

EDUCATIONAL GOAL OR POLICYMAKING:

# **DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO EDUCATION MEASUREMENT IN THE WORLD BANK GROUP**

By

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## **Abstract**

Drawing on constructivism, this thesis examines the World Bank's approach to Education sector development in developing countries by examining the System Approach for Better Quality Education (SABER) project in Afghanistan. It reviews the role of international organizations which work on and analyze approaches to development. Following Finnemore's norms diffusion framework, this research identifies the SABER project as a norm set by the World Bank on best practices in the developed countries. I use the three approaches—top-down, bottom-up, and holistic—to offer an alternative way of looking at development in 21<sup>st</sup> century and therefore, understand the effects education policies have on our society, keeping in mind cultural differences as well as conflicts in developing countries.

**Keywords:** International Organizations, Development, Education Measurement, World Bank, SABER, Holistic Approach, Top-down Approach, Bottom-up Approach, Education Goal

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## Introduction

In 2011, the World Bank Group (WB) initiated Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) project to measure education development in developing countries<sup>1</sup>. I explain how educational policies are implemented in the developing world based on SABER and why this measurement of education development matters. To answer this question, I analyze SABER in the WB as it has impacted policymaking in the education sector. A case study in Afghanistan is done to investigate the Education Management Information system (SABER-EMIS), which is an indicator of SABER. This analysis illuminate which measurement approach might impede, or enable, the successful implementation of educational goals. In the context of education policies, the government and citizens of the developing countries which practice SABER are not involved in a bottom-up manner<sup>2</sup> in developing countries. The WB claims to have a bottom-up approach to measurement and goals of education whereas I claim the WB is using an expert-led, top-down approach for educational goals set for developing countries which is based on economic development<sup>3</sup>, bypassing factors such as conflict and culture. Furthermore, indications are that holistic approach to measurement of education development is needed to divert the policymaking of educational purposes in line with the needs of community and its growth.

The WB approach to education development in developing countries operate as an agenda-setting<sup>4</sup> institution for education policies. In addition, I study economy-focused developmental paradigm to include other approaches to development that the WB could potentially adopt within its education framework. Within the context of the WB, my critiques

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, "SABER Index," World Bank Group, 2020, <http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=5&sub=1>.

<sup>2</sup> Mark S. Reed, Evan D.G. Fraser, and Andrew J. Dougill, "An Adaptive Learning Process for Developing and Applying Sustainability Indicators with Local Communities," *Ecological Economics* 59, no. 4 (October 2006): 406–18. the bottom-up approach to development is defined as community-based conversational theory and has been proven to be useful in varying local contexts - and the top-down approach is expert-led with a focus of promoting wealth, connectivity, and diversity<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> I define economic development in education sector as a type of development which traces after WWI encouraging market-based development, elaborated in the following paragraph.

<sup>4</sup> Tuomas Takala et al., "One Size for All? Policy Advice of the World Bank and the OECD on Quality Assurance and Evaluation of School Education in Russia, Brazil and China," 301–19. The WB voice itself as a knowledge bank for education policymaking.

shows the successes as well as shortcomings of SABER project that the WB promote. The WB's SABER was established to provide data and record improvement in accordance with international development standards. In a gradual manner, however, SABER became the guiding document or framework for educational content creation for developing countries. For the purpose of education development, I review alternative approaches to measurement of education development. Accordingly, this analysis also offers a model to show to the understanding of development overall.

The aim of this thesis is to assess the WB development approach to education, tracing its motivations back to an economic model of development. The assessment of developing countries' education policies is influenced directly by the WB through what is known as data policy and best practices. Based on a SABER Overview Paper published in 2013, where the WB's rubric on education is developed, the WB's data policy objective is to develop "A global knowledge based on education policies and institutions<sup>5</sup>".

According to constructivism, International Organizations (IOs) become agents, instead of principles<sup>6</sup>. Using Martha Finnemore's conceptualization of norms diffusion, SABER is identified a "norm."<sup>7</sup> defined as 'collective set of ideas' that teach states how to behave. Given SABER record data through its indicators, the data set the norms for future behavior towards the educational goals. The collaboration for fulfillment of these goals are done in coordination of the WB with government of the host country. For instance, SABER is implemented through the WB and the ministry of higher education within the host country. The policies implemented through IOs legitimize not only these practices but other institutions that can then set norms themselves. Here, SABER is the new norm of educational measurement in the WB's overall

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<sup>5</sup> "The What, Why, and How of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)" (The World Bank, 2013),5.

<sup>6</sup> Susan Park and Jonathan R. Strand, *Global Economic Governance and the Development Practices of the Multilateral Development Banks* (Routledge, 2016),7.

<sup>7</sup> Barnett and Finnemore,1999 quoted in Susan Park, *International Politics* 43, no. 3 (July 2006): 342–61., Park explain norms as 'collectively held ideas about behavior' that teach states how to behave and what are appropriate behavior in a rational way. This definition of norm is analyzed in the constructivist theory of Finnemore.

development strategies. Put differently, SABER, initially conceived as a data gathering mechanism, has become a legitimating standard—a norm—itsself.

There are 13 domains to SABER, including SABER-Early Childhood Development, Student Assessment, and others. SABER-EMIS which is a foundation of SABER is analyzed here. These systems and tools record and assess education data, which accordingly policies move to the next stage of implementation.

Initiated in 2011, SABER is now present in 130 countries around the world<sup>8</sup>. Within the WB, SABER is a comparative index/ a benchmark of the education systems (best practices) in developed countries for developing countries<sup>9</sup>. In this paper, I examine some of the SABER Framework Papers, Policy Advice to the WB by Tuomas Takala<sup>10</sup>, and one critical analysis paper dealing with SABER. I elaborate on how SABER is a ground of policymaking for education sectors in developing countries. Reports which are produced based on SABER are used for grant continuation of education development project in the WB. On the one hand, I argue that SABER as a project focus on the quantification of literacy. On the other, this aspect does not account for contextual factors in the host country, such as conflict or post-conflict realities. One of SABER's limitations its lack of self-criticism or analysis, a problem this thesis aims to begin to address.

I assess SABER according to bottom-up, top-down, and holistic approaches to educational goals development as a method of analysis. Based on a study done by the Sustainability Research Institute on tools developed for the measurement of development goals, the bottom-up approach to development is defined as community-based conversational theory and has been proven to be useful in varying local contexts - and the top-down approach is expert-

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<sup>8</sup> World Bank, "SABER Index," World Bank Group, 2020., <http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=5&sub=1>.

<sup>9</sup> Bank. Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Tuomas Takala et al., "One Size for All? Policy Advice of the World Bank and the OECD on Quality Assurance and Evaluation of School Education in Russia, Brazil and China," in *International Perspectives on Education and Society*, ed. Alexander W. Wiseman and Petrina M. Davidson, vol. 35 (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018), 301–19.



led with a focus of promoting wealth, connectivity, and diversity<sup>11</sup>. However, the WB still uses its SABER framework as best practices<sup>12</sup> with no impartial monitoring, that informs policies in education sectors more widely. Through the approaches mentioned, the SABER project is a top-down approach with characteristics of bottom-up approach. A system like SABER is more a monitoring tool, as well as a norm that sets practices of observation and data collection, than it is a holistic measurement of education development.

I focus on education by envisioning the future of a country. In economic terms, investment in the education sector is an investment in the now and tomorrow. I examine development approaches to education to unpack the meanings of development and how they have taken shape under top-down approaches; this aspect of development is particularly visible in the education sector. This analysis opens a gateway through which we can analyze alternative approaches to development, and their importance in development work, specifically for application in the education sector.

