scope of operations, fortifying in the process both its capabilities and its reputation, giving rise to its higher regard among UNESCO institutes and offices. The fact that IIEP can form strong relationships with donors, clients, and consumers also puts it in a firm standing within the global development community and places it at a competitive advantage against the few competitors in the field.

Beyond these two environments, the third and fourth arrows depict the directions of exchanges between organizational legitimacy and performance. The third one, specifying the flow of exchanges from legitimacy to performance, is characterized by IIEP's identity as a member of the UN/ESCO family, which gives it leverage to market access, allowing it to easily and legitimately initiate work relations and cooperate with countries. This identity, however, often finds IIEP in dilemmas where it has to manage and navigate the complex politics of the field, where the visions and values it espouses as part of the UN network are sometimes at odds with the strategies and interventions available for its consideration. Also flowing in this direction is the specificity of IIEP's mandate, which lends IIEP the legitimate authority to work with countries on educational planning and management as a UN/ESCO entity. It nonetheless spells constraints and restrictions, as IIEP is often held back from venturing into areas not specifically within the territories of its mandate but closely related to educational planning and management without overstepping the specified mandates of its fellow institutes and offices.

On the other direction, the flow of exchanges from performance to legitimacy is exemplified in the reinforcement of its mandate through the reputation it builds from the quality

of its work. This success, however, sometimes finds the institute in a strained relationship with UNESCO and its other institutes and offices, since the scope of IIEP's work sometimes overlaps or interferes with their jurisdiction (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017). IIEP's work in countries often finds itself interfering with its own image as a UN/ESCO entity, where it often has to choose between defending certain values and visions as part of its normative functions and compromising them so as it can generate positive educational impacts. This pragmatist—idealist dilemma can sometimes lead to existential questions about the institute's legitimacy, with which its leaders and members must grapple to continually redefine and reposition its organizational identity and image (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018).

Managing these interactions and exchanges thus becomes a survival priority for the institute. IIEP needs to strategically manipulate these interactions to maximize their favorable effects and minimize their negative impacts. Such strategies in turn add complexity to the way the institute approach and address education equity across different contexts. In places plagued with corruption, poor institutions, and weak public governance, the problems of access and quality may be approached and understood quite differently from contexts of stronger governance and public institutions but greater population diversity. In contexts of ethnic discrimination systematic marginalizing of certain population, the question sometimes becomes a moral one, weighing between entering cooperation in the prospect of alleviating such other

marginalized groups as the poor, rural, or female or abandoning it altogether in defense of espoused values and principles.

Equity, legitimacy, performance: competing views of justice

In different ways, the conceptualization of equity in the work of IIEP mirrors the many complex dynamics that characterize IIEP as an organization. These dynamics include the maturation of a coupled technical core that responds proactively to demands from the market; they include the sharing of an organizational culture that ties their identity to the larger value systems of the UN/ESCO network; they include the competing strategies the institute devises to uphold both its normative lineage and its technical reputation; and they, in a larger sense, include the competing forces of legitimacy and performance—forces that form the institute's *raison d'être* and determine its identity, development, and survival.

These dynamics also corresponds to the bigger philosophical contrast of the competing views of justice. The equity problems IIEP has to wrestle with in the field—the concessions and compromises it has to take, the principle lines it has to draw, and the difficult choices it has to make in favor of the compromised opportunities to make positive changes advance its work— besides reflecting its organizational dilemmas also reflect the ideological dilemma of the *arrangement-focused* and *realization-focused* approaches to justice (Sen, 2009). The institutional arrangements weak and shambled in many of the countries it works with, sometimes the choices it is presented with do not afford the luxury of walking away in defense of certain principles. The

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same way IIEP could not walk away from the Caribbean country where weak governance and corruption plague the public sector, it cannot abandon the Southeast Asian country over its mistreatment of its citizens for risk of losing the chance help and make positive changes, hoping with these more positive changes will come.

Do they come? If we look at the bigger picture, the answer is maybe. Again, it necessitates a debate over these competing views of justice. Among the critics of the early global efforts for education equity was that they focused too much on access and too little on quality. Countries were so intent on putting their children into schools that they cared little about what they were taught when they were there. That approach proved to be problematic in the later years of *Education for All* and carried over onto *Education 2030*, which the goals now set on improved quality of education for all (Bennett, 1995; UNESCO, 2015a; UNESCO et al., 2015). These are valid arguments: that these changes in enrollment numbers matter little when learning remains poor and equity institutions remain weak, but in the eyes of the practitioners, they were the right thing to do:

> *I don't tend to agree with [such arguments] because again the term haven't used is human rights, and I do strongly believe in the right [of] every child to have a basic education, and the education should be of quality. I think looking back we should have been pushing the quality agenda more; there should have been more advocacy around the need for equality basic education. There should have been more investments perhaps by some governments. Some governments have invested well using the Indicative Framework of FDI into education; other governments have not invested so much. I think the development agencies they all pledged at Dakar […] that no country would fail to achieve EFA because of financial constraints because the donor community would [help] meet the imbalances, but that didn't turn out to be true.*

(*Interview 6*, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

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Conclusion

The chapter has reexamined the conceptualization of equity at IIEP—with its many dimensions and dilemmas—through the lens of its organizational features and within the conceptual frameworks of organizational theory. It suggests that this conceptualization is closely aligned with the way IIEP matures the technology of—and develops its capacity on—educational planning and management, the way it structures and organizes itself around this technology, and the way it interacts with elements in its environments. These maturation, organization, and interactions in turn necessitate a discussion of niche and legitimacy, around which the conceptualization of equity is situated and understood.

