

# Education systems transformation symposium: Collaborative work, local contexts, and false dichotomies

Friday, February 17, 2023 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

The Brookings Institution, Falk Auditorium, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W, Washington, D.C. 20036

## Speakers



**Brahima Coulibaly**, Vice President and Director of Global Economy and Development Program, Brookings Institution

Brahima Sangafowa Coulibaly is vice president and director of the Global Economy and Development program at Brookings and the Edward M. Bernstein Scholar, after previously serving as director of the program's Africa Growth Initiative. He joined Brookings in April 2017 after nearly a decade and half at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System where he was most recently chief economist and head of the emerging market and developing economies group. Coulibaly has also taught economics and international finance at Georgetown University, the Darden Graduate School of Business at the University of Virginia, and the University of Michigan. He has published widely in top-tier academic journals on various topics in international finance, macroeconomics, economic development, monetary economics, and trade.



**Rebecca Winthrop**, Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Rebecca Winthrop works to promote quality and relevant education, including by exploring how education innovations and family and community engagement can be harnessed to leapfrog progress, particularly for the most marginalized children and youth. Her research focuses on education globally, with special attention to the skills young people need to thrive in work, life, and as constructive citizens. She advises governments, international institutions, foundations, civil society organizations, and corporations on education issues. She currently serves as a board member and adviser for a number of global education organizations and lectures at Georgetown University.



**Amanda Datnow**, Professor and Chancellor's Associates Endowed Chair in Department of Education Studies, University of California, San Diego

Amanda Datnow is Professor and Chancellor's Associates Endowed Chair in the Department of Education Studies and Associate Dean of the School of Social Sciences at the University of California, San Diego. Her research focuses on educational reform and policy, with a particular interest in issues of equity and the professional lives of educators. Her recent work includes studies of school and system transformation, data use in education, and teacher collaboration. Her current projects involve interdisciplinary teams engaged in research-practice partnerships. She is deeply committed to impacting policy and practice and works with a variety of local, national, and international organizations to realize this goal. Datnow's work has been published in leading journals, and she is the author of eight books, including *Professional Collaboration with Purpose: Teaching Learning Towards Equitable and Excellent Schools* (with V. Park).



**Folasade Adefisayo**, Commissioner for Education, Lagos State of Nigeria

Folasade Adefisayo is the Commissioner for Education of Lagos State of Nigeria. Her main focus in the role is to provide equitable education for all children in the State irrespective of socio-economic status, gender or ability. Before she was appointed a Commissioner under the Governor Babajide Olusola Sanwoolu government in August 2019, she was the Principal Consultant/CEO of Leading Learning Limited, an educational consultancy firm that she set up. Folasade has over 40 years of working experience spanning banking operations, organizational restructuring, human resource management, international trade and education. She retired from Corona Schools' Trust Council in 2014 after twelve years of service firstly, as Executive Director and CEO for 8 years and subsequently as Director of Corona Secondary School, Agbara. After she started her own consulting practice, Folasade consulted for public and private schools, state governments, NGO's and development partners. Her areas of passion and professional focus include student learning, teacher training, leadership training, school set-up and school transformation.



**Donald J. Peurach**, Professor of Educational Policy, Leadership, and Innovation, University of Michigan

Donald J. Peurach is a Professor of Educational Policy, Leadership, and Innovation in the University of Michigan School of Education and a Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. His research focuses on the organization, management, and improvement of instruction in education systems, with a particular focus on network-based continuous improvement. Dr. Peurach is co-editor of *The Foundational Handbook on Improvement Research in Education* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2022); author of *Seeing Complexity in Public Education: Problems, Possibilities, and Success for All* (2011, Oxford University Press); and co-author of *Improvement by Design: The Promise of Better Schools* (2014, University of Chicago Press). He earned his BA and teaching certificate from Wayne State University and his MPP and PhD from the University of Michigan.



