A proposal for

Education 2030

A “research into action” organization focused on SDG 4
Our mission

We propose a global “research-into-action” organization that can help design and incubate new ideas for change in education and encourage the political and financial processes that are required to move towards implementable solutions.

Our proposal stems from a deep concern that the existing *analytical* architecture is simply not at the scale required and we lack an ongoing, well-organized, two-way conversation between practical work on the ground and analytical work at the national, regional, and global level.

We would focus on how the large-scale transformation can be achieved over the next decade; through a pipeline of new ideas that draws upon the latest *analysis* and design, that combines the best *international experience with local initiative* and that can be implemented through ongoing *engagement* with political, educational, and financial leaders. We would aim to provide this and would welcome all interested to join.
Who we are

The Education Commission is a global initiative encouraging greater progress on Sustainable Development Goal 4 – ensuring inclusive and quality education and promoting lifelong learning for all.

The Commission was set up following the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education for Development to reinvigorate the case for investing in education and to chart a pathway for increased investment to help develop the potential of all of the world’s young people.

The Learning Generation report was recognized by world leaders, its messages disseminated to millions through powerful video messages (in 2016 and 2017), a TED talk, social media, translation of the report in 7 languages and numerous dissemination activities. Several of the Commission’s papers were turned into academic publications and were also used as inputs in the World Bank’s first ever World Development Report on education.

The Commission has been helping to create a pathway for reform and increased investment in education by mobilizing strong evidence and analysis while engaging with world leaders, policymakers, and researchers.
Our Commissioners

The Commission is chaired by the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown and supported by 26 high-level Commissioners. The members of the Commission include current and former heads of state and government, government ministers, five Nobel laureates, and leaders in the fields of education, business, economics, development, health, and security.
WHY NOW?
1. An urgent challenge

We know the scale of the challenge and we know the costs of failing to address it. A quarter of a billion of the world’s children and young people are out of school, and more than 600 million who are in school are not actually learning the basics. The figures will be little changed by 2030 under current trajectories.

We know current systems were designed for the industrial age and urgently need to be reshaped for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and an age that requires flexibility and lifelong learning.

We know changing course will require a major shift rather than incremental improvements and a much deeper understanding of how change can happen and how it can be scaled.

Source: The Education Commission (2016)
2. Key elements for change needed

Experience suggests that translating big ideas from concepts into implementation is much more likely when there is a plan backed up by well-organized inputs to turn “research into action” continuum including:

• **Credible analytical rigor** - bringing the best global and local knowledge, communicated in a compelling decision-relevant manner;

• **On-the-ground engagement in policy and program design** – drawing upon credible analysis, coupled with deep “stick-with-it” engagement with decision-makers at national and global levels;

• **Convening and mobilizing “champions”** – helping to create the political context for reform and drive forward a compelling narrative;

• **Linking with those who make financing decisions and engagement with decision making processes** – reducing barriers and enable smooth translation of ideas into investment.
Education 2030

The international education sector benefits from some of these elements, but not in an integrated manner, nor at any significant scale. Excellent research is undertaken at some universities, but often with limited on-the-ground engagement with policymakers and often too limited in scale. Some think tanks are doing high quality work on international education, but generally at a small scale and lacking the combination of global reach and on-the-ground presence in developing countries.

This stands in marked contrast to other key sectors such as health and environment. In environment for example, several “think and do tanks” have offices in multiple countries, several hundred staff each, individual budgets of tens of millions of dollars per year, and active programs of political and financial engagement facilitated by high-level boards of directors and advisers.

We know that unless we act now, we will, with only 11 years to go to the SDG deadline, not come near to meeting the SDG for education.
3. Education Commission: a platform

Education 2030 would follow on from the work of the Education Commission which identified a need for such an organization and offers a platform to move it forward.

The Commission has created a nimble but strong structure which could serve as a foundation to support the new global education research into action organization. This includes a highly influential set of Commissioners, some of whom would very naturally form the governance board for a new organization, and a secretariat that could provide the design work for a new organization, as well as some of the initial staffing. A track record of achievement has been demonstrated. With the Commission about to sunset, the opportunity to set up such an organization now is dramatically more feasible than it would have been three years ago, or three years from now.

The new organization would provide continuation of the Commission’s work implementing its recommendations in at least 4 areas (see agenda) but also provide a new and enhanced institutional platform to take the ambition of turning research into action to a new level across a number of focus areas.
OUR AGENDA
An initial agenda

The Commission has highlighted the very low level of investment in global public goods – data, knowledge, narrative – in at least 4 areas:

1. **A Learning Revolution**: developing learning approaches for the 21st century linked to advances in both teaching and technology;

2. **A Workforce Revolution**: re-imaging and strengthening the roles of everyone involved in the education system;

3. **A Delivery Revolution**: developing systems and driving change in places where systems are weak or the status quo is impeding reform.

