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Brahima Coulibaly: Yeah. Good morning. Good morning, everyone. Can I have everyone's attention? All right. Good morning, good morning. All right. I was beginning to think we don't have strong enough coffee, but we're so glad that you can all make it and join us here on this, on this rainy day. My name is Brahima Coulibaly, I'm the vice president of the Global Economy and Development program. It gives me a really great pleasure to welcome you to Brookings for the Education Systems Transformation Symposium. As the Center for Universal Education, or CUE, under the leadership of Rebecca Winthrop and Jennifer O'Donoghue celebrates the 20th anniversary and launches its new ten-year strategy focusing on systems transformation, we are thrilled that you, our invaluable partners, could join us today.

We know that young people face complex challenges that require an evolving set of competencies from literacy to numeracy to critical thinking, creative and collaborative problem solving. Across the globe, the climate crisis, increasing levels of conflict and displacement, the diverse social and economic effects of the global pandemic intersects with historical injustices such as gender-based violence and discrimination and economic inequality, making it critical that all children and youth have access to inclusive, holistic learning that prepares them not only to navigate these challenges, but to be agents of positive change in their own lives, in their communities, and on the global stage. Yet the great majority of education systems around the world do little to support this type of learning, especially for children and youth living in the most marginalized contexts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought critical attention to education, putting the dramatic inequities in learning that have only grown in the past three years on the global public agenda to an extent rarely seen before, as evidenced by the U.N. secretary general's call for a transforming education summit last September. So more than ever, young people today need education system that support their engagement with each other, their social, emotional wellbeing and the inclusive and equitable development of the breadth of skills. For the past 20, for the past 20 years, CUE dedicated to building a significant body of evidence and vast reservoir of tools, and a rich network of global partners has cohered around its central theme: educational leaders must work collaboratively with actors across education systems at the local, regional and global levels to transform educational systems.

So today is an exciting day as it marks the official launch of the new strategy for CUE, one in which they will do just that. Seeking to build an innovative, collaborative research to practice network

of actors across education ecosystems and across the globe around a shared goal of transforming education systems. We welcome all of you to this day of connection, of shared learning about education system transformation, what it could be, where it's happening, where it's not, and most importantly, how can we get there together. So it's now my great pleasure to welcome Rebecca Winthrop, senior fellow and director of CUE, whose extraordinary leadership has brought the center to this important milestone. So, Rebecca, the podium is yours.

Rebecca Winthrop: Good morning, everybody. Thank you so much for being here, our in-house audience, and welcome to our online audience. Thank you for joining us so much. We have a great, I'm going to tell you a little bit what our plan of action is today. And I think we, yeah, we got the slides. Our plan of action for today, this morning, we, I'm going to kick off, I'm going to tell you, as Coul said, a little bit about our new direction as we're celebrating our 20th anniversary, where we're heading in the next ten years.

I'm going to tell you a little bit about how we're thinking about system transformation, system transformation, system transformation. Everyone's talking about it. What does it actually mean? And then I'm going to hand over to wonderful colleagues and you have their full bios in the, in the program that you received, so I'm not going to take the time to walk through them. And please do peruse. I'm going to hand over to my colleagues Amanda Datnow, who's a professor at UC San Diego, and Don Peurach was a professor at University of Michigan. Together, they, we have done a study with many other coauthors around the globe looking at the reform journeys of jurisdictions that have gone on a transformation exploration and the lessons learned from that.

And then we will hand over to Commissioner Adefisayo, who is the education commissioner of Lagos State in Nigeria, to bring her perspective as she's trying to do transformation in, in her jurisdiction and what it means. And then we will take a break and our online audience will leave and we'll have discussion around the tables. And because we don't have a formal Q&A session for all of you, please join in the discussion online, especially our online audience at hashtag transform edu. And of course, those of you here, please, please join in too. I have just posted right prior to this on LinkedIn and Twitter— if anyone still uses Twitter— links of all the various reports that we'll be talking about this morning. And then it will be followed by parallel sessions, various coffee breaks, parallel sessions in the morning, lunch, parallel sessions, and then come back together at the end of the day at 4:00 for a plenary. So that is our master plan.

And before I jump in, I really do want to give a very heartfelt thank you. I see many, many old friends in the audience. I see many new friends. I just want to give a heartfelt thank you to all of you, to all of our partners around the world. We work with all of you very closely. We learn from you. We have learned from you a huge amount over the last more than a decade that I've been here at the center. We're incredibly grateful. I also want to give a big shout out to our funding partners whose very generous support means we can actually do this work. And I want to give a particular shout out to the cross-center supporters, Echidna Giving, BHP Foundation and the Lago Foundation, who just recently gave a very historic grant we're incredibly excited about to fund key parts of our new strategy. So thank you very much to all of you.

And then, of course, last but not least, I want to thank our team, from myself and from Jennifer O'Donoghue, my right hand in running the center, who's the deputy director. Huge thanks to CUE, if, can anybody who's wearing a little blue lapel, and some of you may be surprised to hear this and you have a blue lapel, but people will ask you questions. So please, if you have questions, where to go, what to do, how to access the Wi-Fi, where are the bathrooms? We are here to serve. So if CUE members, I don't think anyone's sitting, we do have an oversubscribed house, they're at the back. CUE members, please do stand up in your various rooms, I do believe we have a couple of overflow rooms because we're oversubscribed. So CUE members, please do stand up and wave. Thank you to the team for getting this whole thing together.

And before I dive in, I wanted to give one big, huge shout out, one person above, over and above everybody. Sarah Osborne, our center manager, has really made this event happen. She's probably running around printing things as we speak. All right, so let's dive in. What is our new focus moving forward? So before I talk through what that is, I just wanted to share with you what we did to get there. We looked at our strengths. What have we done well, we looked at our weaknesses, what we'll do better. We had the great benefit of being supported to do an external evaluation, which is rare in think tank world, and that was incredibly formative for us. We looked at the landscape, who are our peers, and we looked at the needs, the needs of the field, and we basically decided that some things we'll stick with and some things we will pivot and evolve.

And our three sort of major focus areas that underlie the strategy, one is we're going to double down. We're not going to change our focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For those of you who don't know what the SDGs are— some American folks may, who work in domestic

ed may not— they're an incredibly important North star for the Globe, and SDG 4 in education is ambitious, it is lofty, and there is a big debate at the moment post-COVID to say, should we abandon the Sustainable Development Goals, because let's just admit they're too lofty, it's going to be too hard to reach. We should just double down on recovery, there's a big debate around let's double down on foundational literacy and numeracy, which is a huge issue and makes total sense.

But we have decided that is not the right way to go and not because we don't think it's absolutely essential that young people recover their lost learning time and learn how to read and write. It absolutely is. But because we've learned from so many past experiences that if you try to bring a goal down to less than what you actually want to achieve, even if you're saying this is the base, this is the starting point, the whole system orients around just achieving that. And rather than being a floor upon which you build, it becomes a ceiling upon which you don't go any higher.