These organizational features and exchanges also speak to the two complementary and competing views of justice introduced earlier in this study. They clarify the equity dilemmas IIEP is often faced with and explain the deliberations behind the institute's choices in these cases. These dilemmas are arguably not unique to the institute, but may be common problems facing technical organizations in the highly political context of global development in education.

CHAPTER 9. TARTE A LA CREME

Tarte à la crème

> *[Q]: I have one final question for you: what do you see are the opportunities and challenges coming ahead for research in education and on equity at IIEP?*
>
> *[A]: Well […] I would say one of the challenge—well, that's a kind of—in French you would say tarte à la crème—I don't know how you would say that in English—it's a kind of a cream pie [LAUGHS].*
>
> *[Q]: Tarte à la crème?*
>
> *[A]: Common thing that people say but I think that's true, which is that the world is changing fast. Habits also are changing fast; expectation from the users of the system are also evolving fast; and so we shouldn't try to redo what we have been doing for ten or twenty years ago, but we have to adapt to these new worlds.*
>
> (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

Context

The world is changing fast. And even though global education is not where we would

hope it to be, tremendous progress has been made since the advent of *Education for All*—the

early global effort towards access and equity in education. The changing social and economic

structure of the twenty-first century, coupled with the rapid advancement of science and

technology, places new demands and pressures for education systems to catch up, much as this

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may sound like a *tarte à la crème*—a cliché. The question for system planning—the core work of

IIEP—is how to adapt to these changes—how to situate planning in these contexts. One expert

raises this concern from the perspective of opportunities (and challenges) for national system

planning:

> *[W]e're moving from an industrial-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, and knowledge is a soft product. And countries can become very powerful even without having big populations, and they can become very powerful without having a very strong industry if the people are very well educated—if the best minds are tapped. Then that leads to better research, and to the products and the byproducts of research, and this is where growth is to be found. It's no longer in—you know—mining the earth where there's almost no more oil.*
>
> *[…]*
>
> *And it's going to be like this more and more: when the world moves into artificial intelligence, some soft skills will be necessary. I mean we will remain only human for a special length of time, and that's where countries have to invest. And that's done only through education—it can be done. I mean it's not the primary resource that you find in the soil—it's something that needs to be grown.*
>
> (*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

And it is amid these changes that the call for equity becomes more relevant than ever.

When countries' competitive advantages are no longer "the primary resource that you find in the

soil," when growth is no longer "in mining the earth where there's almost no more oil," when

knowledge becomes the new global resource, it becomes crucial for education systems to spread

opportunities equitably, so that "the best minds are tapped:"

> *So it's in these areas where basically everybody is still equal: even if you are born in a poor family, your IQ might be much better than mine, so and that for the time being it's still dealt with by nature. It's going to change within the centuries to come but it's still the case. So it's always an opportunity loss on the opportunity cost for countries not to invest in creating equal opportunities for all for all because that's the way it is.*

[…]

So if only those who are in the big cities are getting an education, it [isn't] going to work—big cities, male, with no disabilities and so on. And I think it's also inclusion in education and taking care of children who have disabilities of different kinds. I think is also a mark of how civilized society is.

(*Interview 1*, personal communication, October 9, 2017)

Equity, in these changing contexts, is not just a mark of "how civilized society is." It is also a compelling argument for socioeconomic development. Commenting on how countries all over the world are facing the pressures of labor shortage and demographic transition, one expert underscores the virtues of an inclusive education system:

So they want to bring the country ahead in terms of socioeconomic development: there is not less IQ out there than among the elites so why don't you tap this IQ? And now you have countries which are facing really big challenges from the demographic transition. Now they are looking where the [future] pools [are]—the untapped pools of workers—so where are they: among the poor, among the immigrants, among the women.

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

It thus becomes a priority for IIEP to highlight equity and inclusion in its approach to planning. This defines its visions and strategies for development, to get itself prepared to welcome the opportunities accorded with this changing world, as well as to address the problems and challenges they entail. The following parts discuss some of these opportunities and challenges.

Rumbles from this changing world have sent IIEP unique signals of opportunities and challenges. From the perspective of the institute, it is essential to build on its current successes and respond strategically to the new demands for educational planning. In terms of operation and structure, there is a strong rationale to continue drawing from the growing global market of development technical assistance for resources and opportunities, especially when those are connected to global schemes and agendas:

> *During this 10th Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), for the period 2018–2021, IIEP will further pursue this role of assisting UNESCO Member States in achieving their educational goals in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the new Education 2030 agenda.*
> (IIEP, 2017a, p. 3)

For IIEP to pursue its operations in this direction, it is building on and expanding its current core technology of research, training, and technical cooperation. For training, it means expanding the reach of its training programs to more countries and trainees (IIEP, 2017a, p. 3). It also means expanding the topics of coverage to meet the growing demands of SDG 4 in those countries. The head of the training department, in my interview, laid out the plans for the department—and the rationales behind them—in the immediate years to come:

> *Well I think [there are] three new areas—kind of thematic areas—that we're looking at, and one I have mentioned it all so far, but there's a lot of evidence that if you will if you want to have more equity in education you have to start very young; so you have to look at early childhood development initially like 0–3 range when the main focus might be on health and other things. That's early childhood education and development.*

And that at the moment is actually exacerbating inequities because it's the richer children who are able to go to pre-primary school and so on, and so they're coming to primary school miles ahead of the other children from more disadvantaged groups. So that's a program that we're going to develop, and we're going to develop ultimately. It may take a couple of years or maybe [until] 2020, we'll have a distance education course on planning for early childhood development.

