

Global workshop

Privatisation and public-private partnerships and the right to education: building critical research skills

Introduction

This workshop is organized by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) in partnership with the Globalization, Education and Social Policy Center (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), and E-NET Philippines, with the support of the Open Society Foundation's Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI). It will take place in Manila, the Philippines, from 1 to 3 August 2013.

Background and rationale

In the last decade, policies that involve some level of education privatisation, including public-private partnerships, vouchers and "low-fee" private schools, have become increasingly prominent in global education debates and policies. The urgent need to achieve the Education For All goals and the MDGs, as well as the effects of the financial crisis worldwide, has made governments and international organisations more willing to introduce different forms of education privatisation, both "exo-privatisation" (explicit privatisation of public education) and "endo-privatization" (promoting competitive or market behavior within public education systems). At the same time, the private sector is increasingly targeting public education systems as profitable markets, seeing business (and profit) opportunities through the sale of textbooks, consultancies, ICT technologies, teacher training, evaluation systems, tests, etc. This new push for private sector engagement in education is arguably shrinking the space for public processes of policy making and debate, sidelining citizens as the key drivers of policy while private corporations and organisations become more dominant.

Many national coalitions within the GCE membership are reporting negative effects of privatisation and Public-Private Partnerships, especially in terms of the impact on equality and the promotion of an education consistent with human rights and the public good. During the last GCE World Assembly in 2011, the GCE membership therefore approved a motion on education financing that opposes such trends. In this context, civil society organizations that defend public education and public policy making must further develop their expertise in critical research and analysis on this topic, so that they are empowered to investigate and analyse privatization policies and their impact, and make visible their findings and position.

In this context, GCE, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, ASPBAE and E-NET Philippines are collaborating to organise a workshop on 'Privatisation, public-private partnerships and the right to education: building critical research skills'. It is hoped that this will be the first in a series of workshops on critical research and the right to education. The workshop aims to build the understanding of civil society advocates within GCE's membership of the multiple forms of and rationales for education privatisation, and to provide them with a foundation in the theoretical, conceptual and methodological tools to analyse the effects of privatization on educational politics, practices and outcomes, including impacts on public education and relationship to the state responsibility to guarantee education for all. Through this, it aims to support advocates' rigorous analysis of the policy process and the effects of privatization in

and of education, and also to reflect on policy alternatives to privatization from a human rights approach.

This workshop is underpinned by an understanding of education as a basic human right. Using the framework of former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katerina Tomasevski, the organizers argue that for education to be a meaningful right it must fulfil the conditions of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Analysis of privatisation and public-private partnerships in education should be rooted in this understanding, giving full weight to the impact on education access, education quality and education equity.

This workshop, bringing together scholars and education advocates and practitioners within the GCE network, will promote evidence-based advocacy and contribute to policy actions and recommendations that are grounded on rigorous research. It will also strengthen GCE's work on this topic, engaging members and promoting a forum for cross continental learning and collaboration among civil society, something GCE is uniquely placed to do.

Objectives

- Foster discussion within the GCE membership of different forms of privatisation, their impact on education politics, practices and outcomes, and the issues they raise, helping to build a common understanding of current trends and actors.
- Further strengthen GCE national coalitions' capacity to analyse currently available research and data on privatisation in education.
- Further strengthen GCE national coalitions' capacity to undertake their own rigorous research relating to privatisation in education, by building skills in framing research and research methodologies.
- NB It should be noted that GCE coalitions vary considerably in their prior experience of and work on this topic.

Methodology

- The workshop will include approximately 50 representatives of GCE members, predominantly national coalitions. Given the location, there will be more participants from Asia Pacific, but all continents will be represented.
- The workshop will combine panel discussions, including expert inputs, case studies and debate, with more practical sessions on research methods. Panel sessions will include critical analysis of existing arguments and data on privatisation.
- Participants will be asked to do some preparation before the workshop, including some reading, and initial thought about a research question/ issue on education privatization relevant to their national context. The practical sessions will contribute to develop the design of participants' research questions and on-the-ground processes.
- The workshop will aim to lead to key recommendations both for individual coalitions and for the ongoing work on privatisation of the coordination organisations and allies such as PERI and Right to Education project.
- The workshop will also seek to identify opportunities for follow-up support to those participating coalitions that will seek to develop their own research projects on the basis of learning during the workshop.

Proposed outline agenda

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<i>AM</i> 9:00-12.30	<p>INTRODUCTION: PRIVATIZATION POLITICS AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION</p> <p>9-10 >> Welcome and workshop presentation (Edicio de la Torre and Camilla Croso)</p> <p>10-11:00>> Keynote 1: “Right to education, social justice and education privatization” (Susan Robertson)</p> <p>11-11:30>> Coffee Break and collage “diferents understandings of private education”</p> <p>11:30-12:30>> Keynote 2: “Globalization and new tendencies in education privatization: emerging polices, actors and discourses” (Antoni Verger)</p>	<p>ISSUE 1: THE LOGICS OF PRIVATISATION IN EDUCATION: SCHOOL CHOICE, COMPETITION, SUBSIDIES AND LOW PRICE FOR PROFIT PRIVATE SCHOOLS</p> <p>9-11>> States and Markets or Markets and States? Probing the Propositions of Privatisation Thematic overview of key issues (Keith M Lewin: 30 min) + 15 mins discussion; Education International (Mireille de Koning: 30 min) / + 15 mins discussion</p> <p>10: 30-11:00>> Coffee Break</p> <p>11:00-12:30>> Case study from the Philippines (Cecilia Soriano: 30 min); Case study Chile (Francis Valverde: 30 min)/ 30 min debate</p>	<p>ISSUE 2: EDUCATION AS A MARKETPLACE: CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM</p> <p>9-11>> Theme overview (Susan L. Roberston: 30 min); Case study Africa (TBC: 30 min)/ 30 min debate</p> <p>10:30-11:00>> Coffee Break</p> <p>11:00-12:30>> Case study Brazil (Pablo Gentili: 30 min); Case study Middle East (TBC: 30 min)/ 30 min debate</p>
<i>PM</i> 2:00-6:30	<p>CRITICAL RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY ON EDUCATION PRIVATIZATION</p> <p>2-3:30>> The role of national and regional education coalitions (Camilla Croso and Maria Khan); initiatives from international organisations: PERI and RTE (Ian Macpherson and Bailey Grey)</p>	<p>RESEARCHING PRIVATIZATION WORKSHOP</p> <p>2-2.45>> Researching privatization: designing and developing a programme of research (Keith M. Lewin and Antoni Verger)</p> <p>2.45-3.45>> Workshop part 1: identifying the propositions of privatization</p>	<p>CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD</p> <p>2-3:30>> Advocacy Round Table Discussion: Keith M Lewin (chair), Camilla Croso, and contributions from the floor</p>

	<p>3:30-4>> Coffee Break</p> <p>4-5:30>> Work in groups: mapping exercise on different forms of privatization (privatization matrix)</p> <p>5:30-6:30>> Feedback from groups and comments by Susan Robertson, and Pablo Gentili</p> <p>7-30 >> DINNER</p>	<p>3.45.4.00>> Coffee</p> <p>4:00-5:45>> Workshop Part 2: developing research questions, and locating and analysing evidence</p> <p>5:45-6:15>> Plenary</p> <p>6.30>> RECEPTION/DRINKS (TBC)</p>	<p>3:30-3:45>> Coffee break</p> <p>3:45-4:30>> Conclusions, recommendations and next steps (Camilla Croso and Antoni Verger)</p> <p>4:30>> Social activity: Visit in Manila (TBC)</p>
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