**Emily Gustafsson-Wright**, Senior Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Dr. Gustafsson-Wright is a Senior Fellow in the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution. Her current focus on effective delivery of social services including early childhood, education and health interventions in low- and middle-income countries has consolidated her role as a global expert on innovative financing mechanisms including payment by results, public-private partnerships and impact investing. She is the premier thought-leader in the field of social and development impact bonds and has written over a dozen publications on this cutting-edge topic including a recent series of policy briefs, which examine the success of impact bonds over the past ten years. She also guest lectures on these topics at, among others, Columbia, Duke, George Washington and Johns Hopkins Universities. In addition, she leads the Childhood Costing initiative at the Center for Universal Education at Brookings, aimed to establish quality data on the costs of education and early childhood interventions, including the development of a calculator for collecting and analyzing cost data.



**Rosa Maria Moncada**, KIX Honduras Project Coordinator, SUMMA

With over 20 years of experience in the education sector, Rosa Maria has contributed to various entities such as government, international cooperation, civil society, and nonprofit organizations. Currently, she is serving as the coordinator for the "Adapting and Scaling Teacher Professional Development Approaches" project in Honduras, implemented by SUMMA. Previously, she held the position of Technical Coordinator for the National Council of Education in Honduras, where she was directly involved in public policy development. She also oversaw the Teacher Professional Development component of the Honduras Education Standards and Students Assessment, the MIDEH project funded by USAID in Honduras. Rosa Maria has been actively involved with Foro Dakar Honduras, a civil society organization focused on advancement in the Right to Education and Sustainable Development Goals. She has dedicated over 30 years to volunteering, including serving as the President of AFS Honduras, an intercultural exchange school program aimed at promoting tolerance and understanding.



**Carmen Strigel**, Senior Director, ICT for Education and Training, RTI International

Dr. Carmen Strigel is the Sr. Director for Education Technology at RTI International. Her work at RTI focuses on the intersection of neuroscience, technology, and learning. She designs, implements, and researches technology that enhances learning, builds capacity, and facilitates decision-making. Carmen is passionate about using technology for teacher growth and pedagogy with a focus on supporting diverse learners. She designed Tangerine®, open-source data collection software that facilitates student assessment, teacher coaching, and program monitoring. Carmen also contributes to RTI's work in game-based assessment, wearable sensors, and machine learning. Carmen holds a doctoral degree in educational neuroscience from Johns Hopkins University, where she also serves as adjunct faculty, and originally trained as a teacher in her native country of Germany.



**Wendy Smith**, Director of Education Programs, Worldreader

Wendy Smith is the Director of Education Programs for Worldreader. She has over 15 years of experience working on education and child protection programs in development and conflict and affected countries. Wendy has worked for many international organizations (CARE, SCF, NRC, IRC, World Vision) strengthening early childhood and basic education programming. Wendy currently sits on the INEE Steering Committee and attended Colombia University Teachers' College for her graduate studies.



**Emily Markovich Morris**, Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Emily Markovich Morris leads the family engagement in education research at Brookings and coordinates efforts to leverage family, school, community partnerships to transform educational systems. She also serves as a senior leader and international advisor on gender and inclusion, distance learning, teacher training, and youth development. Her current scholar research in Zanzibar, Tanzania tracks marginalized youth from preschool through post-secondary to understand how and why students are pushed out of school, and how family, school, and community collaboration is critical to their success and wellbeing. Morris is a lecturer at American University and serves on several global research advisory groups focused on equity and inclusion. She is also a proud leader in a parent teacher organization in her community.



**Akilah Allen**, Senior Project Manager, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Akilah Allen is a Senior Project Manager for the Family, School, and Community Engagement team in the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, where she helps deepen relationships with key global partners in education. She leads efforts to increase the impact of Brookings research to support families, teachers, and students. Akilah's experience includes global philanthropic strategy, international development in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, and state and district school system improvement in Washington, DC. Akilah began her education career as a kindergarten teacher in New York City Public Schools.



**Laura Nora**, Senior Research Analyst, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Laura Nora holds a Master of Public Policy with a concentration on Program Design & Evaluation. Laura previously worked as a Research Assistant at the University of California and the UN Sustainable Solutions Network. Laura completed her BA in International Affairs at the Universidade Federal Fluminense in Brazil. As a Senior Research Analyst at the Center for Universal Education, she works to leverage global data on family-school-community engagement to transform educational systems.