The other one is the course I've talked about already; it is planning for inclusive education. We'll have the summer school next year and then hopefully 2019, I think it should be viable we'll develop a course on planning for inclusive education.

And the other area which we've also developed is something on lifelong learning and adult education, because they tend to be—again—that's another very excluded group. [Adult education] was excluded during the EFA era because [adults are] not very good at advocating for their own needs, because often they are there are people without much power, whereas children with disabilities often have parents who have influence and so on. The adult education thing is really dropped off the global agenda, so we're going to do something with the Institute of Lifelong Learning in Hamburg on adult education.

(*Interview* 6, personal communication, October 26, 2017)

For technical cooperation, it means expanding the pool of countries IIEP works with. This is also thematically linked to the set of issues at the center of the institute's focus. One particular group that IIEP targets in its 10th MTS is refugees and countries at the center of the global refugee crises. This response is not only strategic: it is also moral, and it places equity at the heart of technical cooperation work:

[F]rom this year onward—so around now but also the next two or three years—we will put a major focus on education for refugees, because you could argue that the refugees are internally displaced persons but especially refugees are indeed the most disadvantaged people on earth, so it does show a response to [equity].

Because it is rarely those that anybody would make the point—oh you're not paying enough attention to this—beyond the more political question of who are the specific groups you look at, but I think the theme of equity—the concern of equity—is present in most of the work that we doing.

(*Interview* 5, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

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For research, it means expanding its current research themes to touch upon more current and pressing problems. For the current MTS, IIEP is strategically expanding its research problems that are endemic to the countries they cooperate with, but maybe foreign to its own knowledge repertoire:

> *And really especially in the choice of our research projects we have to be even more strategic within these changing worlds to be more in a position to say something that would be of interest for people in two- or three- or five-years' time. So I would say a kind of watch function should be even more important than what it used to be in the past, if not we may become some kind of old-fashioned quite quickly.*
>
> *And if we are not able to adapt in the types of research topics that we're selecting, well it means that then our training won't be able very relevant for other countries and also the types of advice we can give to countries in terms of technical assistance would no longer be relevant. So these capacities keep some kind of vision over what are really the major issues where we can conduct research and this research can be of help for countries to adapt and to adjust to this new environment that is changing fast. I think that's really one of the major challenge[s] [for] research.*
>
> (*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

These changes call for even greater unity and coherence in the collective work of the institute. Not only must the tripartite model persist where each expert is expected to perform all three roles, IIEP must also be a space for research interests to converge. In this new model for change, experts cannot simply reside in their own silos, but the collective knowledge of equity and educational planning must take into account how each aspect and dimension interacts and interplays with one another:

> *Then maybe in terms of more on the equity issues, well from what I have mentioned as you certainly understood we don't necessarily [come] together at IIEP to develop a real common vision of what we consider as an equity view at the institute. And so if we want to put more emphasis on equity at some point certainly, well different people from our institution—*

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those working on transparency and accountability issues like myself but maybe those also working on education for displaced populations, or post-conflict populations and so on, those working maybe on financing issues, those working on gender issues—should come together and have a kind of more integrative and comprehensive approach over what we mean by equity and what kind of implications it can have for planning.

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

And that is not something that currently exists at the institute. In my interviews with twelve of them through the gender mainstreaming project as part of my internship duties, all twelve of them showed varying degrees of both concerns for and knowledge of gender equality. That is also why complaints like the following can sometimes be heard: at IIEP, people know of and respect each other's work, but the problem areas associated with each of them do not necessary meet, let alone interact. Crossing silos is still very much of a struggle, even for these experts:

I was asked to go to [a Southeast Asian country] to do the technical assistance work of the education sector diagnosis. Now being here there's [already] a problem of the sex versus gender, equity versus equality [terminologies], and the way I see that was because [of the way] the manual has been written [by the technical cooperation team], and this has been used for the last fifteen years obviously—people have been using that. And I see that now because I usually don't do a lot of technical assistance.

[…] I accepted to go to [this country] to use the manual which was to be given to me to use and then there's a format. So what I am doing is to just to do my best to try to intervene and to do a little bit of the editing of the manual and then also do that explanation using the power point.

I'm saying, "Am I the only person who sees this problem?" The other people probably don't get bothered by that and so that's my struggle.