I refer to different approaches to education development outside of the WB which center so-called “human-development” approach.<sup>13</sup> This reference allows me to position SABER's strategy in a broader development framework and within the general approach of the WB. Through a review of sources available on SABER, I bring into conversation some examples of transformative, human-development approaches to the development of education to show alternative approaches to education and, importantly, what SABER is missing in its framework. The approaches to education measurement in developing countries (SABER) have rarely been questioned by scholars and governments, particularly in well-established institutions. Education development orthodoxy has, for the past decades, mainly focused on increasing literacy rates in

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<sup>11</sup> Mark S. Reed, Evan D.G. Fraser, and Andrew J. Dougill, “An Adaptive Learning Process for Developing and Applying Sustainability Indicators with Local Communities,” *Ecological Economics* 59, no. 4 (October 2006): 406–18. These approaches were developed for the sole purpose of evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>12</sup> “The What, Why, and How of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER).” 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Tadashi Hirai, *The Creation of the Human Development Approach*, 24-39. Hirai discuss IOs as a vital part of framing the concept of development which has passed its wave of economic development and is turning to human development and put UNDP as a pioneer in setting the milestone in institutionalizing development.

developing countries. While literacy as a sole measurement of development has proven insufficient<sup>14</sup>, the emphasis has shifted to quality of education, relied on to bring change, and emerging leaders, likewise relied on to diminish conflict and improve environmental challenges.

Developing countries across the Middle East and Central Asia have suffered from different types of conflict. For instance, in Afghanistan, the layers of student trauma incurred both from political events to religious and ethnic conflict can be well tackled through the educational development system, which is without consideration of conflict and culture consideration. Some institutions take a transitional justice/conflict resolution approach to education, such as the Initiatives of Change Organization (IoFC). These flexible organization not only measure the level of literacy but also approach the resolution of challenges based on conflict in targeted countries as an educational goal. Yet SABER remains the dominant norm for assessing education development outcomes. Even taken on its own, I argue that a best practices-oriented approach will be deeply flawed unless it accounts for the varying cultures<sup>15</sup> in developing countries, due to the diversity of conflicts, and differences a country carry as luggage.

### **Two Main Parts:**

In the first part, I articulate the diffusion of norm empirics through the framework of constructivism to elaborate more on power the WB has over policies. I acknowledge that the WB is a financial bank and there to finance the development projects in developing countries while in need of numeric results to seek assurance of improvements. Yet, this measurement approach is not enough to achieve educational goals today. As a case study, I go in detail of one of the indicators of SABER in Afghanistan; Education Management Information System (SABER-EMIS) to prove there is a cycle of policymaking for education that bypasses the local

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<sup>14</sup> “Press Release: World Bank Warns of ‘learning Crisis’ in Global Education,” September 2017, [https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/09/26/world-bank-warns-of-learning-crisis-in-global-education?cid=EXT\\_WBSocialShare\\_EXT](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/09/26/world-bank-warns-of-learning-crisis-in-global-education?cid=EXT_WBSocialShare_EXT).

<sup>15</sup> UNESCO, “Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies World Conference on Cultural Policies Mexico City, 26 July- 6August 1982,” The importance of culture in development is elaborated in part two in relation to holistic approach to development.

participation. It is significant to report on the understanding of how educational policies and why measurement is essential and related.

In part two, the empirical meaning of development is explored. The capacity of development is usually outsourced due to the fragile component of the host country to the organization. I will refer to the overall umbrella of development and its space within the pol, and how the insights from my cases offer new vantage points to understand its conflict and cultural implications. For an overall overview of approaches, the bottom-up, top-down, and holistic approaches are explained. These approaches illuminate the understanding of the development and its goals and the norms used around education. Educational policies in the WB in coordination with countries which practice SABER practice a top-down measurement, which has characteristics of a bottom-up approach, but does not comply with holistic approach to measurement and local participation. Simply put, SABER has become a guidance for educational goals which neglect local, contextual factors such as culture and conflict, in educational reforms.

## **Part one:**

### **1. Terms and Significance of Study**

From a neo-Gramscian perspective, the WB can be characterized as an institutionalized hegemonic power, embedded in structure, where there is little citizen participation<sup>16</sup>. According to a realist view, like Mearsheimer's, the United States led the world order after the Cold War, which was neither democratic nor international due to the self-interest of powerful institutions<sup>17</sup>. Institutionalists, however, do not accept this point of view, instead viewing the WB as an acting stakeholder in a dense international legal environment through international policymaking<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Earl Conteh-Morgan, "Globalization and Human Security: A Neo-Gramscian Perspective," *GMU.EDU*, 2020, <http://www.gmu.edu/academic/hsp/ecm.html>.

<sup>17</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 5-7.

<sup>18</sup> Mearsheimer. Ibid.

The best way to understand the WB's approach to education is to follow Finnemore and other constructivists who take the WB as a bureaucracy that encourages norm diffusion<sup>19</sup>. The term 'norm'<sup>20</sup> alludes to the measurement system of education, defined by Finnemore as a set of values which increase bureaucracy through legitimizations. A number of social functions are legitimized within the WB through SABER: knowledge creation and dissemination, policy formation (and subsequently the WB's influence on it) and providing funding for host countries. Here, the WB's SABER project, which is used for the measurement of the educational indicator, acts as a norm. There is also a resistance in evaluation of SABER on the ground because of the workforce it has created to tackle poverty is considered by local stakeholders to have a capitalist structure due to its economic development traces. I define the norm in the context of IOs as any value that sets the basis for development goals.

Empirically, the term development has tended to be interpreted economically. Economic development refers to the progress which the WB promotes. To elaborate a different meaning of development through the mentioned approaches, I look in its economic meaning in relation to first wave of development before WWII and holistic sense after WWII. According to the holistic measurement approach to education, characteristics of approach is not determined by quantification rather sees systems as a whole and interconnected to each other<sup>21</sup>. These approaches are defined to evaluate the meaning of development in the education sector in this thesis.

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<sup>19</sup> Martha Finnemore, "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy," *International Organization* 47, no. 4 (1993): 565–97.

<sup>20</sup> Park, "Theorizing Norm Diffusion Within International Organizations." Norms are defined in this paper as the set of values which direct a state to have in certain ways. Once these norms are formed in international institutions, it becomes an international

<sup>21</sup> Mihajlović Ljubiša M., Mihajlović Milica Lj. and Mihajlović Nevenka K., "Holistic Approach to Education and Upbringing: Contradictory to the General Assumption of Life," *Visoka Škola Strukovnih Studija Za Vaspitače, Kruševac* 3 (2014). This article bases its argument on Ron Miller's definition of holistic education "Holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the idea that each person finds the identity, meaning and purpose of his life through a connection with community, nature and human values such as compassion and peace" Miller, 1997:149.

I denote IOs as development organizations which promote values of developed countries. Developing countries refer to the third world nations which lack improvement in areas mentioned first by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and then Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which IOs are inspired by.

Historically, the roots of development go back to pre-WWII colonization. According to Hirai<sup>22</sup>, who has done empirical studies, the transformation of the expansion of the concept of development started by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is the period in which development became an international reflexive in awe of exposing western development ideas. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the new age of development, Schurman compiled a series of essays on development theories in the book “Beyond the Impasse<sup>23</sup>”, published in 1993, which I use to explain the emprises around development. In the following decades scholars such as Amartya Sen<sup>24</sup>, who described development as a notion away from material poverty, became prominent. Furthermore, development theory discussions emphasize that economic conceptions of development narrow the concept of development.