4. **An Investment Revolution**: substantially scaling domestic and international investments and making them more effective;
Many of today’s education systems were shaped 200 years ago by the Industrial Revolution and have remained unchanged. Driven by a desire to reach a growing number of children and to support the development of national systems, the organizational structure of the education sector in most countries has been marked by standardization rather than customization. Education systems have tended to shift decision making to central organs of government which often hinders desired personalization.

Evidence is starting to emerge that new models of education delivery combining new adaptive learning technologies with tailored support and instruction by teachers could have great potential and provide customized learning at scale. Examples of these “high-touch high-tech” approaches are appearing in countries around the world. Initiatives integrating AI in teacher training are also emerging. However, these experiences are still too few and far between.

A concerted effort to critically analyze, refine, adapt, and scale these initiatives is urgently needed. This will need to include attention to design, evaluation of impact, and an effective scaling strategy. The government of Vietnam has already requested to be a pilot country and work is ongoing. Other countries have also expressed interest.
2. A Workforce Revolution

Drawing on concrete examples of successful workforce reform and innovation around the world, the Commission’s Education Workforce Initiative (EWI) is bringing fresh thinking to workforce design to ensure the right teams and roles at all levels are in place for inclusive, quality education. It analyzes how the education workforce could be strengthened to support and work alongside new advances in pedagogy and technology.

Working with three countries (Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Vietnam), the project is piloting alternative models of a more diverse and better trained education workforce. While important for its own sake, the country-level work is also part of a concerted effort to shift mindsets within the sector worldwide. In addition to the EWI’s High-Level Steering Group, commissioners and other high-level champions will also be engaged in a campaign to shift thinking through a variety of fora, including the UN General Assembly, international meetings such as the annual meetings of the MDBs and global education meetings, the G20, and the World Economic Forum meetings.

The goal is to transform the way education planners analyze, identify, and develop learning teams of human resources for education systems so that they can be most effective and efficient.
3. A Delivery Revolution

Value for money varies greatly across education systems. Much depends on how delivery is managed, how accountabilities are allocated and monitored, how delivery systems respond to weaknesses at they emerge: in essence how the education system is governed. Governments around the world are looking towards new approaches to improve outcomes, which has led to a rich array of models. But these approaches have rarely been the subject of serious analysis, especially in developing countries and context where the needs are highest.

**One area for early focus is the role of dedicated delivery structures.** The Education Commission, in partnership with the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford, is building an evidence base on such approaches. Country studies will be taken forward in close collaboration with relevant ministries in countries as part of the program.

**To further enhance uptake of findings, a high-level group of commissioners/board members and other strategic high-level individuals will be engaged to disseminate research findings.** At the technical level, engaging and securing buy-in from development practitioners will require a well-managed community of practice. Membership would include multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, civil society, private sector, and research/policy organizations. This work could also inform the work of the new International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) which will promote results-based approaches to education financing.
Information on education finance has been shockingly weak. The Education Commission, together with its partners, has made some progress to address this. A financial model originally used by UNESCO has been refined, enabling projections of costs and needs at country, regional, and global levels.

Furthering this work could include:

- **First** – at the country level, global and local experts would work with governments and other partners to assess long-term financing opportunities, including domestic, international, public and private financing. Special attention would be given to more equitable and effective finance delivery (using the Commission’s principle of progressive universalism and results-based financing tools).

- **Second** – country level work, coupled with cross-country work, would deliver advances in global knowledge, including refining modeling frameworks; including evidence on best practices and effective interventions in education.

- **Third** – drawing upon insights from country and global research, a dedicated team would work to encourage high quality delivery of the major financiers – the MDBs and IFFEd, GPE, ECW, and other multilateral, bilateral, and foundation funders.
The International Finance Facility for Education will become operational in 2020 as an independent entity.

The Commission is in a unique position to engage with this new platform as well as other international partners such as the GPE and ECW to ensure international investment for education can be effective and at the scale required.

The Education 2030 institute would aim to work with these partners to analyze impact made, share knowledge on programs and help scale initiatives that have been proven to be effective.
OUR APPROACH
Count it, change it, scale it

• **Count It** -- Start with data. Conduct independent research and draw on the latest technology to develop new insights and recommendations. Rigorous analysis unveils opportunities and informs smart strategies.

• **Change It** – Use research and our commissioners to influence government policies, business strategies, and civil society action. Test projects with communities, companies, and government agencies to build a strong evidence base. Work with partners to deliver change on the ground embedding new practices to ensure our outcomes will be enduring.