And so for us, we are really committed to this idea of keeping a North Star, making sure systems have in their mind this vision of opportunities and competencies and skills that young people can become, to allow young people to become lifelong learners. So that is really important to us. For those who are interested in this work of the SDGs, the Secretary-General has talked about the importance of rescuing the SDGs, the UN Secretary General. And in September, there's a special summit on the SDGs in New York during the UN General Assembly week, because it is the midpoint of the SDGs and the entire conversation will be around, let's keep our aspirations high and instead figure out what we really need to do differently to try to meet them.

Which gets me to our second focus for our strategy, which is on system transformation. And we have a couple of reasons for focusing on this. Basically, the reason I just said, that we actually do need to do deep transformation if we're going to meet these goals by any measure of what would be a moral time horizon. It's not moral, in my opinion, to say kids can have a high-quality education in 50 years in communities that don't have it. And we also have realized we've been doing lots of work on systems transformation, but not calling it that for many years on different dimensions. I'll give a shout out to my colleagues who run our scaling work, who have for years been looking at how do you scale and sustain impact over time and not necessarily scale an organization from small to big, because scaling impact over time requires systemic shifts.

We, also another reason focusing on systems transformation as we know that if we want to have any change at scale, you need to work with systems. But for us, what we're doing internally is

bringing all of our different portfolios under this umbrella of systems transformation. And really the, the reason we're doing that is because we got feedback from all of our partners. We work with about 100 partners across 40 different countries, governments, civil society organizations, parent networks, teacher organizations, business, global institutions. And in our external evaluation, we got great marks saying, you are, we, you know, CUE is a trusted collaborative partner, we really value working with you. But you CUE do not invite us into your whole center's work; you keep us pigeonholed with the project we work in, the, the people working on gender transformative systems only work with gender transformative systems and don't get connected with the people working on scaling or climate resilience or assessment or teaching and learning or innovative pedagogy, etc.

And so for us, that was a real message. We hadn't quite realized it and we are going to do better. That's one of the things we endeavor to do, to really make sure that we partner better and more holistically. The third thing in vein with that, which is a big focus for our new work over the next decade, is to do more co-creation with colleagues on the ground, particularly civil society organizations. We are doing quite a bit of this already, but we want to evolve it and really co-create not just on our specific project areas but co-create our agendas.

And we're going to tell you more about that. And part of where this came from was not only our feedback, as I just explained from our partners, but also the realization that, you know, as a global institution that has a platform, we do have a, we, we have to think about power dynamics. And I'll point you to a, to a piece called Shared Priorities to Transform Education Systems: Mapping Recovery and Transformation Agendas, where we looked at sort of the debates around the Transforming Ed Summit, and one of the things that came out was that people inside the systems, students, teachers, school leaders, even governments in many countries felt that they were not equally at the and civil society organizations who work with them, local civil society organizations felt they weren't equally at the table on the transformation discussion.

So we're trying to do our part in trying to adopt that, address that. What would that look like in practice? We are going to launch and you're going to hear more about it, and Coul mentioned it, a Knowing-Doing network for education systems transformation. For those of you who know your network theory, this is a movement network, so it's a network of networks. So bringing together the range of different networks who are working on different pieces of the system transformation agenda under one umbrella to do collective knowledge-building and ecosystem strengthening to advance

systems transformation. And we will be looking for and at 4:00, this is my, you know, come back, don't just stay in the coffee, coffee hall at four. Once you've all met your incredible colleagues and you just want to talk to each other, come back at four for the closing plenary, you're going to hear more because we are looking for ten organizations, civil society organizations around the globe to partner with us to lead this network. And we're going to share with you that call for partners.

So with that, that's sort of where we're heading. But it does beg the question, what is systems transformation? So this is a term that is much used. This is an approach that has been much used in many other sectors besides education. Systems is not a new concept. People have been working on systems strengthening for many, many decades in education. And I think what we want to do is share with you alongside many other people who are getting into this discussion our version of what we would, what is sort of at the highest level, simplest terms we mean by systems transformation. And so we offer it to you as a point of discussion and a jumping off point, and we offer it alongside other people in the sector who have been exploring this.

I want to give also, point you to the RISE program, who's done eight years of work on systems particularly and on literacy and numeracy in low- and middle-income countries has just put out a new MOOC, sort of capping off their, their work as they close. I want to point you to a new book come out by NORRAG, "Systems Thinking in International Education," which looks at systems transformation and sort of the international development space on education. And I want to point you to OECD's governing complex education systems work, which has been around for a little while and is very, very relevant.

And I would say at its core, when we talk about systems transformation, at that sort of most basic level, what we're talking about is moving away from just relying on effectiveness evidence or sort of this idea of what works, so, you know, if in one context, we know that training teachers on how to make education more relevant is really effective for stemming the tide of students who leave school and secondary school, that doesn't necessarily, that only really works in a new context if that is the reason, the same reason why kids are leaving school, you have to understand in that new context, why would they be leaving school in the first place? And what is the system doing to help them to, to not allow them to stay? Because there could be many, many reasons.

And the other piece of that's really crucially important for thinking about systems transformation for us is leveraging sort of this long literature, decades of work in other sectors on

systems thinking. And what do we mean by systems thinking. Here are a few tenants that we think are important. First is this idea of drawing a boundary around a system that is beyond the formal education institutions, beyond just schools and district leaders and line ministers and ministers of education. But drawing a larger boundary around systems that include families and communities and the private sector and civil society, and a wide range of actors that actually shape how systems operate.

And, and to also note another sort of key tenet and principles to note that education systems are open and active and live, they're not closed fixed systems. Their boundaries are very permeable, many things impact them. I have a, we have some hot debates here inside our team, and we have some team members who say, you know, I think people think that, you know, education systems shape the environment we're in. And, and I think from what I'm looking at my research, I think the environment actually shapes the education system more.

So the other piece that is actually absolutely crucial is this idea of interactionism, that systems deliver what they deliver because of the relationships between the different elements in a system, and understanding those relationships is essential. It's also essential to understand that those elements in a system are not just the visible elements. There's also invisible elements. Some people call this hard versus soft elements. So, you know, a concrete or visible element would be people and resources that you might have to think about shifting the relationships, but a soft or invisible element, things like beliefs and culture.

And lastly, this principle of homeostasis, that systems through all sorts of everyday routines, mindsets, existing power dynamics, habits have a way of, of staying the same, and that is just a tenet of a system. Now, all of this doesn't tell you how to transform, doesn't necessarily transform a system. This just tells you how systems work. And you have to understand that if you want to transform. This can tell, you you can look at these principles and it can drive towards keeping the system the same and status quo if you want to transform. Our job is to really shift the elements and how they relate to each other, so you'll get a different outcome. And that is really hard. It is hard work; it is long work. It is not an easy fix. So we have put out and we're just offering this up to you a framework that is a high-level sort of, you know, well, what do I do with all this, when I go back to the office, do I sit and think about homeostasis interactionism and get a headache and then go home?