The legitimacy of IOs is explored by Susan Park’s focus on norms<sup>25</sup> in development and particularly in the WB. Park recognizes Finnemore’s definition of norms as shared behavior that teach states how to behave. Within the international system, in her research on IMF and the WB, Park provides guidance on how policy norm is created and yet confirming the gap, I recognize the role of the WB as policymaker utilizing SABER as the norm that is based on best practices.

Placing the role of IOs concerning educational policies, I review policy advice and online reports by the WB and scholars. I am familiar with SABER and SABER-EMIS indicators through my work as an external consultant before my studies for the SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan. My contribution by analysis of SABER confirms Park’s argument in detailed

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<sup>22</sup> Hirai, *The Creation of the Human Development Approach*.

<sup>23</sup> Frans J. Schuurman, *Beyond the Impasse, New Directions in Development Theory*, 1993.

<sup>24</sup> Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 2 vols. 1999.

<sup>25</sup> Park, “Theorizing Norm Diffusion Within International Organizations.”

practical analysis. Given the limitation of analysis on how educational goals are shaped in IOs, this study brings in an example of the many country cases in developing countries that practice SABER.

## **2. Norm Diffusion Through International Organizations**

Using a constructivist framework, this part focus on how the WB as a bureaucracy fits in the theory of norm diffusion. This section argues SABER project is a norm implemented by the WB and how the legitimacy of norm comes from the power of the WB as a bureaucracy. In context of legitimacy, the hypocrisy of the WB is explained as the cause of legitimacy through norm diffusion.

IOs are mechanisms for the distribution of power across the world. According to Finnemore, the diffusion of power happens based on the three factors: legitimization, institutionalization, and eventually hypocrisy.<sup>26</sup> The WB is known as an umbrella of IOs owning all these three aspects. This legitimate role of IOs is expressed through their presence, membership, and power concerning the formulation and implementation of policies. Among the first organizations which gave rise to the diffusion of norms worldwide by asking for memberships are UNESCO and OCED.<sup>27</sup> Finnemore discuss the legitimization<sup>28</sup> of IOs in relation to a hegemonic/unipolar power as following: the unipolar first diffuse its power through institutionalization, as the USA did after the WWII<sup>29</sup>. Afterwards, the legitimization itself gives power to unipolar. The notion of hypocrisy is a feature of this process, which is not entirely negative as it also provides an opportunity for unipolar to penetrate its ideas. Legitimization of

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<sup>26</sup> Finnemore, "Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity: Why Being a Unipole Isn't All It's Cracked up to Be," (2009): 58–85.

<sup>27</sup> Park, "Theorizing Norm Diffusion Within International Organizations."

<sup>28</sup> Finnemore. Ibid. 61. Legitimization by nature is a social and relational phenomenon that can only be given by others. Institutions set use the framework of law as a norm to justify their actions through legitimacy. Should the norm here be the law, according to the article 26<sup>th</sup> of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to education and elementary education is compulsory. The emphasis on Universal Declaration of Human Rights and importance of education development is also reflected in the beginning of the World Banks's Education Strategy 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Finnemore. Ibid.

SABER project is done by the WB as an institution exercising education development according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. SABER, as a norm, reflects values of best practices set by the WB.

One of the examples of a platform for data collection is the Education Management Information System (EMIS)<sup>30</sup> in Afghanistan (which I discuss in detail in this paper) that provided a digital platform for collecting educational data that shaped and continued to shape policies within the Ministry of Higher Education in Afghanistan. Results have only recently improved are still in an emerging stage (50 or below 50 percent of application), yet this positions the WB as the ultimate organization that creates, forms, and implements educational policies in Afghanistan. The WB received the required legitimacy from developing countries in order to shape educational goals through data collection. These steps are indeed necessary for the development of the education sector, however, the challenge is the top-down approach of the WB's SABER which encourages hypocrisy. The top-down approach relies on recorded 'best practices' rather than taking citizen participation through conversational approaches to development into account. The result of SABER is not only misleading understanding of key educational goals, but that pursuing these goals are in the interest of actors who are interested in maintaining SABER.

The hypocritical manner of the WB inspired by the best practices here on one hand set the norms and on the other legitimize the norms upon which policies are made<sup>31</sup>. The hypocrisy in the WB is also explored by Catherine Weaver in her book "The World Bank Hypocrisy Trap" which explain how the WB's goals alter as the institutions develop its own culture that create a hypocrisy trap of winners and losers through mainstream gaps<sup>32</sup>. In the WB'SABER the

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<sup>30</sup> "SABER\_EMIS\_Afghanistan\_Country\_Report\_Final\_2017".

<sup>31</sup> Finnemore, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Catherine Weaver, "The World Bank and the Poverty of Reform," in *Hypocrisy Trap: The World Bank and the Poverty of Reform* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 19–43. I bring mainstream gap as the cause of hypocrisy. The mainstream contribution is defined by Catherine as the following: "something is said to be mainstreamed when it is so routine that it provokes neither conflict or comment." P.21.

hypocrisy is identified by not considering the needs/interest of external stakeholders. Values promoted by the WB are based on the development goals yet, once the bureaucracy is formed, the values move from people to organization as it sets its norms. The top-down approach of the WB's SABER put the interest of best practices which can deliver data as an evident for continuation of funding.

In constructivist<sup>33</sup> theory, the act of the WB as a legitimate policymaker for education development has "the power to diffuse norms throughout the international system, and make decisions based on their internal culture, norms, and identity."<sup>34</sup> The diffusion of norm is also inevitable as it is a means developed as a result of the spread of economic development, enhancing a peaceful approach of development. The presence of the WB is more credible than the presence of any kind of military. Based on the Finnemore's study of IOs, the WB also has the power to legitimize itself and delegitimize others<sup>35</sup>, which also creates and diffuses norms. SABER as a norm for measurement of education development prove efficient for those investing through the WB as there is evident of projects progressing from one phase to others. SABER is legitimate as it is the best practice reflecting the winner side of hypocrisy.

The education development goals altered from the provision of primary education to focus on quality. The actors of goal setting agenda are IOs which become lawful through norm diffusion such as UNs and the WB. The shift of educational goals is seen by observing MDGs in the year of 2000 SDGs in the year of 2015. In 2000 the WB, UN, OECD, and IMF published a report outlining that they were gearing their efforts towards aligning their goals towards the MDGs that set the norms around education, health, female empowerment, environmental sustainability, and poverty reduction<sup>36</sup>. The second MDG was to "achieve universal primary

<sup>33</sup> Stefano Guzzini, *Power, Realism and Constructivism*, 1st ed. 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Susan Parkand and Antje Vetterlein, *Owning Development: Creating Policy Norms in the IMF and the World Bank*, eds 2010. Note: Also in a principle-agent model of policy, the act of WB as a policy making organization is backed by the interests of dominant state which aim to legitimize their presence and power through IOs.

<sup>35</sup> Park, "Theorizing Norm Diffusion Within International Organizations."

<sup>36</sup> Parkand and Vetterlein, *Owning Development: Creating Policy Norms in the IMF and the World Bank*.2010.



education"<sup>37</sup>. This goal left a gap that transformed to goal number 4 of SDGs, focusing on the “quality of education<sup>38</sup>”. This transfer of goals is yet another way of diffusing some of the norms around the supposedly ‘completed primary school’ by application of MDGs and moving to provision of quality education. It was then that the approaches to the education sector should have changed to a bottom-up approach reflecting the resolution of conflicts across the world specifically developing countries. This would have ideally been a way of investment and working towards a peaceful future.