**Madhukar Banuri**, Director & CEO, Leadership for Equity (LFE)

Madhukar Banuri is Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer for Leadership for Equity (LFE), a systems change and research organisation that helps strengthen the effectiveness of public school systems to deliver quality education at scale in India. He was previously an Ashoka Fellow and Advisory Board Member to Teach for India.



**Carolina Piñeros**, Executive Director, Red PaPaz

Carolina Piñeros has been the Executive Director of Red PaPaz since 2004. Piños has a degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Los Andes (1988) with a Specialization in Personal and Family Development from the Family Institute of the University of La Sabana (2004). She is one of the founders of Red PaPaz, from the La Montaña Gymnasium Parents Association in February 2003.



**Khadija Shariff**, Head of Programs, Milele Zanzibar

Khadija Shariff leads the Milele Foundation's project portfolios in the health, education and livelihood sectors, from the inception and design to the evaluation phases. Along with providing project management and oversight, Khadija leads the strategic development and implementation, fundraising, partnership building and stakeholder engagement as well as capacity building and learning for staff and the organization as a whole.





**Ellen Chigwanda**, Country Office Gender Focal Point - CARE  
International 2016 Echidna Global Scholar - The Brookings Institution

Ellen Chigwanda is an education practitioner with over a decade of experience. Currently a member of the Learning and Action Alliance for Girls Agency (LAAGA), her work explores the intersections of the climate crisis, gender, and education. She has worked as an independent gender and social development advisor/consultant for organizations such as the SADC Parliamentary Forum and UN Women, and has worked in various capacities on girls' and young women's empowerment with local NGOs.



**Edem Dorothy Ossai**, 2021 Echidna Global Scholar - Brookings  
Institution Founder and Executive Director – MAYEIN

Edem Dorothy Ossai is a development practitioner who works on implementation issues at the intersections of education, youth, and gender policies. Following several years in legal practice, she established MAYEIN, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting inclusive education, youth development, and gender equity. MAYEIN has since touched the lives of thousands of disadvantaged young people in Nigeria. As a result of her efforts, in 2016 Edem was selected for the Mandela Washington Fellowship, a renowned global leadership program for young African leaders. In 2018, she was chosen by the Obama Foundation as an inaugural Obama Scholar. Edem is currently a member of the Learning and Action Alliance for Girls Agency (LAAGA).



**Amna Qayyum**, Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings  
Institution

Amna Qayyum is a historian of global development, decolonization, and U.S. foreign relations, with a regional specialization in South Asia. As a fellow at the Brookings Institution, Qayyum leads the Echidna Global Scholars Fellowship and contributes to the Center for Universal Education's research portfolio on gender equality in and through education. Qayyum's current research foregrounds gender in the study of political economy and global governance. Her book manuscript, "Authoritarian Body Politics in Muslim South Asia," demonstrates how reproductive health and education programs have crucially shaped gender norms, development politics, and U.S. foreign relations in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Focusing both on policymaking and praxis, it links a diverse set of stakeholders from across the Global South and North and reveals the multi-scalar centrality of reproductive politics to everyday life, governance, and global geopolitics.



**Jennifer L. O'Donoghue**, Deputy Director and Senior Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Jennifer O'Donoghue has dedicated the past 28 years to understanding and promoting inclusive education as a basis for democracy and social justice. Her current research focuses on the development of holistic policies to build agency and improve educational, social, and economic opportunities and outcomes for marginalized girls and young women in low- and middle-income countries. Prior to joining Brookings, O'Donoghue served as research director and general director of Mexicanos Primero, a leading education policy research and advocacy organization in Mexico, where she coordinated studies on inclusive education, teacher professional learning, English language learning, and educational spending, as well as two comparative indexes to evaluate the efforts of the Mexican states to promote inclusive education. She worked closely with teachers, civil society organizations, and legislators to develop policy proposals during the Mexican constitutional education reform process and collaborated in the construction of the Latin American Learning Community for School Leadership (CALLER), part of the Latin American Education Network (REDUCA).