(*Interview 2*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

For IIEP to welcome the opportunities accorded with a fast-changing world, therefore, it needs not only to mature and build upon the common tools and the common "languages" of educational planning and management it has quite successfully built within the half century, but to also look deep into these tools and languages to find nuances of meanings and uses, and to bridge the gaps between them. This starts with questions like the very questions that this study raises, and to negotiate and navigate their answers will afford the institute and its members, and—by extension—its partners, donors, clients, and the global educational development community at large, with important and useful lessons.

Challenges

Its visions and strategies firmly in place in response to these contexts, the time looks prime for IIEP to respond to the opportunities of a changing world. And yet these opportunities do not come without challenges. The expanded areas, building on the success of the 9th MTS, include early childhood education, education policies for displaced persons and for inclusive education, implications of demographic changes on educational planning, and the linkages between education and employment (IIEP, 2017a). The current structure is a central source of stability for this direction, but in terms of sustainability it posits a growing staffing problem, from an administrative point of view:

> *Currently IIEP is thinking of developing and expanding its research themes, but that is difficult without significantly expanding the research team, because expertise is [currently] located within these big names and it would be hard to associate their names even with*

some other topics. The tradeoff here is depth and rigor on the one hand and a diverse, complete range of research foci on the other.

Going forward, the question is how we diversify research interests and organizational expertise in human resources planning in the next 10-15 years, when most of the current senior experts retire.

(*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018)

The problem nonetheless becomes even more challenging from a technical point of view, when the difficulties of entering a new research area are taken into full view. Yet it is in these exact conditions that the need for expansion is pressed upon the institute:

But at the same time, we are under so much pressure that—you know—if you open a totally new area of research—I'm witnessing this with the demography piece which I'm working on. It's not easy. It's not easy to find the time to do as much research, as much—really—you know—collaboration in the field, trying out the materials, trying out the approaches that you can say yes, we have a new product. We are not staying within our comfort zones, but we have something new.

(*Interview 4*, personal communication, October 20, 2017)

Moreover, a shift of focus in technical cooperation to system resilience and crisis-sensitive planning also comes with caution, as the pool of countries and governments that exist in this problem space are historically weak. The more capable ones are more likely to respond to a different set of concerns and to cooperate with a different set of actors (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018). This adds another layer of complication on top of the technical challenges IIEP is to face in the field, which is the complex politics and power dynamics in those places. This is where the institute will often have to make concessions and compromises, negotiating between the potential good that it service provides and the values and visions that it upholds (see Chapter 5).

Identity

Beyond the specific strategies for growth and sustainability, the notion of organizational culture and identity plays an important part in IIEP's plan for the years ahead. This organizational identity, argued one expert, is the result of the ability to keep an intellectual function within the institute—a function developed on research and knowledge generation from practical work. This function is made possible in part by the triple roles that each expert performs and—be it limited—the sense of institutional collegiality that allows them to collaborate and learn from each other's work. It is thus closely connected to IIEP's core technology. This identity also has to do with the institute's reputation, benefiting from the direct connections it has with ministries and governments. This puts IIEP at a competitive advantage compared to other organizational actors in the field:

> *[…] I think of one of the reasons [for IIEP's success is] that we have this capacity to keep this kind of intellectual function within IIEP and not to [be] a service institute where we just only respond to requests and so on. But because we keep on having this kind of intellectual function of applied research at the heart of what we're doing, where we are not only consultants selling our services in the area of planning and management, we keep on having something to say to the planning world, so this makes a big difference.*
>
> *And also what makes a big difference is that we have this kind of direct connection with ministries, especially because they know what we're doing. They know our publications, but also we have trained many of these people, and so they feel familiar with IIEP, they trust the institute, and so this also makes quite a difference compared to other organizations.*

(*Interview 3*, personal communication, October 16, 2017)

As also mentioned in another interview, one of the reasons that explain IIEP's technical capability and success is precisely because the institute is able to foster a strong organizational culture around its technical mandate of educational planning and management, characterized with well-defined themes, consistency, and a strong sense of organizational integrity. This organizational culture is a result of its relatively small size, a focused interest that makes up its technical expertise, a long history of its presence in the field, relatively stable staff, and an inherited organizational culture from UN/ESCO. And while this organizational culture affords IIEP to effectively carry out its function, it also marks the institute's stability and resistance to change. Its well-defined institutional expertise makes it a challenge for the team of experts to venture their research interests outside of its renowned territories, and that rumble gets louder down the road when, in 10- or 15-years' time, most of its current experts will have retired. Another identity-related problem is for IIEP's experts to cross the boundary between academic and action research: although they have quite an impact in terms of policy and governance, they are not widely known within the academic circle (*Interview 5a*, personal communication, March 27, 2018).

Conclusion

Within the past five chapters, I have laid out an account of the conceptualization of equity within the organizational context of IIEP. This conceptualization is laden with many dimensions and many dilemmas, both of which are related and connected to IIEP's organizational features

and its relationships with its environments. It is also tied to the complementary and competing

views of justice raised by prominent philosophers of our time, where the philosophical questions

of equity are indeed closely related to the technical and contextual aspects of IIEP's work on

educational planning. Moreover, the conceptualization reveals the complex dynamics of global

development work on education and raises questions about the challenges and choices technical

organizations like IIEP are faced with in the decidedly political and increasingly politicized world

of global educational development. Such questions might involve developing and maturing a

strong core technology, buffering it from or coupling it with elements both within and beyond

the organization, interacting and maintaining relationships with actors and agents in the

environments, finding or creating its own niche, and strategically negotiating the delicate balance

between legitimacy and performance. These sets of actions require the institute to continually

revisit the questions of its human and financial resources, its technical capacity, and its

organizational identity, which are tied to the opportunities and challenges accorded by a rapidly

changing world.