At the time of the industrial revolution, the approach to education reflected in educational policies was the provision of education geared for the labor market only. The allegedly peaceful approach to educational capacities, which is ideally supporting prosperity for all, is flawed by its very base to spread the world industrial economy while sharing raw material<sup>39</sup>. Education is also known as a consequential agency for reproduction of all social/class structures<sup>40</sup>. Polyani argues that the problem with a market-based structure of society is the collaboration of governments based on national interests. This underlying motive also increases privatization in the education sector everywhere. In the case of Afghanistan, the privatization of education is a barrier to the participation of male and female students<sup>41</sup>. One major drawback of education based on the WB strategy is the motive to tackle poverty. Difficulties arise when privatization of education in this respect does not comply with educational development goal as its roots goes back to a market-based structure of development as Polyani argued. The WB is not the only institution which use SABER results. The results which are produced by SABER are used not

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<sup>37</sup> MDG Gap Task Force Report. *Taking Stock of the Global Partnership for Development*. 2015.

<sup>38</sup> UN, “United Nations Sustainable Development Goals,” 2020.  
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>.

<sup>39</sup> Craig N. Murphy and Enrico Augelli, “International Institutions, Decolonization, and Development,” *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 14, no. 1, (1993): 71–85. (2014)71-85.

<sup>40</sup> Roy Nash, “Bourdieu on Education and Social and Cultural Reproduction,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 11, (1990) 432.

<sup>41</sup> Anne Maree Payne, Nina Burridge, and Nasima Rahmani, “‘An Education Without Any Fear?’ Higher Education and Gender Justice in Afghanistan,” in *Rethinking Transitional Gender Justice*, ed. Rita Shackel and Lucy Fiske (2019), 295–314.

only by the national governing bodies of host country but also by other IOs as the likes of UNESCO, and the UN through partnerships<sup>42</sup>.

It is development itself that needs to be examined as new strategies are put forward through IOs. In the ongoing conversation between organizations, academics, governments, and activists about decolonization and development,<sup>43</sup> civil society should be setting norms as well as policies as they are closer to the concerns of citizens in a country. Now it is the WB, which is the norm consumer<sup>44</sup> along with its data-based policies. The norms are not set by the civil society or the people. The institutional norm of education development applies to the progress of the education system and the implementation of its policies along with future goals.

### **3. Education Policymaking and the World Bank Group**

Taking in mind SABER as a norm below, I describe the emergence of SABER as a measurement tool for education development measurement based on economic development. In the following section I analyze SABER and how it effects policies in education development in the WB. I choose to look into SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan in more details because EMIS stand as the backbone of SABER.

Engaging this framework suggest aspects of local/conversational method of policymaking is not reflected in policies or educational goals resulted by SABER.

The WB's longstanding mission is to "end extreme poverty within a generation and boost shared prosperity" by 2030<sup>45</sup>. In 2014 the WB assumed a new operation model focused on development overall with increasing commitment to further funding of IDA from 16.3 billion to 22.2 billion in the 2014 fiscal year<sup>46</sup>. Under this mission and through the International Development Association (IDA) of the WB, the SABER project gained momentum to further

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<sup>42</sup> Parkand and Vetterlein, *Owning Development: Creating Policy Norms in the IMF and the World Bank*.

<sup>43</sup> Murphy and Augelli, (2014)"

<sup>44</sup> Park, "Theorizing Norm Diffusion Within International Organizations."(2006)342.

<sup>45</sup> "The World Bank Group, Who We Are, (2020) <https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are>.

<sup>46</sup> The World Bank, "World Bank Group Commitments Rise Sharply in FY14 Amid Organizational Change," *World Bank Group Press Release*, June 2014, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/07/01/world-bank-group-commitments-rise-sharply-in-fy14-amid-organizational-change>.

apply SABER in developing countries. SABER record education development as the production of data and the improvement of quality through policies.<sup>47</sup> According to the education strategy 2020 of the World Bank, the development of education sectors worldwide is set on the basis of three points: improving results, guiding education, while acting locally in accordance to the countries in which it is implemented<sup>48</sup>. SABER accord in improving results and guiding education for an economic model of education development. However, the notion of ‘acting locally’ is not reflected in SABER. As discussed, the WB design SABER based on best practices and implement in developing countries.

The problem with this kind of development was pointed out in an essay by David Slater: the poverty which the WB is trying to tackle is defined as economic hardship, which needed to be tackled in the late 1980s<sup>49</sup>. Slater bases his argument on Polyani <sup>50</sup> who explained that the main problem lies in centering development on economic interests. The overall mission of the WB in hope of tackling poverty is based on economic development and therefore interests. Further challenges to this approach that I will examine the partnership of the WB with governments and the trend of privatization of education which has caused bureaucratic circles of corruption in developing countries. However, the WB today also treats educational development as economic development or vice-versa - countries that do better in education are portrayed as the result of better economic income<sup>51</sup>. Despite, economic development results in better performance in societies including development of education, yet given an opportunity is given for private sector and the WB’ self-interest, the motivation of development change. Economic development is a top-down approach to development evident SABER as a norm produced by the WB. SABER is only a small and detailed project which I analyze in order to further analyze the top-down approach.

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<sup>47</sup> “Framework\_SABER-Student\_Assessment.2012.

<sup>48</sup> “Education\_Strategy\_2020.Pdf,” 20.

<sup>49</sup> Schuurman, *Beyond the Impasse, New Directions in Development Theory*.

<sup>50</sup> Karl Polyani, *The Great Transformation*, 2nd ed. 1957.249.

<sup>51</sup> “Education\_Strategy\_2020.”

## a. The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER)

The International Development Agency (IDA)<sup>52</sup> of the WB was established in 1960. The IDA has invested \$391 billion in more than 113 countries<sup>53</sup>. The SABER project functions under the funding of the IDA. The model of SABER illustrated below is from a SABER overview paper<sup>54</sup>.

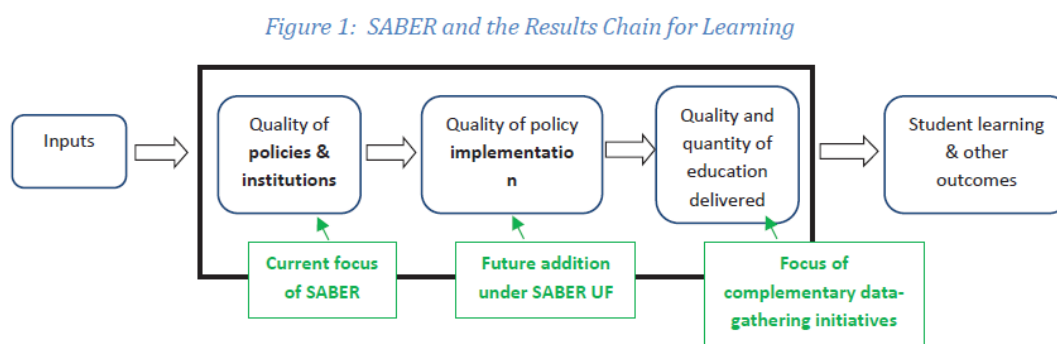


Figure 1 illustrates the three key links in that “education results chain”<sup>3</sup>, as well as the role of SABER in illuminating it:

*Figure 1: SABER education results chain<sup>55</sup>.*

Based on the above chart, SABER provides data to improve policies and their implementation to increase learning. One of the 13 domains of SABER is the Education Management Information System (EMIS)<sup>56</sup> that aims to provide digital education data such as the number of students, teachers, schools, etc. in developing countries and track their progress. These numbers indicate the success of the EMIS project's improvement through the statistical functionality of the developed systems. The assumption, based on regression analysis, is that each direct variable has an independent effect despite the existence of other current levels of other variables.<sup>57</sup> A good outcome based on this type of analysis and policy advice is an

<sup>52</sup> “What Is IDA,” World Bank, 2020, <http://ida.worldbank.org/about/what-is-ida>.