**Atenea Rosado-Viurques**, Senior Research Analyst, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Atenea Rosado-Viurques is an educator with 10 years of experience in research, policy making, curriculum planning, and program implementation with a focus on education in emergencies, inclusion, and peace and human rights education. Her current research at CUE primarily focuses on collaborative research on girls' agency with the Learning and Action Alliance for Girls Agency. During her career, Atenea has contributed to building networks with different education partners at the local and international level. She has worked to radically collaborate with and learn from students and educators and to incorporate evidence and learning into program design and implementation. Prior to joining CUE, she worked at the Collective for Education, Decoloniality, and Emergencies (CEDE!), the Ministry of Public Education of Mexico, the American Friends Service Committee, and as a high school language teacher and mentor.





**Ghulam Omar Qargha**, Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Ghulam Omar Qargha is a fellow in the Center for Universal Education at Brookings and an education, research, and program evaluation expert with 20 years of overseas experience designing, managing, implementing, and evaluating international education programs. Qargha's expertise is in policy analysis, program design, education transfer, and research on teacher education, curriculum development, educational delivery, and monitoring and evaluation in the Global South, with a particular focus on fragile, conflict-affected, and emergency contexts. Qargha brings this expertise to enrich and continue Brookings work on scaling educational innovations for systemic improvement in low- and middle-income countries around the world. Qargha's work experience includes developing national standards for teacher education programs; developing science- and math-training programs; developing national teacher competency and credentialing systems; working with grassroots organizations to manage school construction; developing teacher training, peace, and environmental training curricula; and conducting research, monitoring, and evaluation of education and development efforts.



**Jenny Perlman Robinson**, Nonresident Senior Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Jenny Perlman Robinson is a nonresident senior fellow with the Brookings Institution, Center for Universal Education, where her work focuses on improving quality education and learning for children and youth in the Global South at large scale. Previously, Jenny led the Women's Refugee Commission's work on education and youth. Prior to joining the Women's Refugee Commission in 2003, Jenny worked on issues of women's empowerment, human rights, and development with other nongovernmental organizations, the United Nations, and the World Bank. Her fieldwork has included research and assessments in Thailand, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jordan, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Bolivia, and Cuba. Jenny earned her Master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University and her Bachelor's degree in Latin American Studies and Peace Studies from Colgate University.



**Kathy Hirsh-Pasek**, Senior Fellow, Center for Universal Education, Brookings Institution

Kathy is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a Professor of Psychology at Temple University. Writing 14 books and 250+ publications, her *Einstein Never Used Flashcards* won the Book for a Better Life Award in 2003 with her *Becoming Brilliant* (2016) reaching the NYTimes Best Sellers List in education. Co-founder of the global Learning Science Exchange Fellowship, she brings together scientists, journalists, policy makers and entertainers, to put learning science in the hands of educators. Her work on Playful Learning Landscapes reimagines cities and public spaces with science infused designs that enhance academic and social opportunities. Her most recent book, *Making Schools Work: Bringing the Science of Learning to Joyful Classroom Practice*, was released in October 2022.



**Simran Mulchandani**, Founder of Rangeet Pte. Ltd.

Simran Mulchandani is co-founder of Rangeet, a mobile platform for facilitators featuring a play-based, measurable Social Emotional and Ecological Knowledge (SEEK) curriculum and teaching resources designed around the UN SDGs. SEEK supports existing curricula to promote the overall well-being and development of children in any environment. Simran is a Director of GenBlue, a company whose mission is to catalyze a regenerative economy. He served on the board of Singaporean NGO, Global Mangrove Trust, that built a peer-to-peer platform for Mangrove Restoration. Through Rangeet, Simran hopes to establish a framework in which nature and society are at peace.



**David Jarboe**, Director of Instructional Technology & STEAM, D2 Harrison Schools-Colorado Springs, CO

Dave currently serves as the Director of Instructional Technology and STEAM for the Harrison School District 2 in Colorado Springs. He holds his Certified Education Technology Leader (CETL) certificate from the nationally accredited Consortium for School Networking (CoSN). He also serves the broader educational community by serving on the board of directors for the Colorado Association of Leaders in Educational Technology and co-chairs CoSN's national committee on Emerging Technologies. He believes STEAM is a gateway for many students to lifelong learning and multiple exciting career pathways and is passionate about making access and opportunities available for all students.