So and the framework comes, I missed this. Sorry, this is just teeing up the framework. The, one of the things we want to make sure to underline is the power of the invisible elements. I think most of you have probably seen this iceberg graphic. It is everywhere for many, many different things. The, you know, I like it because it's incredibly simple. It does distill a lot of systems thinking in a very simple way. So the tip, you know, above the water in the iceberg is events, and that's what people react to. Below are patterns of behavior. And that's when you're doing trends setting, you're looking at trends. Below that is system structure and you really think about systems design, but you probably won't truly transform systems if you don't get all the way to the bottom on mental models and really shift mental models, sort of beliefs of what and assumptions underlying the system.

And so we have developed sort of this framework that is hopefully provides some practical steps on what you could do to try to advance systems transformation. But it's not the end all and be all, but hopefully a good starting point for discussion. It was developed together with the Ministry of Education of Sierra Leone, and we call it a participatory approach to education systems transformation. It's a 3P model, I'll go through the first, the three P's, the first one is around purpose, that one thing that is incredibly important and this gets right at the bottom of the iceberg around mental models is to try to get on the same page with everybody in the system.

So it's not enough just your teachers and your district leaders, you've got to get families and students and community members all on the same page about what is the purpose of your education system. And here I would like to say that I think there is quite a bit of confusion around what is actually what serves as a purpose for education. Some folks say literacy and numeracy. That is the, you know, that's what we're going to focus on for our system's transformation. Literacy and numeracy, critical thinking, collaborative problem solving, what have you are skills and outcomes of an education system. They are not a purpose.

You can have literacy and numeracy, let's take that as the example in service of many different purposes. If you think back many years, mid-1700s to Prussia, where the first idea of having a public accessible universal education system came out, they said we're going to, we want everyone to be literate and numerate so we can have a stronger military and stop being, you know, hurt in the wars. And that is a national security purpose for literacy and numeracy. If you take Brazil, I see Claudia here, Paulo Freire, the famous progressive educator who said literacy numeracy is a cent, is absolutely important for liberation. Naming the world, in your own words, is liberatory for oppressed

people. That was his way of looking at a purpose. Many of us would say that literacy and numeracy is essential for jobs. That's an economic purpose.

So there are and if, and those are three very different ways to teach literacy and numeracy. I will tell you that the way we're teaching literacy numeracy in my kids' school is nothing like how Paulo Freire taught literacy and numeracy in the fields of Brazil. So you really do have to understand sort of the purposes of education. And I point you to a piece by my colleagues Emily Morris and Omar Qargha, who just got, what just got posted as it stood on the various purposes of education that you could think through.

The next one sort of step is to really think about the pedagogical core, and that is the relationship between learners, educators, content and resources and how those relationships work. It's not enough to shift content and, and expect that something different will happen if you don't shift how that content interacts with learners and educators, etc. And the reason we put this here is because so much education reform over the years stays at a very high policy level and actually doesn't change the pedagogical core. And then people say, well, education systems, it's impossible, nothing, it's just give up, it's too hard, nothing changes. Well, you're going about it the wrong way is what we would argue. You really have to think about redesigning the pedagogical core to figure out what needs to shift to get to that purpose of education that you've identified.

And then lastly, again, it sounds easy on a slide, slide deck, but incredibly hard, align all the different components of your education system, position them behind that redesign of the pedagogical core. So those are what we offer, offer to you as food for thought as we move forward. We are, we are excited for critiques and new ideas and feedback. We would not, never say that this is sort of our last word on systems transformation, we are embarking on a journey, we invite all of you to work with us and we are really excited to learn from you as we go through our next decade. And with that, I want to say thank you very much. And I want to invite up Amanda and Don, who have done some deep work on what do systems do when they shift their purpose to wellbeing, to sort of child well-being from just learning.

Donald Peurach: Good morning. I'm Don Peurach, I'm a professor at the University of Michigan. I'd like to introduce my colleague Amanda Datnow from the University of California, San Diego. And we'll be discussing a report that we prepared with our colleagues, Vicki Park from San Diego State University and Jim Spillane from Northwestern University on transforming education

systems to support holistic student development. The report summarizes case studies and system building and system rebuilding prepared by an amazing group of colleagues around the world. Juan Bravo, Whitney Hegseth, Jeanne Ho, Devi Khanna, Dennis Kwek, Angela Lyle, Amelia Peterson, Tom Walsh, José Weinstein and Hwei Ming Wong.

Our collective work is organized around a central empirical question: is there evidence that it's possible to rebuild academically focused education systems to support holistic student development? And appreciating this question requires understanding the vision of educational transformation that sits behind our work. And for that, I'd like you to consider the difference between transformation as recreation and transformation as maturation. Now, a lot of people think of transfer, of transformation in terms of recreation. This view typically begins with a critique of the status quo on education as broken or as ill-suited or as somehow not up to the task, and the matter at hand is recreating education systems that are fundamentally different and that serve different, more current purposes.

By contrast, we think of transformation in terms of maturation. This view begins with respecting and appreciating everything that people are doing and striving to do to support the development of students all the way from classrooms up to national ministries. And the matter at hand is recognizing the need to develop fundamentally new capabilities to do even more to support the development of even more students. So think about the maturation of a child into an adolescent and then into a young adult. At each stage, the maturation lies in preserving and sustaining all that's good, addressing some things that need work while at the same time becoming even more. With each turn, the child's transformed, becomes somebody who's still recognizable, yet somehow fundamentally different, more fully realized. That's the understanding that we bring to our work on educational transformation.

We focus specifically on a three-stage developmental progression for building and rebuilding systems. This begins with the development of school systems, with capabilities to organize and manage access to schooling for more and more diverse students. It continues with the maturation of school systems into education systems that also organize and manage the day-to-day work of instruction, teaching and learning in the pedagogical core to ensure quality and equity in students' academic development. And it continues further with the maturation of education systems to support the holistic development of students, that is, their intellectual, emotional, social, moral, cultural, physical development.

Now, as you know, over the past decade, there's growing attention in education policy, research and practice to developing a wider breadth of skills in students that include but also transcend academic achievement in core content areas. This attention amplified during the pandemic. It continues to amplify. For example, education scholars argue for an integration of learning and well-being, for conceptualizing cognitive, socio, socio-emotional and identity development as not independent constructs, but as overlapping constructs. And for recognizing that fostering students' positive identity development also requires honoring their diverse cultural repertoires.

Now, these processes for advancing access, academic quality, holistic student development have emerged and accumulated historically, as Rebecca just pointed out, in many developed countries, and they're currently being experienced simultaneously in many developing countries. But all of this is very much a work in progress. Even in developed countries, many are working hard to mature beyond access-oriented school systems to academically focused education systems, never mind developing further capabilities to support holistic student development. And that brings us all the way back to the empirical question that drives our work: is there evidence that it's even possible to rebuild academically focused education systems to support holistic student development?

