GLOBAL CONSULTATION SUMMARY NOTE

Between 15 March and 15 May 2016, the Commission invited a diverse range of organizations and individuals to host consultation sessions to gather input into the issues addressed by the Commission. The questions were translated into the six languages - English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian - in order to facilitate global participation. The goal of the consultations was to generate perspectives and sources of evidence from a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to thinking around the report. The response was impressive, with over 130 consultations conducted. Consultation sessions were led by volunteer hosts who recruited fellow community stakeholders to discuss key questions associated with the Commission's research agenda. Each host submitted findings to the Commission, which are synthesized and summarized in this note.

QUICK FACTS

Total number of consultations	138	
Participants from	80+ countries, 6 continents	
Regional breakdown	Africa: 45	Latin America/Caribbean: 11
	Asia: 34	North America: 12
	Australia and Pacific Islands: 2	MENA: 9
	Europe: 19	Virtual: 6
Type of organization (host)	Firms, funds, foundations: 4	NGOs: 55
	Individuals: 7	Research Institutions: 7
	MOEs: 6	UN Agencies: 2
	Networks, CSOs: 39	Universities: 18

Consultation Questions

1. Given that there are clear benefits of education, why do you think people have not acted and invested in education at the level needed?
2. What do you think has been the biggest single obstacle to raising educational quality in developing countries? How can we overcome this obstacle?
3. For those countries which have made the greatest improvements in education in recent years, what do you think have been the critical factors in their success?
4. How do you think education/school will look different in 2030? What implications does this have on the Commission's recommendations?
5. What will be the most important (new) sources of finance for global education over the next decades? How could these sources be harnessed?
6. Is there anything else the Commission should consider? Do you have any questions for the Commission?

1. Why people have not acted and invested in education at the level needed

At the individual level
Lack of demand was most cited **(75 consultations),** for one or more of the following reasons:
- The perceived link between education and future earnings is not strong or thought too slow, especially for the poor. **(42 consultations)**
  o Low quality of education reinforces the perception that education will not lead to better jobs or higher earnings.
- The opportunity cost of education (mainly child labor) is too high.
  o Education not seen as a prerequisite to getting a job **(29 consultations)**. A number of countries noted that low-skilled employment, nepotism, and crime offer financial opportunities that often do not require education.
  o Lack of job opportunities for the educated (**27 consultations**). Perception that too much education leads to demand for better paying jobs that are limited or do not exist in weak economies. This can lead to perpetual un- or under-employment.
- Culturally, education is not always seen as a positive or valuable venture, as there are negative attitudes towards girls' education and/or prevalence of child marriage. In some contexts, the type of education provided is not valued because it lacks relevance to life and community**. (50 consultations)**

> *"To educate is to multiply the economic and social progress of the country" (Peru)*

At the government level:
Lack of political will was most cited **(68 consultations),** for one or more of the following reasons:
- Slow return on investment. **(51 consultations)**
  o Political cycles are too short for the long term investments in education.
  o Lack of incentives for political decision-makers to act on behalf of the poor.
  o No "quick wins" or high enough measurable returns, especially compared to other sectors.
- Competing priorities. Education is not seen as "life-saving" as other sectors. More emphasis placed on combating climate, health, violence, ongoing conflict, etc. **(51 consultations)**
- Lack of resources, budget constraints. **(51 consultations)**
- Corruption, nepotism, and lack of accountability. **(39 consultations)**
- Lack of community or civil society involvement. **(19 consultations)**
- Some perception that the government does not *want* the electorate to be educated/liberated – reasons cited included cheap labor, impetus to maintain status quo, etc. **(12 consultations)**

> *"We have a poverty of leadership at all levels - school, region, central." (Qatar)*

Others barriers mentioned: political instability and conflict, lack of coordination among actors and donor fragmentation, education not a "visible" cause like hunger, donor fatigue, lack of creative funding models, lack of "educated" role models for children, lack of parental involvement and contribution due to perception that education is the government's responsibility.

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2. Biggest obstacles to raising education quality and how to overcome them

- **Teachers** were the most cited **(75 consultations) -** low quality of teachers, inadequate teacher training and/or professional development, low remuneration, low valuation of teaching profession, and inadequate supervision and management.
- **Sustained, long-term, coordinated funding (58 consultations)**. Little recognition of funding for education as a multi-year *investment*.
- **Lack of holistic and contextualized curriculum and learning (49 consultations)**. One or more of the following given as a reason:
    - Emphasis on theoretical rather than practical learning, education not relevant to labor market **(31 consultations)**
    - Lack of inclusive education approaches for girls, disabled, indigenous and other vulnerable groups **(27 consultations)**
    - Lack of mother tongue instruction **(13 consultations)**
- Bad governance, skewed priorities, politicization of education, and corruption. Lack of political vision and poor leadership (some overlap with question one)
- Disconnect between one or more of the following **(32 consultations):**
    - **Elites/policy-makers and poorer communities**. There was a perception that most policy-makers tend to go to elite schools and are out of touch with the public education system.
    - **Donor expectations and realities on the ground**. Need to recognize a "continuum of progress"; contextualize outcome expectations to each context.
    - **Central/national leadership and local leadership**. There is no one-size-fits-all solution - even within a single country. Those closest to the issues should have a stake in addressing them.
- Monitoring and accountability **(25 consultations)**, and demand for better data **(16 consultations)**
- Poverty and other factors like nutrition, hunger, conflict, female genital mutilation, etc. are barriers, along with lack of adequate infrastructure, facilities, materials, etc. Not mentioned as much as other structural problems.