**Sarah Beardmore**, Strategic Partnerships and Capabilities Team Lead, Global Partnership for Education

Sarah Beardmore heads the Global Partnership for Education's Strategic Partnerships and Capabilities team where she develops and leads multi-stakeholder initiatives to support education in the global south. Sarah designed and now oversees the \$72 million Education Out Loud program for civil society advocacy and social accountability, leads GPE's strategic capabilities initiatives, and supports GPE's engagement in global policy dialogue on issues such as climate change, gender equality, financing, equity and inclusion. Sarah has over 20 years of international experience in human rights advocacy, resource mobilization, policy research, program design, strategic communications, grant-making and partnership management. Sarah has worked for non-profit organizations including Results Educational Fund, Global Action for Children, Rights & Democracy, Women Thrive Worldwide and People & Planet. She also volunteers on the Governing Circle of 7th Generation Labs and is a trained herbal medicine practitioner.



**Anna Maria Tammi**, Education Specialist and Thematic Lead for Education in Crisis and Conflict, Global Partnership for Education

Anna-Maria is an Education Specialist and Thematic Lead for Education in Crisis and Conflict contexts, leading evidence work and supporting evidence uptake across the partnership to promote what works. She also supports policy dialogue in partner countries affected by fragility and conflict in areas of resilience, humanitarian-development coherence, and inclusion of displaced populations in national systems. Anna-Maria previously worked for the European Commission, World Bank, and Doctors Without Borders. She holds a Master of Science in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies from the London School of Economics.



**Juan Alfonso Mejía López**, Facultad de Estudios Internacionales y Políticas Públicas, Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa

Juan Alfonso Mejía López is a full-time activist focused on the defense and promotion of the right to learn for children and young people in Mexico. For the last 15 years, he sought to influence educational system's transformation from the social, governmental, and academic spheres. He founded the organization Mexicanos Primero Sinaloa and, later, was appointed director general of the organization at the national level. Congruent with his cause and passion for education, Juan Alfonso is also a university professor of public policy, international studies, and political science at the Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa. In 2018, he was appointed as Minister of Education in Sinaloa, Secretaría de Educación Pública y Cultura. From there, he built an agenda in favor of opportunities and a single objective: to put kids and adolescents at the highest level of priorities.



**Aleesha Taylor**, Principal, Herald Advisors

Dr. Aleesha Taylor is the Principal of Herald Advisors, a consulting firm she founded in 2016 to enable leaders and organizations to thrive in the intersections of philanthropy, education, and international development. Aleesha brings a wealth of experience as a technical leader and strategist. From July 2020 to April 2021, she was Education.org's Interim Chief Technical Officer, playing a key role in building their new and growing program portfolio, overseeing the development of country-level teams and activities, establishing strategic partnerships, and guiding the adaptation of data categorization frameworks and analysis for the education sector. A native of the Bronx, NY, Aleesha is passionate about advancing equity and justice through the education sector. She is a specialist in systems building, particularly in conflict-affected states. She has worked closely with the governments of Liberia and Myanmar to advise and shape the development of their education systems following their respective democratic transitions.



**Rakesh Rajani**, Vice President of Programs, Co-Impact

Rakesh Rajani brings three decades of experience in human rights, education, governance, and philanthropy in his role as Vice President, Programs at Co-Impact. Until 2018, he served as the Director of Civic Engagement and Government at the Ford Foundation, responsible for US and global programs on democratic participation, taxes and budgets, and protecting civic space. Previously he founded and served as the Head of Twaweza, an East African organization that promotes citizen agency and open government, and led the establishment of Uwezo, Africa's largest program to assess basic literacy and numeracy. Rakesh is also a founding member and past co-chair of the Open Government Partnership, which seeks to restore the social compact between people and governments in over 75 countries covering more than two billion people. He has played key roles in establishing several civil society and media platforms in Tanzania and consulted on global development and civic movements.