Now, to explore this question, our colleagues produced case studies of seven diverse initiatives aimed at building and rebuilding systems for holistic student development. They include national initiatives in Singapore, Ireland and Chile. Provincial, territorial and local initiatives in British Columbia. In India, with the happiness curriculum. And in the U.S. with Iowa BIG. And they include one cross-national initiative, the International Baccalaureate. These seven cases are at different points in their reform journeys. Some launched over a decade ago. Some are just getting off the ground. They're different in many ways, but each is working in policy contexts that are pressing for academic quality and equity, while also amplifying the press to support holistic student development. And that, in turn, has each of these systems imbuing their work not only with technical value aimed at amplifying students' academic development, but with moral values.

So as these systems build and rebuild themselves to support holistic student development, our cross-case analysis suggests that they're focusing on three general domains. The first is self and well-being, including cultivating students' socio-emotional skills, mindfulness, confidence and positive identity. The second is orientation to others and community, including cultivating social responsibility, empathy and intercultural understanding. The third is learning dispositions, including cultivating critical

thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity. But none of these systems is focusing on all three. Different systems are prioritizing different domains. For example, in Chile, in India, the focus is squarely on socio-emotional well-being as key domains of holistic student development. By contrast, Ireland is foregrounding student agency.

So I'm going to turn the floor over to Amanda. She's going to tell you what we learned. And one of the things that she's going to tell you is that we learned that developing systems for holistic student development looks very much like the work of developing systems to support student academic development.

Amanda Datnow: We found that education system rebuilding involves ten key lessons across, across three core domains depicted here. In the first domain, systems work on managing their environments to build support for holistic student development among diverse stakeholders, construct coherence within their systems, and address perceived tensions between equity, rigor and holistic development. In the second domain, systems build or rebuild a social infrastructure, develop instructional designs, and design an infrastructure that supports holistic development in schools and classrooms. In the third domain, systems work at integrating educational infrastructure with everyday practice in schools by balancing common conventions and local discretion, distributing leadership and supporting professional learning and managing performance and continuous improvement.

What the spiral is intended to show is that the domains of system rebuilding work are interrelated and overlapping as institutional environments are in constant flux. Further, the work in one domain, in different domains does not happen in any particular order. Although managing environments is important early in a reform journey, it also remains crucial later on. We'll highlight an example from each of the domains. Among the first move each system made in their efforts was to cultivate engagement with a broader and more diverse group of partners. The happiness curriculum in Delhi is one example of this.

Delhi's journey towards holistic student development began in 2017 with the development of the happiness curriculum as a complement to a long standing, content-based national curriculum. Led by the Ministry of Delhi, in collaboration with five NGOs referred to as knowledge partners, the aim was to develop a scalable social emotional learning program that was responsive not only to the needs of Delhi's diverse students, but also to global conversations about the need to advance student well-being. Implementation of the Happiness curriculum was launched throughout Delhi in 2018 as a

mandatory standalone curriculum for nursery to grade eight across all 1024 government run schools. The curriculum is mandated for 35 to 45 minutes per day. Supporting implementation required overcoming resistance and building support among teachers, building extensive support for curriculum at scale and developing capabilities for continuously improving it.

It's important to note that the NGOs were pivotal in creating the curriculum at the beginning, supporting its implementation and adapting it for an online environment during the pandemic. Parents are also positioned as important stakeholders, both providing ongoing input and engaging with the curriculum through their children. There's also structures for teachers to provide ongoing feedback. The seven systems engaged in various social infrastructure building activities to support collective sense making around the idea of a holistic student development and what that meant for instruction. This helped them develop shared purpose, vision and norms.

Ireland's journey towards more holistic student development exemplifies the building of what social infrastructure might look like. Their system transformation efforts gathered momentum about a decade ago as they reconsidered their primary school curriculum. They shifted to outcomes-based specifications for both academic and holistic development, redesigned the curriculum to include more flexible and open-ended content, and included provisions for enhanced teacher and student agency. With the new curriculum framework, the teacher has been reimagined as a curriculum maker rather than a curriculum implementer, so a significantly different approach to what we see in Delhi.

Curriculum redevelopment was a co-constructed process with heavy engagement from a wide range of stakeholders. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment commissioned 14 research papers, some of which were discussed in forums with stakeholders to guide change processes. A series of NCCA-led consultations with students and parents and teachers have been instrumental in both shaping the curriculum framework at the outset and in providing feedback. Collective sense -making has been facilitated through a school's forum in which educators from 60 schools meet regularly throughout the year to discuss the successes and challenges they face in their contexts. The NCCA also established an International Board of Experts to advise the ministry on curricular enactment. The seven systems found different ways to balance common conventions with local discretion in promoting holistic student development.

Although conventional strategies usually rely on getting school actors and other stakeholders to change behavior through an appeal to positional authority or through incentives and sanctions, a

more discretion centered approach involves developing a joint ownership of reform. An education system, rebuilding, underway, an effort underway in Chile provides an example of balancing common conventions with local discretion. Chile's journey towards holistic student development had a tipping point with the onset of the pandemic and the recognition of the dire effects on students and families.

Chile's effort has centered on reconsidering its assessment and accountability framework. Specifically, the Education Quality Agency placed a moratorium on its high stakes framework and implemented a newly created comprehensive learning diagnosis, the DIA Assessment. The DIA is a voluntary assessment tool that's made available to all Chilean schools to provide timely information and guidance on students' academic and social emotional development through the school year. It includes indicators of students' personal learning, community learning and citizenship learning, as well as students' assessments of school support for their well-being.

Chile relies chiefly on local discretion for schools to opt into using the new DIA, which is a shift from the past. Teachers voluntarily draw upon agency guidelines and webinars to address socio-emotional well-being in the classroom. Educators now have the discretion to make school-level changes based on student needs. The DIA has been widely embraced by teachers and leaders in schools and incorporated by the new Chilean government into a four-year plan for advancing academic and socio-emotional learning post-COVID.

Wrapping up the cases profiled in our report fill out the middle space between educational policy and instructional practice by providing a practical framework detailing core elements of work integral to rebuilding systems. The systems we studied took different on ramps and pathways to holistic student development, but what's common is the attention to the three inter-related and overlapping domains. Managing environmental relationships, building an educational infrastructure that supports instruction, and integrating educational infrastructure into practice.

Moreover, and importantly, in no case did the seven systems put information technologies in the first position as the primary driver of educational transformation. Rather, each place instruction the collaborative work of students and teachers in the first position, and each engage deeply in the development of infrastructures and organizations to support holistic student development. Looking ahead, we must expand the scope of inquiry to include a broader array of system rebuilding efforts, especially in systems that are aiming to support holistic student development, while also increasing basic access to schooling, including in developing countries.

Our work also suggests a need for new types of collegial, cross-national learning opportunities among system leaders so they can learn together about the work of rebuilding systems to sustain academic rigor and support holistic development. We also need to find ways to draw local education professionals, parents, community members, and especially students into global conversations that provide evidence of new possibilities, build upon their knowledge and fuel their agency. Our aim is to cultivate mutual awareness, increase trust and positive collaboration in collective efforts to build and rebuild education systems to support holistic student development. Thank you.