The conceptualization of equity and the organizational features of IIEP are bound

together in an interesting dynamic: it is—as we have seen—elements in the organizational

structures and environments of IIEP that characterize much of the thought and talk of equity at

the institute, and yet it is also the discourse and the work on equity that the institute engages in

that makes and gives sense to its operation, its adaptation, and its organization. Understanding

how IIEP grapples with the concept of equity thus sheds light on how the institute positions and

structures itself in the global education context, and likewise studying its structuring and positioning expands our understanding of equity in the context of its work.

The study also deepens an understanding of equity by revealing its underlying complexity and multidimensionality in context. What starts out as a relatively simple and straightforward idea that—as one interviewee puts it—"is not difficult to agree with" (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017) turns out to be filled with complex, competing, and complementary nuances, as evidenced in the work of research, training, and technical cooperation on educational planning. Promoting education equity would have to do with improving access to education in one context, while remedying the unaccounted negative effects of universal access in another. Similarly, tackling gender inequality in certain contexts goes hand in hand with confronting corruption and issues of accountability within the education system, and in others requires addressing the socioeconomic inequalities that widens the resource and achievement gaps between rich and poor, privileged and disadvantaged, rural and urban. The complexity and multidimensionality require the experts, the educational planners, and the policy makers to continually revisit and reevaluate the concept, situating and examining it in different contexts to gain deeper and more thorough perspectives.

I have proposed in this study to approach this phenomenon from three angles. The conceptual angle of equity in education thus explained brings forth important discussions and understandings of the meanings of equity which, though may not be new, are important to re-question and revisit. The study also makes a modest contribution from a methodological angle,

where it attempts to bring theories and concepts from organizational theory to aid the qualitative analysis of an organizational study. And finally, from a contextual perspective, this study has brought forth interesting questions and insights into the organization and operation not just IIEP and UNESCO, but for similar technical organizations in the field of global educational development as well.

Despite these contributions, some limitations must be acknowledged. Among these is the lack of a critical insight on the work of educational planning and on the relationships between organizations like IIEP and its partners, especially its client country. On the one hand, this insight is rooted in the critique of global educational development, where concerns over a hegemonic global vision of education and development have long been raised (Kapoor, 2011; Klees, 1998, 2008a, 2010; Mundy, 2007b; Samoff, 2003; Spring, 2008), in which the growing roles of global actors and their actions seem to fit into a global neoliberal narrative that marginalizes and suppresses the voices of the disenfranchised (Ball, 1998, 2008, 2013; Spring, 2008). From a technical point, the work of educational planning and management, with its scientific orientation rooted in quantitative measurement and analysis, coupled with its economics-centered development theories, reflects well this hegemony.

On the other, the discourse—and by extension the work—of global development and technical cooperation in education are inherently Western-centric in terms of perspective, which does not take into account local, indigenous perspectives and knowledges from the countries in which they work (Kapoor, 2011; Kapoor & Jordan, 2009; Kapoor & Shizha, 2010), and which

reflects colonial and post-colonial power structures and dynamics that plague the field of global development (Kapoor, 2011; Klees, 2010; Samoff, 2003; Spring, 2008). The voices of developing countries and their populations, argued these critics, are often ignored, marginalized, and even suppressed within the framework of neoliberal global development, which lasting consequences on their lives and well-being, education being one aspect.

This latter issue is evidenced in this study in the glimpse into the work of technical cooperation provided by one of the interviewed experts (see Chapter 6. *Technical cooperation*), where international cooperation work on educational planning largely ignores the voices of the beneficiaries, especially when they are also the disadvantaged, thus "it is not always those [who] should be listened to the most who are the ones who will talk the most" (*Interview 5*, personal communication, October 25, 2017). This issue—both technical and political in nature—makes difficult the job of educational planning, and IIEP experts to some extent are aware of it. Ironically, here the dilemmas are bound together: it may very well be within this widely adopted and widely applied technology of educational planning and management—which privileges and emphasizes large-scale quantitative analyses and scientific theories of development, and which IIEP has helped develop and master throughout its existence—that local and indigenous voices and knowledges are marginalized and excluded.

Another related limitation is the lack of alternative perspectives to educational planning, international cooperation, and global development work. This study looks at issues of education equity in global contexts solely through the lens of UNESCO-IIEP, which is in turn characterized

mostly by its highly technical work in educational planning and management. Absent in this narrative are the points of views of its clients, donors, partners, beneficiaries, and consumers. Although within this work I did have a chance to talk to trainees, often these talks did not fully and deeply convey their views on education equity, not to mention if these views aligned with what they were trained on from the institute. It would therefore be helpful and useful for similar studies to approach this idea from the perspectives of governments and ministries, of educational practitioners at different levels within the systems, of students, parents, and educational consumers that IIEP-supported plans target, and of like-minded and/or ideologically divergent organizations functioning in the same space.