<sup>53</sup> “What Is IDA.”

<sup>54</sup> “The What, Why, and How of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER).”

<sup>55</sup> “The What, Why, and How of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER).”

<sup>56</sup> “EMIS,” 2020. <http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=8&pd=2&sub=0>.

<sup>57</sup> Steven J. Klees et al., “The World Bank’s SABER: A Critical Analysis,” *Comparative Education Review* 64, no. 1 2020. 46–65.

educational measurement that drives policies but factors such as conflict and local knowledge are not reflected enough in these policies. Alternative approaches would include conflict resolution in local communities for countries in conflict. Private consulting organizations remain an aspect too weak to influence policies. The thoroughly critical analysis by Kless (2020)<sup>58</sup> offers an intensive critical analysis on SABER's 13 domains to evaluate its effectiveness. One of the results is that SABER's approach is narrow, biased and encourages privatization through better implementation of educational policies. And this does not even address features of SABER, which deliver data for the sole purpose of receiving project extensions.

SABER analyzes educational data to appraise the quality of education policies – not the implementation and quality of the curriculum. Although data and numbers remain essential for growth, the functionality of the curriculum is the basis of a classroom that supports self - development. Based on the WB index on SABER<sup>59</sup> from 2013, SABER development is a bottom-up, and there are levels of flexibility. However, as analyzed earlier, factors such as conflict resolution and a lack of system development are not considered in the implementation of SABER. This system of development for education remains a top-down approach where policies for developing countries and places in conflict are formed based on best practices outside the home country of the project. This leaves an education system with insufficient room for affective learning which goes hand in hand with policies and usage of SABER as a norm.

## **b. Education Management Information System in Afghanistan (SABER-EMIS)**

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) in a lot of sense is the backbone of the SABER project. EMIS was established in the purpose of digitalizing the educational data in Afghanistan in 2005 with a 5-year plan but did not start until 2007<sup>60</sup>. This automatically

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<sup>58</sup> Klees et al.

<sup>59</sup> World Bank, "SABER Index."

<sup>60</sup> "Education Management Information System," 2020, emis.af.

reduced the timeframe for implementation. EMIS created a data center for the implementation of SABER which was initiated later in 2011<sup>61</sup>. The SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan has four focus areas for policies: Enabling Environment, System Soundness, Quality Data, and Utilization for Decision Making which are marked as emerging and except Utilization for Decision Making which is latent in Afghanistan<sup>62</sup>. Therefore, the phase one of SABER project in Afghanistan has not been fully implemented. The indicators in SABER-EMIS Afghanistan is showed below:

**Box 6: List of Education Indicators under Afghanistan's EMIS**

<b>Student Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Enrollment Ratio</li> <li>• Gross Enrollment Ratio</li> <li>• Drop-Out Rates</li> <li>• Net Intake Rate</li> <li>• Gross Intake Ratio</li> <li>• Repetition Rate</li> <li>• Survival Rate</li> <li>• Primary Completion Rate</li> <li>• Transition Rate</li> <li>• Early Childhood Enrollment Ratio</li> <li>• Student to Classroom Ratio</li> <li>• Student to Teacher Ratio</li> <li>• % New Entrants to Primary Education</li> <li>• % Enrollment in Private Schools</li> <li>• % Students Qualifying the Quality Test (a test taken in grades 6, 9, and 12 in terms of functionality of curriculum)</li> </ul>	<b>Teacher Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Professional Teachers (Bachelor's degree)</li> <li>• % Teachers Who Benefit from In-Service Trainings</li> <li>• % Teachers Who Teach Based on Their Experiences</li> <li>• % Female Teachers</li> <li>• Teacher Attrition Rate</li> <li>• Teacher Absenteeism</li> <li>• Teacher-to-Department Ratio</li> </ul> <b>School Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % Schools with Usable Buildings</li> <li>• % Rented Schools</li> <li>• % Schools by Category: One-shift, Double-shift, and Triple-shift</li> </ul> <b>Literacy Rate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Literacy Rate</li> <li>• Youth Literacy Rate</li> </ul>
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Source: Ministry of Education, Afghanistan.

Figure 2: Indicators of SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan <sup>63</sup>

Although all the above indicators are administrative, yet for the functionality of these indicators for SABER, a successful EMIS is necessary.

The SABER-EMIS is a completed project in Afghanistan which ended in 2016<sup>64</sup>. EMIS is a system of recording educational data for goals of SABER. In contrary, utilization of data for policymaking of SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan is latent, this means there are limited enabling environment, processes, structure, data management utilization.<sup>65</sup> Given SABER is established on EMIS, the system is not completed to provide complete data. This utilization of this data is used by IOs more than the host country due to the latent status of the system. On local level in

<sup>61</sup> World Bank, "SABER Index."

<sup>62</sup> "SABER\_EMIS\_Afghanistan\_Country\_Report\_Final\_2017."

<sup>63</sup> "SABER\_EMIS\_Afghanistan\_Country\_Report\_Final\_2017."

<sup>64</sup> "SABER\_EMIS\_Afghanistan\_Country\_Report\_Final\_2017.Pdf."

<sup>65</sup> "SABER\_EMIS\_Afghanistan\_Country\_Report\_Final\_2017."

Afghanistan, this system will not be effective as other sectors remain paper-based. For instance, should there be a need for the number of schools in a district in Afghanistan, an individual will have to go through governmental administrative procedures that are paper-based to receive the data. The digital EMIS system is given to the ministry of higher education as a measurement tool for the WB which are setting educational goals forward.

Aside from the weakness of data, aspects of ghost schools are not reflected in the reports produced. A ghost school is a school which feed its data in the system for the purpose of receiving funding, but the school and students do not exist. In my experience as a principle investigator for the WB for the SABER-EMIS, I confronted aspect of ghost schools by approval of Ministry of Higher Education in Afghanistan to the WB SABER staff. Yet, this fact was not reflected in any of the reports produced on SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan. There are also no data available on ghost schools in Afghanistan. Ghost Schools were mentioned in the WB reports 1-2 times, explaining the fraud of existing reports of schools that did not exist physically in the Philippines <sup>66</sup>. Some articles reflected on existing ghost schools in Pakistan<sup>67</sup>. The existence of ghost schools is proved as Afghanistan stand as one of the most conflicted and corrupted countries among the third world countries. Given that ghost schools are not reflected in the WB reports of SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan can also be the beginning of asking questions about the legitimacy of the WB staff who worked on this project.

In the logic of bottom-up approach when the policies are based on SABER-EMIS there is no space for local/conversational method of policy making. Although the existing data through EMIS is district based in Afghanistan, aspects of community concerns are not reflected in the policies that shape the lives of the community. The WB's SABER-EMIS in Afghanistan will decide when to close projects and when to move on to the next stage bypassing the context of

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<sup>66</sup> Harry Anthony Patrinos, Felipe Barrera-Osorio, and Juliana Guaqueta, "The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnership in Education" (The World Bank, 2009)55.