Folasade Adefisayo: So good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you so much for having me here. I'm very excited, especially because I've heard the two speakers before me. I read their material and honestly, at times I said, oh dear, we were thinking along the same pathway, kind of we didn't, I didn't read the study before we did our transformation. Well, clearly, many of those ideas we, we developed organically in a totally different system. And I would like to add to that. So I'll take you through my paper now. This is the outline. I won't spend much time on it, and I wouldn't spend time here either. But I wanted you to know that I come from Lagos, Nigeria. It's subnational, so it's a state. And you can see there very clearly accounting for just 0.4% of the landmass of the country, the little red there, but accounting for 11% of the population of the country, which means that honestly, I can't describe what places like, I'm sure it doesn't look like any of the systems you've been seeing. So I would really appreciate, you know, when we break out, you tell me more things about what we can do.

We have 18,000 private schools and 1017 public schools. There are more children in private schools. This, this has, you know, this has grown you know, this has been an unbridled growth because, of course, people keep coming to Lagos every day. I will get to that eventually. Oh, I was going to show you the slides showing how Lagos has grown over the years. But let me start with our problems, the major challenges we are facing. The very high attrition rate, because many of our students, even when they start school, they start to see a kind of hopelessness. And so they tend to go into informal training, learning to be a carpenter, learning to be a hairdresser, and many of them have to work. And these are all poverty-related issues. So we have a fairly high attrition rate. We thought we didn't have out-of-school children, but now we know that we have a significant out-of-school children population.

So what? First of all, we had the high attrition rate and so the educational system has to have relevance for them. Right now it's not relevant. We have low numeracy and literacy skills, and I became a Commissioner for Education about three and a half years ago, before then I was in private service where I was a very severe critic of the government, which is a lesson for so you criticize when you get there. It's not that easy. So the, we have very low numeracy and literacy skills among the students. You had students getting to, you know, spending six years in our system not being able to read, which is quite scandalous, I felt. We have a nation-wide challenge with insecurity, even as I'm sitting here, I'm on my phone trying to understand whether I should close schools or not. So again, that's another context. I may close schools in the next one hour. I'm sure none of you is facing that kind of situation. Maybe you can advise me on what to do.

We have budgetary restrictions. Once the governor asked me— he calls me education— education, what percent of the budget would you want? I said hundred percent. And even the hundred will not solve all our problems, but I'll take hundred. So he said, well, realistically, I'm going to give you 13% of the budget. So I have 13% of the budget and it is the largest budget in Nigeria. In fact, my colleagues routinely make fun of me and say I should be in the same company as governors and not commissioners, because there are many states in the country whose budget is not that large either. So but it's still not big enough because it's there's just so much happening that we, we don't have control over.

And so there's this limited access to public education. You saw the figures, 1017. I'll tell you, our main problem, apart from the fact that the high cost of building in Lagos, Lagos is extremely waterlogged. The cost of building a school in Nigeria is the equivalent of building like three schools in other places, because the foundation alone, by the time you put hundreds of piles before you actually start building, you would have, you would have spent enough to build about two schools. So we have that problem and then we have the problem of massive migration into towns so that there's no space anymore. And we have to build up. We just have no space to expand, which would at least take our minds to technology I would think.

I mentioned something about out of school children. Yeah, we do have significant out-of-school children now because of migration. People born in Lagos go to school, they may drop out, but they start school. But people from other parts of and not just Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa flocking to Lagos with no skills, and they don't send their children to school. So we are now having a significant

out-of-school population. We can't even count how many because UNESCO tells us that it is six people come to Lagos only in an hour and do not leave.

And because they do not leave, so let me give you an example. One of our schools had a total enrollment of 4000 a couple of years ago and that was in 2017. They have 10,000 today. So we have 10,000 children entering into one facility. Your guess, I mean, you can't imagine. Again, because education is no longer glamorous, as low quality as the quality of teacher training, the quality of teachers is really poor. The universities that have faculties of education, they take the lowest scoring students, the best scoring students going to medicine, engineering and so on. People do not want to do, don't want to go into education. I have situations where I had a student when I was a principal, I had a young man work with me and his father kept fighting me that would you want your own child to be a teacher.

So the, the profession has lost its luster. I'm a daughter of two teachers, I'm the daughter of a commissioner for education, I'm the daughter of the principal. So to me, education is actually the most important job anybody can do. So I was amazed that people think it's a real low kind of thing indeed. I've told you about the high influx of immigrants. And then there's the overlapping roles of governments and agencies. What if I tell you that I'm the Commissioner for Education? I'm in charge of pre-tertiary education, but there's an agency under me that recruits teachers, trains them and so on, but does not report to me. So how, well, because we are good friends, we talk, but if we were not good friends, they wouldn't know what we want to do. They would just do what they want, and we just do what we want.

So all these but for me, I'm the kind of person who thinks its half a cup full, isn't it? But and I work with this gentleman who I'm showing you on the screen who challenged me and said, look, Lagos is about the audacity to think, to imagine, and to make it happen. So I have a lot of his political will. But remember, we are subnational, not national government. But even within that, we're able to do a lot of things. And that's why he set up what he called the THEMES agenda with the E, the first E there being education and technology, the nexus between the two. Many of our problems can be solved by technology. But remember, we also have these, the infrastructure challenges of data, availability of data, availability of power. And of course, poverty. People who just cannot buy the systems.

Of course, we were influenced by the SDG goals, SDG4, quality education, which is always there at the back of our minds. So sorry, you can see my handwriting. I do the, I do that a lot and it's a good thing they gave me a cutoff point, or the slide would have been totally different again. So I got off that day and I wrote something. So please try and ignore the handwriting. So what we were able to do some things with the student enrollment and it keeps rising, especially now in primary schools where enrollment had gone down because people felt the quality of those small private schools was much better. So it's rising, which is good, numeracy increasing at 3%, three times increase in rates of learning, literacy again, 40% growth in performance. We have exams, the terminal exams after year 12 and when we came in the pass rate was at 39. It's now around 80%.

And we have other things we, we, when we pitch ourselves against our mates in other states, best teachers, head teachers in Nigeria, first in all sorts of competitions and we've got a lot of financial support from the private sector and development partners to the tune of over it's $11 million for now. And so, so why? What have we done? And this is one of our more interesting schools. The governor insists that we should build sports facilities. We don't have much land, but this is one of the places where we have land. Can you see Lagos from the air? This is one of our schools as well, a tech driven. We built it with containers, so the foundation was not as expensive as it usually is. And it's all tech tech tech. Yeah, but still expensive.

So how did we achieve this in three years? I mean, and this is, these are those two papers. I now had to look at them and say, did we do anything, did we match any of these? I think we did. And I say a big thank you to you. I read the paper, I enjoyed the papers and I said, that means that we were thinking straight, right even in the midst of a lot of problems. And I know, you know, COVID struck and for nearly two years the country was almost comatose. And during this period though, we were still able to teach and learn, mainly because we had this transformation plan at the back of our minds. So I, you've they've talked about the two, but what I can say is the purpose.