Epilogue

I ended my field work and my job as an intern at IIEP in early November 2017, when the 39th session of the UNESCO General Conference was under way and visits from national delegations frequented the institute. In the span of more than two weeks, IIEP received many visits from country delegations who were in Paris for the General Conference. The *2017/18 Global Education Monitoring Report* just came out less than two weeks earlier and talks of how stronger actions were needed to meet *Education 2030* goals filled the spaces of the building.

It had become clear by that point that IIEP was playing an increasingly stronger role in educational planning and in the global collective work towards *Education 2030*. Its technical cooperation portfolios became thicker and travel schedules denser, its signature annual training

programs garnered the attention of participants from many countries, the recent summer school had been a success, and its experts were involved in a dozen research projects, some of which funded by key global donors while some were in cooperation with national ministries and commissions. IIEP, with its proven record of quality work throughout more than 50 years of its history, was well positioned to take on this growing role.

At the same time, the institute also faced increasing pressure from these demands. Over the five decades of its existence, growth had been gradual and expansion modest. The team of experts, well known and respected for their work, was relatively small compared to other faster growing organizations like the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The technical cooperation team—the largest in the institute—had fewer than twenty people. On top of the expanding demand was also a renewing pressure: most of its experts had been at the institute for more than twenty years, and in the span of ten to fifteen years most of them would have been retired. Furthermore, even though IIEP was performing better financially compared to UNESCO and its other offices and institutes, its status as a technical service provider emphasized a reliance on the market for funds, and at a budget of around US$12 million, it did not have the comparable means and resources to support its work as comfortably as would UNICEF or GPE.

In this context, the call is for the institute to stand up to both the opportunities and the challenges. To do that, it must reinforce its organizational identity, building upon its status and reputation as a capable technical assistance provider. This requires not only strengthening its operations and structure, but also sharpening its strategy and fostering its organizational culture,

embracing the image of a true intellectual organization (*Interview 3*, personal communication,

October 16, 2017). Externally, it must also grapple with the ever-competing demands of

legitimacy and performance, in an increasingly complex institution and an increasingly diverse

market. The world is changing fast, and adapt to it must 7–9 rue Eugène Delacroix. This *tarte à la*

crème, to the institute, is thus not only creamy with tall opportunities: it is also tart with

mounting challenges.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Expert interview questions

1. Could you give an introduction about yourself and your work at IIEP?
   Your role(s), position(s), years at the organization/department and in the position, work experiences prior to IIEP, transition to other role(s), etc.…

2. Is there a formal/informal common agreement in the way IIEP conceptualize equity? If so, how does the organization define/conceptualize equity?
   What is the essence/basic idea of equity? From what perspective(s) is equity conceptualized? What major equity issues are of concern? What IIEP works highlight and/or exemplify this view of equity? How is it compared to other official (e.g. UNESCO's) conceptualization of equity?

3. From your own work experiences—inside and outside IIEP—how would you define the concept of education equity?
   What are the essence/basic idea of equity? From what perspective(s) is equity conceptualized? What are the key equity issues in your view and how do you think it could/should be addressed? How does your own work highlight/exemplify this view?

4. Could you speak of IIEP's current and recent work that focus on education equity?
   What are these programs and projects? What are/were the goals? What did/have they achieved? What remain-s/ed to be done? How is/was equity a focus in these programs and projects?

5. Could you speak of your own work—past and present—that focus on education equity?
   What are these programs and projects? What are/were the goals? What did/have they achieved? What remain-s/ed to be done? How is/was equity a focus in these programs and projects?

6. How would you evaluate the organization's/department's work on education equity?
   What are the achievements, failures, progresses, setbacks? What opportunities/ affordances or challenges/difficulties do you envision?

7. How would you evaluate your own work on education equity within and beyond IIEP?
   What are the achievements, failures, progresses, setbacks? What opportunities/ affordances or challenges/difficulties do you envision?

8. What are the organization's/departments' strategies for advancing its work on education equity (if any)?

9. What are your own strategies to advance your work on education equity (if any)?

Appendix 2: In-vivo codes

Coordination
Equity
Conceptualization
By others
By UNESCO
Terminological issues
Formalization
Personal beliefs
Technical
Variables and measurement
Use
Dilemmas
Access vs quality
Part - whole conceptualization
Dimensions
Access
Outcomes
Resources
Levels
Beyond school
Classroom
School
Multi-dimensionality
Crisis sensitive planning
Education financing
Educational outcomes
Gender equality
Learning environments (school and home)
Poverty and marginalization
Transparency and anti-corruption
Priority

Organizational functions
Flexibility of interpretation
Mandates
Restrictions
Organizational strategy
Going forward
MTS
Risk of mission creep
Outlook
Relationship with countries
Capacity building
Context dependability
Political
Proactivity
Technical assistance
Relationship with donors
Producer – consumer
Relationship with UNESCO
Autonomy
Competition
Coordination and cooperation
Challenges
Institutional
Opportunities
Discretion
Friction
Opportunities for improvement
Other institutes and offices
Specialization
Importance of education
Projection
Inequalities
Complexities and exacerbation
Compounding effects
Policy failures
Education system
Curriculum and schedule
Ethnicity and language