<sup>67</sup> Amin Ahmed, "'Ghost Schools' Cause Leakage of Billion: Report," *Dawn.Com*, 2013, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1046903>.

the country and its needs. As the SABER critical analysis<sup>68</sup> confirms the standards of best practices remove relying on physical control of development which has substituted a 'participatory democratic manner'. Once again, this position the WB well embedded in the educational policies of Afghanistan. This system stimulates an economic way of development. Keeping in mind an investment of \$460 million was made for SABER-EMIS in 2004<sup>69</sup>.

## **Part Two:**

### **4. The Umbrella of Development and the World Bank**

Following Daura, this part views development in economic, political, and cultural as relationally produced aspects of human-development. I address human-development as a bottom-up approach to development which strongly consider culture. Referring back to part one, culture is not reflected in the roots SABER as a norm that is inspired by economic development.

Development takes place around the interdependence of countries to each other which has resulted in rise of international institutions. It becomes more essential for IOs to include human development from a bottom-up approach with an understanding of cultures. The definitions of culture is reflected in human development within IOs but not in policies, specifically in the WB. However, in between the evolution of the term 'human-development' and economic development – the economic development has been a notion which replaced any other idea regards to development in the global south <sup>70</sup>. I refer to economic development here as a tool for development of capitalism. Based on a review on development theories done by Rioux<sup>71</sup> on the book "The Global Development Crisis"<sup>72</sup> reflected on Sen's argument "Development As Freedom"<sup>73</sup> as the following: Sen criticizes capitalism in relation to economic

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<sup>68</sup> Klees et al.(2020)

<sup>69</sup> The World Bank, "Lessons Learned from World Bank Education Management Information System Operation-Portfolio Review 1998-2014," (2017)23.

<sup>70</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>71</sup> Sébastien Rioux, "The Global Development Crisis," *Resilience* 2, no. 3 (September 2, 2014): 212–13.

<sup>72</sup> Ben Selwyn, *The Global Development Crisis* (Cambridge University, 2014).2015.

<sup>73</sup> Sen, *Development as Freedom*.



development as a contradiction to cultural freedom. If the concept of development is connected to economic means, the freedom of individuals is questioned. Development should be framed around the context of conflicts in host countries where culture is well integrated in policies that shape development goals. The definition of culture by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the Mexico Declaration on Cultural Policies<sup>74</sup> centers human development and sensitivity rapidly.

“... Culture might be considered at present as the combination of distinctive features, spiritual and material, intellectual and affective, that characterize a society or a social group. It encompasses, in addition to humanize the arts, ways of life, fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs...And that culture bestows humans with the capacity for reflection on himself/herself. It makes us as beings, specifically humans, rational, critical and ethically committed. Through it, we discern values and make options. Through it, humans express, become aware of themselves and recognize themselves as an unfinished project, questioning their own fulfillment, looking tirelessly for new meanings and creating works which transcend them...”<sup>1</sup>

Yet, this level of consideration is not given during the project implementation of policies or indicators which shape education policies within institutions as the WB reflected in Figure 1. Yet, there are many ways to turn this around for the WB, first to review the roots of education development in developing countries and making sure its roots do not put capitalism as a platform for human development. Second, is to include culture and conflict in education development approach actively. The WB has missed the dichotomy of culture in development, centering human-development as well. UNESCO in relation to culture and development refers to the challenge of the convincing policymaker to include culture in all sectors, including education<sup>75</sup>. The very first time, a conference was held on the inclusion of culture in SDGs was

<sup>74</sup> UNESCO, “Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies World Conference on Cultural Policies Mexico City, 26 July- 6 August 1982.”

<sup>75</sup> UNESCO, “Culture and Development,” 2017, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/>.

in 2013 during the Hangzhou congress<sup>76</sup>. Changing the approach of education measurement could be a starting point of basing development on humans instead of numbers.

According to Daura<sup>77</sup>, there are three logics of power within human activity: economics, politics, and culture. As much as there is a space for economic development through the power of capitalization or free market, there is also a prerequisite for reliable political and cultural power, which needs to be upfront of every development framework. Culture is the basis of human development. It is culture through which the development of different sectors can be rooted in generational growth hand in hand. If culture were to be reflected in education policies, there could emerge a global sense of bottom-up educational systems. It is for this very reason that the analysis of the global south or the global north modernity discussions by Daura published in 2015 stands correct.

In bottom-up approach to development, culture is the foundation for the implementation of policies. Policies which reflect culture result in implementation of policies in a local context which encourages citizen participation. Citizen participation is a fundamental transition of power from governments to people. The WB claims to have this approach, however, when evaluated on the base of SABER, this remains untrue. In the context of educational measurement, the power of the people is underestimated since they have no awareness of the education system for instance, and the policies shaping their lives. Lack of citizen participation is yet another downfall of relying on policies that are outside of the cultural framework of the country.

The need for transformation and changes of approaches are also evolving within the WB and other IOs. It became more crucial to study the approaches of development to align goals with the challenges of today. A notable example of a transformative change in the WB structure/system is the formation of IDA<sup>78</sup>. The growth of IDA and its vastness is an interdependency that

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<sup>76</sup> UNESCO, "The International Congress 'Culture: Key to Sustainable Development' Hangzhou (China), 15 May-17 May 2013," Culture and Development. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/hangzhou-congress/about-the-congress/>.

<sup>77</sup> Daura, "The Crisis of Global Modernity".91-118.

<sup>78</sup> Jonathan Pincus and Jeffery A. Winters, *Reinventing the World Bank* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

failed to choose conflict resolution and inclusion of culture in its policies. Given IOs like the WB and its power are fruits economic development<sup>79</sup>.

After the financial crisis and the debt crisis in developing countries due to the best practice approach of development, the concept of development has tried to fix the gaps created in numeric goals. In view of the fact conflict within development is a macro level of development, which was supposedly the target of MDGs. Yet, these goals undermine local “local politics, social realities, and belief systems.” Which is a chance for conflict resolution<sup>80</sup>. It is rather tricky for the WB also to include factors such as culture and conflict in its development of public policies. Since the measurement of the goals and the norms it has created does not support conflict resolution and culture as the basis of development.

Entering the year 2020, the rise and legitimacy of IOs are becoming more as the world faces environmental challenges alongside others. IOs such as Initiatives of Change International (IofC), which are totally different in structure, motive, and approach, stand more successful in development work. IofC was originally formed in the late 1920s as The Oxford Group and later transformed to IofC in 2001 by the former president of the International Committee of Red Cross<sup>81</sup>. It is then the organization centered conflict resolution in search of good governance. IofC is as old as the WB focusing on development through innovative educational approaches and encouraging transformation based on need. IofC has adopted a human-centric and personal growth approach since the beginning and advocate their programs through its transformative values. The holistic approach<sup>82</sup> to education and its evaluation is applicable in all three dimensions of economic, political, and cultural notions. It already consists of human and environmental development, which developing countries have longed. One of the programs of

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<sup>79</sup> “Education\_Strategy\_2020.Pdf.”

<sup>80</sup> Olympio Barbanti Jr., “Development and Conflict Theory. Beyond Intractability,” *Guy Burgess an DHeidi Burgess*, 2004, [https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/development\\_conflict\\_theory](https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/development_conflict_theory).

<sup>81</sup> Initiatives of Change, Initiatives of Change International, 2020.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070824230251/http://www.iofc.org/en/abt/>.

<sup>82</sup> Jana Lay-Hwa Bowden, Leonie Tickle, and Kay Naumann, “The Four Pillars of Tertiary Student Engagement and Success: A Holistic Measurement Approach,” *Studies in Higher Education*, October 10, 2019, 1–18.