• **Scale It** -- Don’t think small. Once tested, we work with partners to adopt and expand our efforts regionally and globally. Our Commissioners engage with decision-makers and global processes (e.g. G20) to carry out our ideas and elevate our impact. We measure success through government and business actions that improve outcomes.

**Education Workforce Initiative: an example of how we work**

**Count it** – Bringing together the latest analysis on workforce reform in an accessible Education Workforce Report.

**Change it** – Work with Ghana, Sierra Leone and Vietnam to test possible pathways for reform. Work with local partners from public and private sector to embed new thinking.

**Scale it** – Use global fora and processes (e.g. 2019 UNGA) to share the analysis and reform experience and ensure greater reach. Work with regional partners (e.g. ADB) to scale programs in countries and regions.
Our approach

- Global processes, movements, tipping points
- National-level dialogue
- “On the ground” capacity building

Research, analysis, tools
An adaptive approach to change

The institute will take an **adaptive approach to change**. It recognizes that effective solutions will require engaging with a complex process of transforming education systems and the broader bureaucratic and political context in which they operate.

Our work would **explore new and alternative paths** to enable countries to leapfrog and make faster progress.

The proposed organization would **connect** innovators with wider communities of educators, business leaders, civil society leaders, and policymakers around the world.

It would **support** these actors **co-design** prototypes, demonstration cases, and best practices, and rigorously **evaluate** and take them to **scale**.
A network, not a center

The proposed global organization would be built around **regional hubs rather than one global headquarter**. Ideally, within a few years there would be five hubs – one each in Asia, Africa, USA, Europe, and Latin America. Priorities would of course differ according to location, with those in developing counties focusing much more on practical application, which in turn would contribute to global knowledge creation – a key goal for the entire network.

**It will rely on partnerships to scale.** An important element of the institute’s success will lie in the long-term partnerships and **ecosystem** it is able to develop to harness the best knowledge, mobilize champions, and link with financing processes at global and local levels. It would support a network of institutions around the world, where researchers work in partnership with ministries of education and other stakeholders to use data and research to reach the SDG4 goals. **This enables “on the ground learning” and capacity building.**
Our tone and values

When raising funds, designing programs, and engaging with decision-makers, we would always seek to do this in association with other leading players in the field. We would, for example, expect to have deep relationships with the key multilateral players in education, as well as with the leading academic researchers.

Given the current 2030 deadline and the urgency of acting now, our goals are set in such a way that we are not about enhancing our own brand or budget, but rather about playing a constructive and significant role in bringing evidence-based ideas to the marketplace of policy dialogue, program design, financing, and most importantly the implementation of change.
Building High-Touch, High-Tech Learning:
A research into action program
The Opportunity

Globally, there is high demand from countries to harness new technologies to accelerate better learning at scale and leapfrog other development constraints.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has high potential to provide adaptive learning platforms that can be tailored to individual student learning levels and enhance equity by helping narrow the learning gap.

The Education Commission is partnering with select countries, academic institutions, and tech thought leaders to test the applicability and adaptability of “High-Touch, High-Tech (HTHT)” learning in diverse contexts.
HTHT learning hinges on the radical shift in the role of teachers to offer human touches for students (High-Touch) while using AI to effectively deliver content knowledge for students (High-Tech).

New types of AI adaptive learning technologies can cater to the different abilities and backgrounds of every student. In this way, AI directly addresses the key binding constraint – the mismatch between classroom instruction (delivered in a standard way) and student learning levels.

However, to personalize learning for every student, adaptive (High-Tech) learning should be combined with High-Touch learning because students need human connections and guidance that AI cannot offer.
How would the approach work?

Students can use AI tools to understand and remember content in different subjects at their own pace – the High-Tech element.

Teachers can use AI algorithms to provide different learning paths for each student because AI can analyze the learning progress of each individual student.

This frees up time for teachers to focus on High-Touch learning of students and nurture higher order skills like complex problem-solving, critical thinking and teamwork through projects, discussions and hands-on experiences.
The diagram below, based on Bloom’s Taxonomy, shows how HTHT learning enables students to create and develop skills.

High-Touch Learning
With Teachers

High-Tech Learning
With AI and Mobiles

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Modified from Dale Johnson (2018)
There are already examples of successful integration of a personalized, AI technology-aided instruction across the world.

**ALEKS, ASU:**
- 65,000 students have benefited from ALEKS in 12 basic courses. Introducing ALEKS in a college algebra course resulted in the increase in completion rate by 20.5 percent on average and by 28.5 percent for those with math placement below algebra.

**MindSpark Software, India:**
- Middle school students in India showed significant improvement on test scores after implementation of MindSpark; relative gains for academically weaker students were greater.