Teacher training, recruitment, compensation
Gender
Regional
School type
Socioeconomic
Interviewee information
Reflections and evaluation
Role in the organization
Years at IIEP
Years in current position
My interpretation
Other organizations
Related to IIEP
SACMEQ
Independence
Reduced participation
Policy
Evidence-based
Intervention
Pro-poor
Systemic public governance reform
Role of the state
Corruption
Failures
Spending
Systemic weaknesses
The shortfall of international comparisons
UNESCO

Appendix 3: Map of in-vivo codes

UNESCO

The shortfall of international comparisons

Corruption

Failures

Spending Role of the state

Systemic weaknesses

Evidence-based

Pro-poor Policy

Systemic public governance reform Intervention

Related to IIEP

Independence Other organizations

Reduced participation SACMEQ

My interpretation

Dissemination Research and innovation

Assisting countries

Sustainability Capacity building Technical cooperation

Dissemination

Field training Training Core technology

Gender mainstreaming

Growth and expansion

Context of establishment

EFA History

Past programs

Through technical cooperation

Through training Impact

Innovation

Needs and demands Management and administration

Individual expert

Mobility Organizational capacity

Organizational agenda

Flexibility of interpretation

Mandates Organizational functions

Restrictions

Going forward

MTS Organizational strategy

Risk of mission creep

Outlook IIEP

Capacity building

Political Context dependability

Proactivity Relationship with countries

Technical assistance

Producer - consumer Relationship with donors

Autonomy

Competition

Institutional Challenges

Opportunities Coordination and cooperation

Discretion

Friction Relationship with UNESCO

Opportunities for improvement

Other institutes and offices

Specialization

Codes
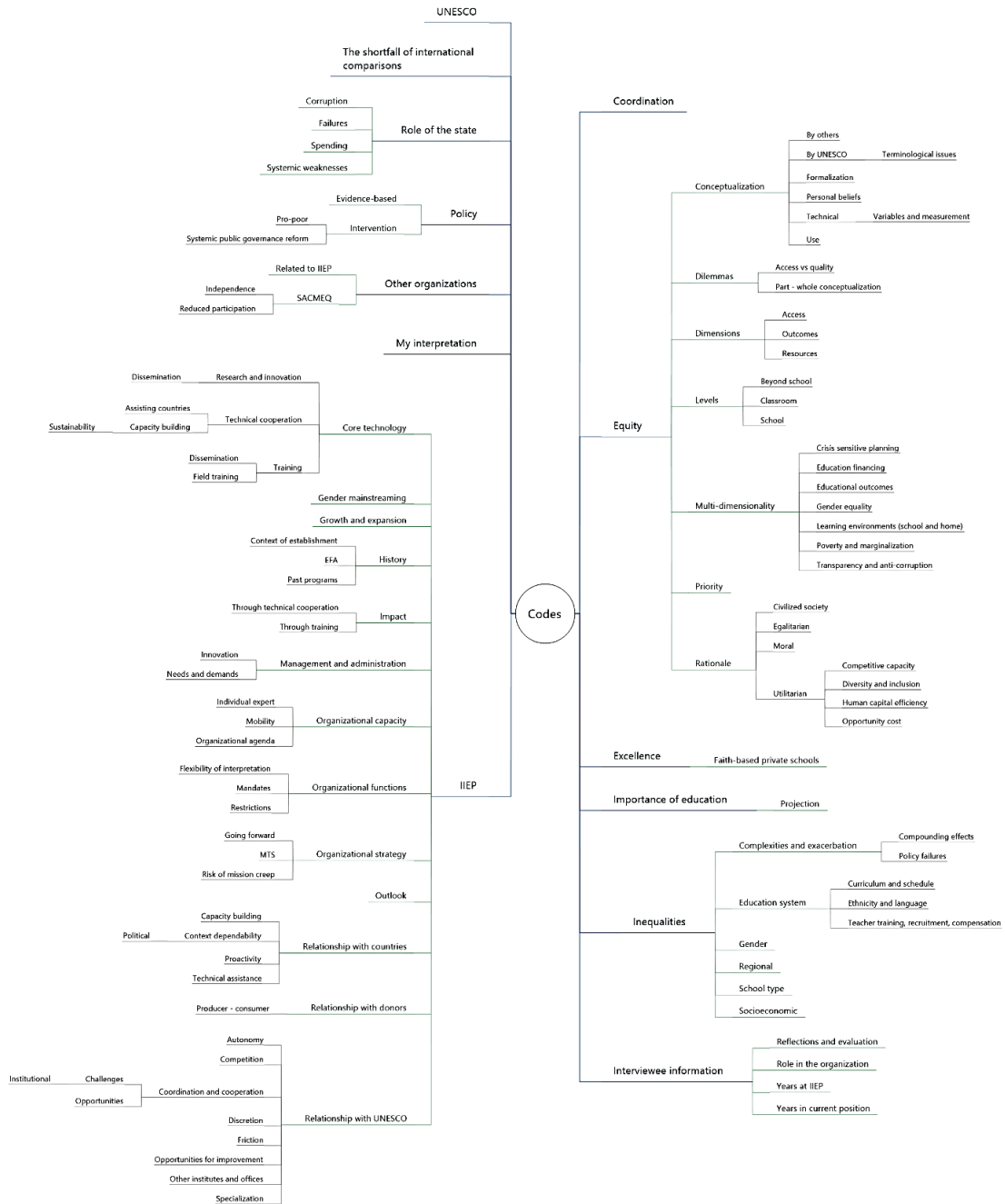
Coordination

By others

By UNESCO Terminological issues

Conceptualization Formalization

Personal beliefs

Technical Variables and measurement

Use

Access vs quality

Dilemmas Part - whole conceptualization

Access

Dimensions Outcomes

Resources

Beyond school

Levels Classroom

School

Crisis sensitive planning

Education financing

Educational outcomes

Multi-dimensionality Gender equality

Learning environments (school and home)