"People are looking for one big, global obstacle to education. We can't put all our money into addressing only one obstacle; we need to recognize ALL the obstacles in order to raise educational quality together." (US)

Consultations stressed the importance of addressing the above barriers *simultaneously* and *contextually,* and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

3. Critical success factors for improvements in education

Governance and Resources

- Strong long-term national strategy and vision that value education. Government appreciates education as a tool for socio-economic transformation, with a firm grasp of social, cultural, economic and political configurations. Proper use of policy-oriented research in informing policies. **(70 consultations)**
    - Need for strong leadership to catalyze and direct these changes **(27 consultations)**
- Efficient and sufficient use of government resources towards education**.** Tackling educational reform as a system issue and not merely single issues. Cross-sectoral approaches. **(55 consultations)**
- Community, family, and youth engagement for greater transparency and participation in budgeting and decision-making. Strong school management committees and PTAs. **(41 consultations)**
- Autonomy and decentralization; empowering schools, increasing transparency, and minimizing corruption and political interference **(17 consultations)**
- Reducing family costs to increase equitability so that parents/guardians are not forced to pick between children – namely, between girls and boys **(16 consultations)**
- Investment in adequate infrastructure, including electricity and internet – a first step **(17 consultations)**

Teaching and Curriculum

- Cultivating deep respect for and investment in teachers and the teaching profession. **(50 consultations)** Example of Finland used several times.
- Emphasis on equity for girls, persons with disability, learners in conflict-affected situations, and learners in rural and/or geographically isolated locations **(30 consultations)**
- Emphasis on holistic learning and "building the pipeline" for the education cycle:
    - Early childhood **(19 consultations)**
    - Transition to higher levels of education and lifelong learning, especially for girls **(13 consultations)**
- Shift from rote learning to more focus on building core competencies and cognitive skills, including:
    - Skills and vocational training tailored to local need **(39 consultations)**
    - Analytical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation, and "life skills" **(27 consultations)**
    - Cultural tolerance, peacebuilding, and mother-tongue skills **(25 consultations)**
- Change in learning approaches to be more learner-centric **(25 consultations)**
- Developing assessment and evaluation strategies that promote commitment and engagement from all stakeholders. This is seen as key to improving school and community accountability. Utilizing the findings from the assessments to develop remedial programs, reform national curriculum and tailor teacher education programs. **(29 consultations)**

> *"The education system should be focused on creating more job creators than job seekers."* (Uganda)

Other success factors mentioned: Ensure education at the point of use is free and accessible for all, encourage early grade literacy, advocate for a diversified set of tailored educational opportunities that meet the varying needs of specific target populations both within and outside the formal system, harness innovation in teaching and technology to better support learners and teachers, offer greater flexibility and choice in learning (mobile books, use of tablets etc.), and general country-wide economic development.

4. How education will look different in 2030

There was a general consensus that enhancing quality, equity, and inclusion will be the primary focus of education initiatives between now and 2030.

Changes in learning and teaching (90 consultations)
- Online and distance learning **(34 consultations)**
- Self-directed and life-long learning **(21 consultations)**
- Personalization, individualization, learner-centered pedagogy **(20 consultations)**
- Curriculum reform and a stronger focus on skills to equip young people for the future:
    - Vocational training and education for employment **(35 consultations)**
    - Competencies-based instruction **(27 consultations)**
    - Non-cognitive and soft-skills, including self-motivation, resilience, collaboration, tolerance, peace-building, creativity, problem-solving **(26 consultations)**
    - Global awareness and citizenship **(18 consultations)**
- Safe schools and better infrastructure **(15 consultations)**
- Learning as 24/7 **(10 consultations)**

> *"We must teach for the future not just for the present" (Sierra Leone)*

Role of technology (70 consultations)
- A fairly consistent view that technology is driving a major shift in learning and the role of the school. This was dominant in L/MICs and among youth responses and less prevalent in African LICs.
- Technology offers an opportunity to reach girls, learners with disabilities, and marginalized groups
- Technology should complement teachers, not replace them
- Technology should help with the training of teachers**.** Teachers should be trained in ICT usage.
- Warning that the use and distribution of ICTs may further the digital divide between poor and wealthy communities, exacerbating inequalities **(26 consultations)**

> *"School will become a great laboratory where students attend to discover the world and to reinvent it" (Chile)*

Role of funding
- Private sector seen by some as playing a positive role in innovating and driving change, with the caveat that it risks exacerbating inequity and/or creating a parallel system if regulation is not strong **(13 consultations)**
- Split sentiments over the privatization of schooling. It was acknowledged that while it may increase access and offer higher quality, it may also lead to increased inequalities if it draws away resources from the public system or increases costs for the poor. **(11 consultations)**

Other: Emphasis on importance of early childhood education, schools becoming 'centers of learning', increased involvement of civil society and parents in decision-making and monitoring.