**STAT Initiative, United States:**
- AL was adopted as a key element of the Baltimore Students and Teachers Access Tomorrow – or STAT initiative – aimed at ensuring an equitable education to children from diverse backgrounds with a reach of 175 schools and 111,000 students.
Turning big ideas into global action.

The Education Commission’s business model is as follows:

1. first start small and test what works;
2. create national networks to nurture a vibrant HTHT ecosystem and move to national scale-up and integration within the education system;
3. create demonstration models for adaptation regionally or in additional countries and regions;
4. and finally, help establish a global network that invests.
Phase One - Prototyping HTHT learning in select schools in Vietnam

- Phase one of the HTHT learning will start in Vietnam through the Education Commission’s partnership with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and ASU.

- A prototype for a math course and adaptive + active learning platform, using Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS), will be introduced in four urban English language middle schools in Vietnam to test the effectiveness of HTHT learning.

- Implementation, testing and an evaluation to measure impact and options for scalability will start in September 2019. This phase is being funded through the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID).
Four Phases in Global Action: Phase Two

Phase Two - Adapting HTHT learning across Vietnam:

- Phase two will measure the scalability of HTHT learning. The second phase will include adapting and translating the ALEKS adaptive learning platform and content into Vietnamese along with teacher training programs.

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is keen to partner and collaborate on scaling up adaptive learning nationally in partnership with MOET as well as sharing lessons more widely across other Asian countries.

- Phase two will rely on a diverse set of actors to scale in Vietnam, as private companies can provide technology while public sector enables implementation.
Phase Three - Adapting HTHT learning across regions:

- Phase three will expand the HTHT learning model outside of Vietnam.

- The Education Commission is exploring opportunities to expand the HTHT approach in Asia (potentially Cambodia), in Africa (potentially Ghana), and in Latin America (potentially Uruguay and Brazil) as well as to collaborate with a wider range of partners, foundations, and tech companies.

- The learning model, learning platform, and aligned professional learning systems that have been piloted and evaluated in phase one and two for the Vietnam prototype will be openly shared with other countries while different country context should be extensively considered.
Four Phases in Global Action: Phase Four

Phase Four – Establishing a global network for HTHT learning:

- Phase four will scale the HTHT learning model globally using a global network, aiming first at establishing national and regional networks to nurture a vibrant HTHT ecosystem.

- These will then feed into the establishment of a global network in which teachers, schools, national governments, international organizations, philanthropic foundations, innovators in EdTech can work together.

- The Education Commission is exploring an Open Source Learning Platform as an ultimate solution to take the HTHT Learning approach to scale in an affordable way.

- A High-Level Steering Group will be set up to attract global political interest and cutting-edge thinking and practice, comprised of Education Commissioners and tech leaders.
## Proposed Timeline: 2019-2023

### Phases

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1. Invitation to join

While existing and currently active Education Commissioners will be invited to form the executive board and/or global leadership council of the new organization, additional members could also added. We expect at least 12 existing commissioners to volunteer. Indeed, several commissioners have already indicated their enthusiasm for staying engaged beyond the life of the Commission.

Requirements for board membership would include the willingness to make a serious commitment of time and/or influence to advance the goals of the organization. The board should be balanced in terms of geography, gender, and expertise. All would serve as unpaid volunteers.
2. Invitation to support the work

- **Support for the individual workstreams.** Different donors will have different interests, and thus it will be more effective to raise money for the workstreams separately. *Existing workstreams are supported by the Atlassian Foundation, Echidna Giving, Mastercard Foundation, the Government of the Netherlands, Rockefeller Foundation, the UK (DFID), Reed Smith and Goldman Sachs.*

- **Support for individual hubs in developing countries.** An Africa hub would, we believe, be attractive to donors as well as potentially foundations, given ODA funding available at the country level. Asian and Latin American hubs may be more difficult, but depending on their location, feasible with funding more likely from the private sector or foundations rather than ODA.

- **Core funding.** It would be important to find donors willing to provide core funding, ideally (though not necessarily) in the form of an endowment. A bilateral donor or a foundation would be possibilities here. Conversations with potential interested founding funders are ongoing.
3. Invitation to engage in the design

To maintain momentum and ensure minimal disruption to the ongoing workstreams currently supported by the Commission, it would be helpful to establish the institute once the Commission completes its term in mid to late 2019. The design and establishment is being organized in three stages:

• **Stage 1** - Consultations around the idea and concept with selected individuals working with interested Commissioners. We have already had preliminary discussions with several key commissioners.

• **Stage 2** - Design of the institute. Ongoing.

• **Stage 3** - Establishment and fund raising. In an interim phase, the institute could be established as a sponsored project of the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors which are the current sponsors of the Education Commission project.