IoFC is the Caux Scholars Program, which base academic learning of development through trauma healing, conflict resolution, and transitional justice. The measurement of this program is reflected in the testimonies of scholars who graduated from this CSP<sup>83</sup>. CSP is an investment which centers human in all aspects. Based on my observation of IoFCs' programs, their approach to all programs worldwide changed to online platforms within a week during the pandemic in March 2020. To explore additional approaches to the development of educational goals, I refer to a holistic measurement approach next.

The top-down, bottom-up, and holistic approaches are mentioned in section 4 and 5 in relation to measurement of education development. These approaches aim to simplify understanding of development in holistic and economic aspects. It is illustrated here that SABER as a norm, does not comply with holistic measurement of education development.

## 5. Top-down and Bottom-up Approaches

One of the most impactful critiques by the WB toward the WB itself is that the Millennium Development Goals have left out learning which is a priority for most developing countries<sup>84</sup>. This gap becomes even clearer when facing its connection to a lack of employment and increase of conflict as systems of education become platforms for the practice of self-interests. This has led to the new version of "Education Strategy 2020" and the formation of the so-called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main sector for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also lies in the education system. Lozano point out that a survey on the involvement of the SDGs policies in higher education institutes shows that the SDGs are not holistically integrated because these policies have been compartmentalized<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> Initiatives of Change, "Caux Scholars Program," 2020, <https://www.iofc.ch/caux-scholars-program>.

<sup>84</sup> "Education\_Strategy\_2020."

<sup>85</sup> Rodrigo Lozano et al., "A Review of Commitment and Implementation of Sustainable Development in Higher Education: Results from a Worldwide Survey," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 108 (December 2015), 1–18. This study was done based on a 87 number of qualitative, open e-ended survey on 70 institutions worldwide.

The systematic inclusion of SDGs policies in educational policies is a key development factor that necessitates a transformative bottom-top approach given the importance of local contexts<sup>86</sup>.

The top-down and bottom-up approaches are two different approaches to development<sup>87</sup>: Local-based methods are focused on learning through participation based on the community (bottom-up). The emphasis lies on the growth of individuals and later communities known as human development. As Selwyn<sup>88</sup> argues in dialogue with several political economists that the focus on poor labor force (poverty) lies at the center of a bottom-up approach to development. The bottom-up approach here still focuses on the economic development of the labor force since the needs to the labor force are identified based on income. Ideally, development need not be political or economic but human-centric in all sectors as well as education. Thinking out of the box, the alternative, non-elitist approaches to education would be practices of transitional justice, conflict resolution, and trauma healing in all educational institutions as a start.

Human-centric development relies on the development of self and later communities, which is a bottom-up approach set apart from systematic economic self-interests. As the development institutions and genealogy of terms have transformed and changed, human development continues to evolve and have a bigger scope now. In the WB economic development used to center human-development for employment growth and promoting education for productivity, explained clearly by Hirari in her book 'The Creation of the Human Development'. In 1980 "human development" appeared in WB documents as referring to wellbeing beyond economic means:

"Human resource development, here called human development to emphasizes that it is an end as well as a means of economic progress. ...The case for human development is not only, or even primarily, an economic one. Less hunger, fewer child deaths, and a better chance of primary education are almost universally accepted as important ends in themselves." <sup>89</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Reed, Fraser, and Dougill, "An Adaptive Learning Process for Developing and Applying Sustainability Indicators with Local Communities."2005.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.,409.

<sup>88</sup> Ben Selwyn, *The Global Development Crisis*.2014.

<sup>89</sup> Hirai, *The Creation of the Human Development Approach*,.27. This definition of Human Development in WB is from 1980.

Human Development in the context of the WB does not deliver what it sets out to do because it has moved its focus on education from- education for the labor market to primary education and perhaps diversity. Today, the WB measures its success in this sector through the Systems Assessment for Better Quality Education (SABER). Given SABER is inspired by a collection of best practices from projects conducted in the developed world, it does not reflect the challenges of the host country. This becomes apparent when comparing the WB's top-down approach to citizen participatory approaches that are/bottom-up. The policies and institutions that work in developed countries cannot be applicable in developing countries given the context of each culture for development is different. For instance, a framework for Sri Lanka will not necessarily work in Brazil.

The World Bank's approach to education development has become indirectly the source of policy advice to different countries that utilize its data, yet this constrains the WB to focus on the transformation of the education system fundamentally. Policy Advice<sup>90</sup> from 1995 – 2011 shows an outline of highly technocratic approaches to education. The scope of these approaches has led to the transformation of the World Bank to a "knowledge bank" for education policies. This document was produced right before formation of SABER. This positions the WB as an agenda-setting institution for other countries. This approach is, however, strongly connected to the overall mission statement of the World Bank's economic development to reduce poverty through education.

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the start of the MDGs, which were not fulfilled and later transitioned and modified to the SDGs are part of the WB's agenda as well. Since the WB already sets policies for education, there are limitations for the SDGs to be fulfilled in a generation's time in countries of different cultures and in conflict (developing countries). Both top-down and bottom-up approaches need to be strongly embedded into education systems yet,

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<sup>90</sup> Takala et al., "One Size for All?", 2018.

today there is a need for a bottom-up approach where participatory learning is encouraged for both development of education and all other sectors.

The long-lasting period of these generational development goals is due to the lack of evaluation of the approach. In 20 years of continuous agenda-setting in the hope of transformation across the globe- giving a chance to the emergent IOs to increase. The main question which these new organizations refer to is the meaning of development as the core of their goals. Following the cold war and the war on terrorism, development in developing countries took a turn on not only being economical but also part of the governance of developing countries. There is a strong need for harmonization of aid, as mentioned by Ritzen<sup>91</sup>, instead of the numerous numbers of reports with different suggestions of what works in thousands of development and monitoring donors. The harmonization of aid can happen through transformative educational growth, which is also missing from the SABER.

## **6. Holistic Measurement Approach**

Apart from SABER's approach to education development, many other international institutions adopt different approaches that are not only based on human development but are also human-centric. Moving from economic development understanding of educational measurement to a holistic measurement, I refer to four pillars: affective, social, cognitive, and behavioral engagement <sup>92</sup> to introduce a holistic measurement approach. This approach is not only an alternative way of looking at a measurement of education but also a system of development towards a better method of educational evaluation. This model described in the chart below:

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<sup>91</sup> Jozef Ritzen, *A Chance for World Bank* (Anthem Press, 2005).

<sup>92</sup> Jana Lay-Hwa Bowden, Leonie Tickle, and Kay Naumann, "The Four Pillars of Tertiary Student Engagement and Success: A Holistic Measurement Approach," *Studies in Higher Education*, October 10, 2019, 1–18.