5. The main and new sources of finance by 2030 and how they can be harnessed

- **Domestic finance (70 consultations)** and **taxes (43 consultations**) were the primary sources named, with calls to both increase budget allocations and make spending more efficient. Promote public, private, and global alignment to obtain the greatest impact. Add mechanisms of accountability and transparency. Reduce military spending and corruption to increase education budget.
    - Suggestions for innovative taxes on things like: luxury goods, five star hotels, first class air travel, tobacco, extractive industries, mineral resources, and financial transactions.
- **Increased role of private sector (82 consultations)** was the second most mentioned, with varying views of the role of the private sector:
    - *As employers:* to invest in skills they value and attract top talent
    - *As partners*: to form partnerships
    - *As innovators*: to take on more risk than government can
    - *As part of the larger ecosystem*: CSR or good will
    - Also mention of appealing to foundations, tech companies, and wealthy individuals to do things like 'Adopt-a-School'
- **Aid (34 consultations)** was less mentioned. Global Partnership for Education is seen as an important resource for several LICs and non-government organizations.
    - Consultation reports also mentioned South-South cooperation, strengthening existing funding mechanisms, and debt-for-education swaps, i.e. debt cancellation for better education outcomes.

Noteworthy suggestions to increase financing:

- Foreign Direct Investment in education as a national security initiative (e.g. investing in education to combat extremism in MENA or migration in Central America)
- Advance loans from employers with a mandated number of years that recipients must serve the employer/sponsor after graduating
- Income generating activities in schools – make use of public school land endowments through agriculture or hospitality
- Hybrid models of schooling: students can earn and learn at the same time. This would require labor and education laws to allow for work-study and uphold student/youth rights and welfare. Curriculum would have to balance theory and application.
- Unemployed graduates should serve their country in the education system (not as just as teachers, but also teaching assistants and mentors) to help build build skills for employment
- Innovation funds to catalyze innovation, scaling up, new financing and venture capital approaches
- Tap into Global Sport, Global Music, Entertainment and Services, IT – all sectors with a youth appeal
- Form a High Level Advocacy Group for Education Financing with a pledging summit in 2017, linking to the GPE replenishment and the Education Cannot Wait fund
- Technology will/should lead to lower costs and cost savings in delivery of quality education
- Work with existing resources to increase spending efficiency and cross-sector collaboration
- Crowdsourcing

6. Other Issues Mentioned

- The importance of education for building peace, tolerance, and resilience.
- The importance of advocacy for inclusive education that not only *integrates* but *fully includes* learners with disabilities. Inclusion is not about simply placing students with disabilities in classrooms; it is about ensuring that the supports that are needed – for schools, teachers, students, parents – are effective and available. The ILO predicts that not investing in the education of persons with disabilities to enable them to enter the job market will result in losses of up to 7% of GDP.
- Further analysis is needed on gender-related issues and actions:
    1. Lack of data on the cost of gender disparities in education, both (1) the cost to individuals, families, the community, businesses and the government, and (2) the cost of interventions and services that aim to address gender disparities.
    2. Further understanding of the gender dimensions of private sector engagement in education.
- The imperative to tackle the risk of rising inequity in education opportunities within countries - and in particular between high income, MICs & LICs. Improvements in LICs will be unable to keep pace with continued rapid change in high income countries and need to also factor in costs of including learners with disabilities, indigenous groups, and other 'vulnerable' groups under the SDG targets.
- Not many consultations were done by the *poorest* people living in the *most remote* areas or marginalized communities (eg. the Rohingya in Burma, other indigenous groups that do not speak one of the six UN languages) and their situation should not be overlooked.

Recommendations for the Commission

- The Commission should advise on how to bolster education systems, finance, and infrastructure to prevent growing inequalities and a deeper digital divide; there is a fear that girls, disabled learners, children affected by conflict, and other underprivileged groups will be left behind.
- The Commission should tailor its recommendations to regional, country and/or context-specific education objectives.
- The Commission's recommendations should look toward a longer time frame rather than just 15 years.
- The Commissioners should make public pledges to show their commitment and build momentum for implementing the report's recommendations when it is launched.
- The Commission should share the report with civil society and set out expected roles and targets that various actors and stakeholders can take to accelerate learning and hold leaders to account.

> *"The education system is a continuous improvement process that requires consistent management" (China)*