Let me look at the participatory approach. Yes, we had to have a purpose, a shared vision because we had this educational system. We were all concerned, things are not going well. We have a huge social cohesion problem. We have children on the streets who can't read, who can't work. What do we do? We have to sit together, all of us, parents, teachers and all. So we came together and designed a purpose, and it was more humanistic because we felt that. So that's what we took from both, right? Why we felt our children should learn.

We were too focused on academics when I was in school, and if I happened— because we used to have positions— I happened to come second, I was really frightened to go home because my parents said, what happened to the first? Does he have two heads? Why? Why? Why are you second? And I said, well, there were 30 people behind me. So what, what about that person who beat you, does he have two heads? And, you know, so we were all focused on education and, you know, we just had to broaden our vision. So you've seen these two and I've tried to look at how, how we met the purposes of the two.

So we had our purpose, we had our pedagogy, we had our methods of teaching which were so old fashioned. Instruction, instructor-led, you know, teacher lectures in the classroom. To, to shift teachers from that perspective is something really difficult because they've been doing this for years. So you are trying to say what you have been doing for years, it's just not working and that annoys people. Wouldn't it annoy you? You know, so that took a lot of doing. And then of course, we had to now align the system components and the pedagogy to make sense for every child in the system.

And of course the other, but the other, the other schematic, was managing the environment. We were in a very strange environment where so many children out of school, children going to school saw no reason to go to school. So we had to engage with parents, with the community, with, I mean, we had communities where you finished building a school and you left, and you came back, and everything had been stolen. So we had to tell communities, this is your school. These are your children. They belong to you. Look after everything there, you know, we had to do things like that. And of course, you had to build infrastructure. Technical, everything. Building schools and integrate everything into our policies. I'm not sure we've been very good at that.

Our shared vision was simple. We said, this is what we want every child to be. I had my people talking about all sorts of things you can see out of the box thinking, passionate, God fearing, loving. I said, this just doesn't happen because you wish it to happen. You have to develop a system. So I think this is where we started with a focus on what our vision was. Then we had our transformation plan. We had 15 elements, which was really too much. By reading through now it was clear that we were spreading ourselves thin, and when COVID struck, we had to sit down and say man, just focus on number five. Don't try to kill yourselves.

So some of the things that we did, I mean, introducing all sorts of initiatives to improve literacy and we said, I think I talked about the results, and we did have additional funding for the schools, and

we recruited teachers, about 9000. The state hadn't recruited in about 14 years. And so teachers were retiring at the rate of like a thousand per quarter. Well we now were able to replace them. So we kept on recruiting and were able to really review the curriculum, optimized it. We had this NSSA stem who was actually working with Smithsonian here.

So we had some, I can't tell you how many partners we had. I can't, this is too short a period for me to let you know the intensity of what we had to do, the people we had to move with, the world, the development partners, the NGOs, old students who are very passionate about their schools and are willing to put something back. Communities who wanted their schools to do well by the children. And so a lot of investment, a lot of efforts made and during COVID, the COVID was serious, but we were able to also get people to give us devices because our students couldn't afford devices, got devices, got them to students in the most underserved distant parts of the city.

So the how of it all. I've said that a lot, budgetary political will. And so on, I went back to that. What would we have done differently. I think we need we, we should have devolved more leadership to the schools. There was a lot of top-level discussion. Frankly. We should have included student voice in reforms. We didn't do enough of that. And as a, I was principal of like three or four schools and I know how great the students usually are. We should have broadened our success metrics with so much emphasis on academics, facilities, passing exams, passing exams, you know, and we should have focused on nonacademic subjects, which we tried to do through what we call the comprehensive schools setting up schools where we're teaching a variety of skills, but that's fledgling now.

We should have strengthened monitoring and evaluation, paid special attention because things like we have 8700 schools, how could I get to 8700 schools? So we needed to strengthen that, and we needed, like I said, to broaden dimensions into more holistic development, the student's well-being. And there was not enough of that at all, I'll be the first to say that. So a lot of lessons learned, and this is my last slide. We are going to work on private school regulation because they have more students than we do and there are more of them. We are going to work with more school infrastructure, continue investing. We are not done with that at all.

We haven't done enough with children with special needs. We haven't done enough with children living in extreme poverty, in distressed areas, areas where there's huge climate change and therefore loss of, you know, we have some villages in Lagos that are moving back every five years as

the ocean takes away their waterfront, their homes, their farms, everything. So we haven't done enough with children who are not mainstream, and we've got to do something about that. We need to look at the out of school population because it's going to have severe implications for social cohesion in public, even right now and in future. I need to broaden our curriculum, I've said that.

And finally, I think we need to do a bit of expansion of our vocational training and stop thinking every child has to do physics, chemistry, further maths, maths. But why don't you do other things and make some money out of it. I mean, and students are seeing that, I have students now who are into barbering, plumbing, carpentry, IT, developing IT solutions and so on. So I think, thank you, that's my Governor saying thank you very much for this.

Sarah Osborne: Thank you very much, Commissioner, for delivering those wonderful keynote remarks. And to all of our other speakers this morning. We are going to be wrapping up soon the livestream session of this morning plenary. So thank you so much to everyone who's been joining us online. We've been overwhelmed by the interest in this event. And so as everyone who is with us in person is quickly realizing, we have a very full house today. And so we have tried to squeeze as many of our colleagues as we possibly could into our facilities. And we ask for your understanding and patience as we all move throughout the building today.

We'll have several breakout sessions in the morning and then again in the afternoon. And it's possible that because of the size of our group, your first-choice session might fill up. And so we ask you to please proceed to another session. We will have Brookings staff, which, as a reminder, were all wearing these blue nametags around to direct you to another room that has space. And we encourage you to share your learnings from those sessions in our large networking breakout sessions, our coffee breaks and our lunch so that we can really collectively benefit as a group from all of our different breakouts.

And with this, this now concludes the opening session of our day. And thanks to our colleagues online for joining us and we look forward to reconvening the livestream portion of today in our plenary session, both for those online and in-person at 4 p.m. Eastern Time. And we will now transition into the World Cafe session.

[symposium entails, 10am-4pm EST]

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Welcome, welcome. Shall we do the, if you can hear me, clap once, if you can hear me clap twice, if you can hear me clap three times. Perfect. Thank you all. Welcome to this very exciting conversation, at least exciting for me and I hope exciting for all of you. I know it's going to be exciting for our panelists too. We want to welcome you; we want to thank you for staying with us. We know this has been a long day, a full day of conversation and learning and rethinking. So we're very happy that you have made it to the closing plenary of our session on a now cold and blustery Friday afternoon. And I also want to welcome those who are joining online. We are now livestreaming out this session as well. So it's good to have you back with us, or joining us for the first time, those of you who are joining online.