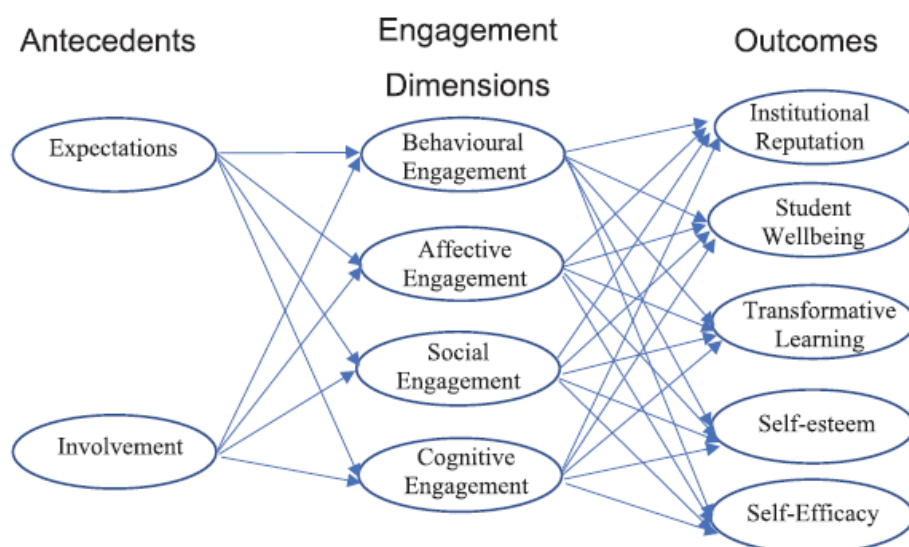


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the four pillars of student engagement.

H1: Expectations are positively related to behavioural engagement

H2: Expectations are positively related to affective engagement

H3: Expectations are positively related to social engagement

H4: Expectations are positively related to cognitive engagement

Figure 3: Holistic education measurement approach<sup>93</sup>

This approach posits that all four notions of student engagement are interrelated to transformative learning and self-esteem and self-efficacy. Based on the research done on tertiary students in Australia in search of holistic approach measurement, both affective and behavioral engagement bring transformative learning and a sense of wellbeing in students. This measurement is not a tool for a 'one size fit all' ideology; the importance of this measurement remains in centering human development within an educational system that does not solely rely on statistical improvement. To reflect, centering human well-being was also mentioned in the WB human-development<sup>94</sup>. Still, their projects actually never adopted a holistic approach due to the purpose of economic development, which triggered the economic aspect<sup>95</sup>. The sense of

<sup>93</sup> Bowden, Tickle, and Naumann.2019.

<sup>94</sup> Hirai, "The Creation of the Human Development Approach",2017.25.

<sup>95</sup> This suggests that economic development does not support holistic approach to measurement.



well-being of students is one of the outcomes of the holistic approach measurement where conflicts (war and insurgencies) are highly studied.

Once again, the old methods have more significant roots within educational policies, which goes beyond any evaluation that would make it turn to a holistic or transformative approach. In Kenya, in the 1970s, due to the low return on educational investment, a 'manpower' approach to economic growth was preferred by the WB and later criticized by the WB itself <sup>96</sup>. The preferred method gave chances for the speedy development of the economy. Given Kenya in the 1970s to implementation of SABER today in Kenya- the approach has not changed in the WB. In a press release in 2018 by the WB mentioned:

**"WASHINGTON, September 26, 2017** – Millions of young students in low and middle-income countries face the prospect of lost opportunity and lower wages in later life because their primary and secondary schools are failing to educate them to succeed in life. Warning of 'a learning crisis' in global education, a new Bank report said schooling without learning was not just a wasted development opportunity, but also a great injustice to children and young people worldwide."<sup>97</sup>

Developing countries have the lowest economies compared to the developing world; this remains an opportunity for investment in all sectors as well as education. Considering, Nepal had one of the weakest economies in 2013, its education sector through the WB was one of the most profitable segments <sup>98</sup>; its under-development and low GDP had served the capacities of social, political, and economic development empowering the bank. The best practice approach of the WB and its success is the most likely cause of the GDP growth of a country<sup>99</sup>. This development position the WB as a powerful institution that drives the privatization of education in developing countries. For instance, World Banks' approach to education in Africa, and specifically in Ethiopia, is a form of power over a policy implementation that is called "best

<sup>96</sup> Tebeje Molla, "Educational Aid, Symbolic Power and Policy Reform: The World Bank in Ethiopia," *London Review of Education* 17, no. 3 (2019): 331–46.

<sup>97</sup> "Press Release: World Bank Warns of 'learning Crisis' in Global Education."

<sup>98</sup> Kapil Dev Regmi, "World Bank in Nepal's Education: Three Decades of Neoliberal Reform," *Globalization, Societies and Education* 15, no. 2 (March 15, 2017): 188–201.

<sup>99</sup> "Education\_Strategy\_2020."19.

practice<sup>100</sup>”. Despite best practices that are applicable not only in developing countries but also in developing. The standard of education is a framework through which power and its implication on government policies are portrayed. The students in a holistic approach measurement which indicate policies through conflict resolution will be needed more and more as different cultures in the world come together to form a better development system.

The holistic approach to the measurement of education relies on the building of the communities through which students can grow. The holistic approach to education does not recognize the quantification of results; instead helps to bring socially responsible communities that form the society through the application of holism<sup>101</sup>. In most ways, a holistic approach to education is an investment in peace by the young generation. The development itself reconstruct once a holistic approach is taken for measurement and overall. One of the examples of organizations that adopted a holistic approach to education is the Le Ciel Foundation<sup>102</sup>. One of the many projects of the Le Ciel Foundation is the annual Holistic Vision Symposium that focuses on approaching the 14 SDGs from a holistic approach. The education goal within the Le Ciel Foundation is a multi-dimensional perspective interconnected with other SDGs.

## Conclusion

The findings of my analysis indicate that the WB’ SABER does not fulfill the educational goals and its approach is not based on human-development. SABER stands as a top-down approach that accommodates the designated goals set based on economic standards, although the WB claim to have a mix of the bottom-up and top-down approach. It is true that the WB aims to eliminate poverty of economic means, yet this has changed as the needs of the countries have changed. In the case of Afghanistan, generations seeking literacy carry years of conflict which

<sup>100</sup> Molla, “Educational Aid, Symbolic Power and Policy Reform.”333.

<sup>101</sup> Ljubiša M., Milica Lj, and Nevenka K., “Holistic Approach to Education and Upbringing: Contradictory to the General Assumption of Life.” Holistic approach to education here condemns current education system as more authoritative. Through a more natural and adoptive approach to education development, communities can be built through child development while considering personal interest of students.

<sup>102</sup> Le Ciel Foundation mission is based on three pillars of education, inclusion, and preservation.

needs to be tackled systematically. Base on my analysis of SABER-EMIS project in Afghanistan, contrasting the three approaches to education measurement, I mention my findings as the following:

Education is one of the many ways through which aspects of peacebuilding can be done locally. It has been so long that the international community has required assurance of access to local communities, yet the measurement, implementation, and policies around education are not questioned enough. Conflict resolution, for instance, can be taught and resolved on a community level through primary and higher education that can both equip individuals in developing countries locally and nationally. Today's discussions around subjects and curriculum of the books are also in Afghanistan are in the hands of IOs such as the WB, United Nations for Development Program, and more.

Educational policies and its goals in the education sector are based on systems of SABER and its indicators in the WB that affect the developing countries. The educational purposes based on best practices has been efficient in the developed world due to the quality of life now and previously. With the intention of global development goals in education, actors and stakeholders in education development should take into account the measurement criteria and its effects on the context of the country. This is also a factor reflected in findings around corruption and bureaucracy. Instances such as even the existence of ghost schools should be enough of an alarm for changing to a holistic approach from the beginning.

Contexts such as culture and conflict are not reflected in the roots of the development of education interconnected to other developmental goals, despite there had been a big emphasis by the UNESCO. Threatened cultures and conflicts in a community cause the rise of conflict that later change forms to discrimination and differences sparked by religion, ethnicity in both the education sector and others. The development itself internationally would need to take a turn on its meaning, goals, and measurement through a national approach in coordination with IOs.

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