Poverty and marginalization

Transparency and anti-corruption

Priority

Equity

Civilized society

Egalitarian

Moral

Rationale Competitive capacity

Utilitarian Diversity and inclusion

Human capital efficiency

Opportunity cost

Excellence Faith-based private schools

Importance of education Projection

Compounding effects

Complexities and exacerbation Policy failures

Curriculum and schedule

Education system Ethnicity and language

Teacher training, recruitment, compensation

Inequalities Gender

Regional

School type

Socioeconomic

Reflections and evaluation

Role in the organization

Interviewee information Years at IIEP

Years in current position

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Appendix 4: Summary of analysis by questions

Research question	Data	Analysis	Report
How is education equity conceptualized and problematized in the organizational life and work of UNESCO-IIEP?			
How do UNESCO-IIEP key members (leaders and experts) conceptualize education equity from their experiences?	Participant interviews	Coding for the (inferences of) meanings of equity from participants' accounts of their work experiences	The aspects and dimensions of the concept of equity as characterized by the participants in their interviews
	Participant publications	Coding for the (inferences of) meanings of equity from participants' past and present published work	The aspects and dimensions of the concept of equity as characterized by the participants in their published professional work
How are cases of equity-related activities organized at UNESCO-IIEP?	Events/Activities fieldnotes	Coding for the descriptive elements of the events (goals, settings, participants, proceedings, etc.)	Descriptions of events/activities
	Participant observations	Coding for the participant's ideas of or attitudes towards equity	Descriptions of participants' talks, activities, and attitudes
	Communications about event (directives, emails,	Coding for the descriptive elements of the events	Descriptions of events/activities

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Research question	Data	Analysis	Report
	informal talks, meetings, etc.)	Coding for concept or focus of equity	Descriptions of the aspects of equity
How are equity-related activities received and/or perceived?	Participant interviews	Coding for the participants' description and evaluation of equity-related work at IIEP	Participants' views and evaluation of IIEP's work on equity
	Discussions with IIEP trainees and partners (field notes)	Coding for the opinions, attitudes, and evaluations of IIEP's work	Consumer's views and evaluation of IIEP's work on equity
	Field notes of training evaluation meetings	Coding for feedback and evaluations from participants	
	Feedback and testimonials from trainees and/or partners	Coding for feedback and evaluations from consumers	

How do the organizational features of UNESCO-IIEP (its environments, social structures, goals, technologies, and participants) characterize its observed work on education equity?

Research question	Data	Analysis	Report
What are the organizational goals and strategies and how are they related to equity?	Official declaration of goals: website, medium-term strategies (MTS)	Coding for relations to equity from statements of goals and strategies	Statements of goals and strategies
	Participant interviews	Coding for statements of goals and strategies and their relation to equity	Descriptions of goals and strategies and discussions of equity by participants
	Fieldnotes of whole organization events	Coding for statement of goals and strategies	Official statements or reiterations of goals and strategies
What are the features of the organizational structures and relationships among participants?	Participant interviews	Coding for organizational structures and	Descriptions of organizational structures and interpersonal

Research question	Data	Analysis	Report
		interpersonal relations	relations from participants' perspectives
	Observation field notes		Descriptions of organizational structures and interpersonal relations from observer' perspective
	Website information and published bios/CVs		Descriptions of organizational structures and interpersonal relations from official sources
What are the features of the organizational technology?	Participant interviews Observation field notes of events exemplifying technological core Publications and technological artifacts (training materials, case reports, research publications) Communications (emails, memos)	Coding for features and characteristics of organizational technology (core activities, know-how, repertoire, arrangements, etc.)	Description of the features and characteristics of the organizational technology
What are the features of the organizational environments?	Participant interviews Communications (emails, informal talks) Review of literature	Coding for the key actors in organizational environments and their relations with the organization	Descriptions of the organization's general and task environments

Research question	Data	Analysis	Report
How do the organizational elements observed interact with one another?	Observation field notes Communications (emails, informal talks) Participant interviews	Coding for relationships and interactions	Description of communication and interaction between IIEP's organizational elements
How do the organization elements and their relationships characterize IIEP's conceptualization of and work on equity?	Synthesis from analyses of the previous questions: drawing connection between IIEP's organizational and environmental features and interaction and the characteristics of its equity conceptualization		
How can these characterizations be explained in the framework of organizational theory?	Synthesis from analyses of the previous questions: drawing connection between this characterization and ideas and constructs in organizational theory		
What implications do these characterizations have on understanding UNESCO-IIEP's functions and its work on global education development?	Synthesis from analyses of the previous questions		

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