My name is Jennifer O'Donoghue. Please call me Jen. And if we haven't met yet today or another day, as I am a senior fellow here at CUE, I head up the gender equality in and through education team and I also serve as deputy director of CUE. And we would like to start or sorry, before I go there, I want to just say that joining me is this great panel who has asked that we not do lengthy introductions. So I am just going to say thank you very much to Rakesh, Aleesha and Juan Alfonso for being here. Please take a look at their bios. We have a great group of people here for this conversation today and to learn with them and we wanted to start our conversation with a, with an opening reflection. And we want to invite all of you to do the same reflection.

So I just want to invite you to find someone next to you, preferably someone you haven't talked with too much today, if that's possible, but don't feel like you have to move around and just spend 2 minutes. So we'll take one minute each and share one thing that has stuck with you from today's activities or conversation so far. So just turn to the person next to you and share one thing.

I think we're going to come back. We'll do the clapping. And if you can hear me clap once, if you can hear me clap twice, if you can hear me clap three times. Perfect. Okay. I know that was a very short conversation, and we're excited that after this panel, we will be having a reception, so hoping you can continue those reflections and, and thinking and talking about what has stuck with you from today. I am now going to turn to our panelists and ask the same question. So I will start with Aleesha and ask Aleesha, what is one thing that you have seen, heard or experienced today that has resonated with you or really stuck with you?

Aleesha Taylor: One thing that keeps coming back to me is the image that Rebecca put up in the opening plenary with the iceberg, and she talked about the power of the invisible elements and

talking about mental models and the importance of knowing how to, of shifting mental models. And I keep coming back to the importance of also taking the time to understand all of the things that are beneath the iceberg, beneath the water.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Great, thank you so much. Juan Alfonso.

Juan Alfonso Mejía López: Well, I will say scaling. Finding a formula is problematic itself, but scaling is another problem. So you may find a very good formula, but the ones that you try to scale it from up or down is one way. And it's problematic itself and from the bottom to the top, it's another problem. So it's that's a very good reflection of the other room.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Okay. Thank you. And Rakesh, same question for you.

Rakesh Rajani: Yeah. The discussion on, it was also the discussion on scaling to think about the enabling environment and the winning coalition, right. In order to make this shift happen, it's, it's a hugely difficult task and you need a winning coalition which isn't just your like-minded people. It's not just people like yourselves who you share values with, but people who actually have the power that you need to make that change happen. And that part was particularly interesting.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Great. Thank you. And thank you all so much. And, you know, I think these three reflections, you know, we didn't plan this in advance, but they seem to all be related to the conversation that we'll have today around civil society's role in systems transformation. And what are those pieces that we need to understand? What are the invisible elements that we need to take the time to understand in terms of the role of civil society? How do we think about the scaling and the, and the, you know, expanding the impact and, and creating winning coalitions, I think is also an important part of thinking about civil society's role.

So, you know, I just wanted to to let everybody know, I think you all heard in the morning, Rebecca mentioned that as part of CUE's strategy moving forward, we are looking to build a global leadership coalition of civil society organizations that will be working to transform education systems around the world. I will be sharing specific details about that; we have the official launch of that open call for participation at the end of our conversation today. So that's just to make sure you don't leave before then. And you know, in this time together, we really want to explore some of the roles that that CSOs can and do play in education systems transformation and where, when and how CSOs have taken this on and where they haven't and what have been some of those challenges.

And, and this is, you know, one, because we share a passion for civil society organizations, and two, because as CUE moves into this new phase of our work, specifically with this leadership coalition, we want to be really thoughtful about how we're doing it and we want to have clarity and make visible what are some of the challenges and the pieces that we need to be thinking about along the way. So having said that, I will move into sort of a first round of conversation, which is really around the role of civil society organizations in sustaining momentum for systems transformation.

So, you know, we all I think have talked about throughout the day how challenging it can be to sustain a movement for systems transformation. And we have some evidence and growing evidence that CSOs can have an important role in this, it's something that's not often achieved in a lifetime, I don't want to say lifetime in the administration, time of a minister of education, of a governor, of a prime minister, of a president. And it is also something that by definition challenges the status quo, right. And challenges that stability or inertia that systems have that we talked about in the morning.

And so Rakesh I want to start with you, you know, when we were had our conversation, the four of us, to plan for today, one of the things that you spoke about was a common error in education, which is to look for, look for or apply technical solutions to what are fundamentally political and institutional problems. Can you tell us a little bit more about that? And how you see that CSOs can effectively play a role here in not only navigating but also really shaping and informing what is this inherently political space of education systems transformation?

Rakesh Rajani: Sure. Thanks, Jen. It's very much been the topic of the entire day at least the sessions I went to, right. So to help kids learn how to read and count, to have girls complete secondary education and leave with confidence, those things are hard, but we know how to do them. They are technical, important technical input, aspects to those that we need to get right. And we more or less have figured out how to do that. The problem is how do they become real at scale on the ground? And that involves two things that I think we are less good at.

One is what does it take to turn a bureaucracy around? And I use the term bureaucracy consciously, it is a bureaucracy. I don't think many of us really know how to do that now. And that doesn't just involve getting the top policymakers, as several of you have remarked today, but it particularly means paying attention to the middle level, all right. What does it mean to work at a block level in India or a district level in most of our countries? How does that transform? How does a

teacher who is in the classroom wake up in the morning super motivated to do her work every single day? That's what it takes to turn the bureaucracy around.

The other is a kind of keen understanding of how power works. Power and motivation, right? Often the people who look formally in charge are not the ones who can actually shift things. You might be the Minister for Education, but you may have very little power to turn it around. So it's figuring out who is it? Is it is it the bishop? Is it the musician? Is it some the Minister for Mining who has, who is connected to the president and may have a greater influence on education rather than the Minister for Education? It's those sorts of things that need to be figured out. And I think a lot of the time we are not good at this because we go with what we are comfortable with.

And this is where I think the fact that there's a predominance of international NGOs and donor thinking in this has also affected this because people who are outsiders who do not have the deep contextual knowledge and the relationships about a place, they don't know how to do political economy, right? So they stick to the technical stuff. I grew up in Tanzania, where I'm from, where there was, I'm going to pick on the Swedes for a change, there was lots of wonderful Swedish people trying to reform education for decades, and they did a lot of training, and they did a lot of manuals and so on. Not because that is what we really needed, because that's what they knew how to do. And they did not have the credibility to talk about politics. And so to come to civil society, I think that's the role, right?

We need to stop kind of running around being subcontractors of donor funded projects. We need to become people who deepen our relationships with our own constituencies in-country, figure out our politics. We know them, we may not write them in our proposals, but when we sit at the bar in the evening, we know the political economy. It's to bring that knowledge and relationships to bear in terms of figuring out what it takes to turn the bureaucracy around.

And, and final point, I think for civil society organizations to play that part, they need the kind of long-term funding and support and legitimacy and space to play that part, which often doesn't go along with the kind of short-term donor funded projects. So even as the Brookings CUE initiative that we're going to hear about rolls out, it'll be interesting to see how it is planning to roll those relationships out and to allow for these kind of long term political engagement on the ground level, which will, which is what you need to turn bureaucracies around.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Thank you so much. Aleesha or Juan Alfonso, do either of you have an example, maybe, or a story of a CSO coalition that may have sustained the movement for change? And any thoughts on what we could learn from, from that?

Aleesha Taylor: One coalition that comes to mind or a group of civil society organizations I'm thinking about, or CSOs that are working in Myanmar or who have been working to advance inclusive and equitable education in Myanmar or Burma, and the extent to which they are able to sustain their own work regardless of what is happening politically or even in the funding arena. And so thinking about organizations that have been working across the border in Thailand to provide training and support and services to ethnic minorities that are outside or that are kept outside of the system. And how when the democratic transition happened some years ago, they were able to move inside and work from, work more openly inside the country. And then when things shifted or went or reverted back to what had happened, what the previous context, they essentially just continued their work and went back across, across the border.

And I think sometimes we miss that, the extent to which CSOs that are deeply rooted in their communities operate, whether we are aware of them or not, whether we recognize or even provide catalytic or significant funding to them or not. And so in terms of what we can learn about that is that when we're looking at systems transformation or any types of social change movement to actually make sure that we're looking for the organizations that were already or have already been doing the work before it became popular, before funders, it became a funder priority.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Yeah. Thank you, Aleesha, I think that's really important. One thing that we've been trying to think through in terms of, you know, the selection process of how we choose these ten organizations is sort of that issue of credibility. And I want to say it, you know, in quotes, but, you know, how, how do we know if it's visible when it's not visible? I think the point you're making about, you know, organizations are working there and operating whether we recognize it or not. And so how do we also, how are we also able to see those organizations, right. And, and not just the organizations that may have a lot more support. And we'll get to the question of support a little bit more later, but that's a great point. Sorry, Juan Alfonso.

Juan Alfonso Mejía López: Well, I think that the magic word is incentives. So you need to understand how the, the system, the incentives of the system of incentives work in that particular country. So in 2013, we were able to write educational reform and, and to made it make it through the

whole government from 2013 to 2018, I think that it was a very good educational reform. But with the new government, they just put it backwards. So we didn't understand— we, because we were there— that in Mexico, the incentives, they are not maybe with the educational system, okay.

So I come from a province that is called Sinaloa. Maybe some of you have heard about it. And if you don't create opportunities for young people, crime organization will create it for them. So if you don't create very good opportunities for childs and youngsters because once they finish school, they will earn a salary, there is impossible to make it through, well, crime organization will be there for them. So with this in the head, we went through a survey from 2019, 19 through 2022, and we were asking the Mexican people, this is a survey with a statistical value, national statistical value, and we were asking them out of the eight subjects that we are to talk about to you, that we are to propose it to you, which one do you think that affect the most, the country? And we put the Mexico, education, sorry, and the education was seven out of eight with 5.9%. Okay.

And then we change it to what do you think that affects, affect you the most? So it will feel like more closely. And then education when eight out of eight with 1.7. So it is not that Mexicans don't care about education, but we haven't been able— we the people that cares about education— to relate problems that care to public opinion, insecurity, income, corruption and educational system. So I think definitely it's a political matter and not a technical solution.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Thank you. And I think points, too, to the fact that often we think of civil society organizations working in relationship to government and trying to convince policymakers, but often it's also around how do we motivate people, right. We need to have that public backing. And I'm going to say with full transparency, since Juan Alfonso's already mentioned it, that we worked together for many years in civil society in Mexico, so. I want to move a bit into this, we had an audience question around how should civil society and education stakeholders work together to align their efforts to achieve effective transformation?

And, you know, one of the, the other roles that sort of posited for civil society organizations and systems transformation is, is being a bridge, you know, and really being a bridge between and among actors in the education ecosystem. And these could be a bridge between policymakers and schools, communities, families, students, mid-level bureaucrats bringing in media sometimes too into the education space. And, you know, I really want to this, this sort of bridge can be used for different

reasons, right. So civil society can be involved in agenda setting, setting, trying to set priorities, often in accountability and evaluation and equity, movements for equity.

And, you know, I wanted us to talk a little bit about the often-complex relationship that CSOs have, in particular with local government. And, you know, we do have, some evidence, it's correlations to date that with greater CSO presence, we see better education outcomes. So I think that it's an area that we will be delving into much deeper to really understand this role and build the evidence base around CSOs and education outcomes. But this relationship between governments and CSOs is often fraught and complicated.

And Juan Alfonso, I want to start with you. So I will just say for everyone that Juan Alfonso's had a perhaps unusual career that has woven between CSOs spaces and government spaces. So he worked in the Federal Ministry of Education, where his unofficial job was to monitor civil society activity and education. And then he was the founder of a local state-level civil society organization in Sinaloa which he mentioned and then moved to the national levels of civil society, and then most recently was minister of education of the state of Sinaloa. So he's going back and forth in those two spaces, and I think that has given you a very unique perspective. So the question to you is what did you learn from these experiences about this relationship between CSOs and government or policymakers?

Juan Alfonso Mejía López: Well, as you said, it is a complex relation, whereas there is always a tension between the two actors and that tension is related to the level or the healthy level of democratic regime. That's very important because that's the way that the government is going to understand himself. So if you ask a public servant, I think in Latin America who, to whom belong the public schools, do they belong to, to whom? I think the public servant will say the to the government, okay. And I think that society will say to the government. They don't understand that it is a common good. So that's like one of the things that I really learn from outside and being inside.

So bureaucrats, they think that they're going to be there for 25, 30 years and no one will care. So they need to survive. So before starting a strategic decision that might change the system, they need to think that that minister is going to move. So I should care more. So what is going to happen later on if I want to stay here? And the civil society, and I'm going to be, I'm going to say it, and I'm already here, so. Civil society needs to understand that opportunism, not opportunity, opportunism, it's a great talent value in political matters. So it is not an ethical question. It is not a technical question.

It's about politics. It's about survival. So civil society needs to understand the right moment, needs to understand how to create the conditions so that politicians can act and the politicians will bring their policy with them and civil society will stay behind.

But civil society is very hard to civil society to understand that. So I think that's where, because once the minister or the government leaves, he needs to leave some mistakes. So, so the progress, so you will create incentives for the next one, so he can keep, or she can keep going. And it will be worse if he backwards. And I think that you need to think about the, to think about that during the whole process.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Thank you. Rakesh and Aleesha, again, when we had our sort of prep conversation for this, we talked about the prevailing narratives, right, on each side, that there's the prevailing narrative that civil society has about government, and then there's the narrative government has about civil society. And one of the challenges and really the needs is to learn to move beyond some of those prevailing narratives in order to effectively work together. So I'm wondering if you have seen anything in your experience that demonstrates that we can move beyond and how we can move beyond some of those narratives on both sides and really start to work together more effectively?

Aleesha Taylor: Well, from in my experience, I think before we talk about moving beyond that, we have to look at some of those invisible elements, I'm going to keep coming back to the the bottom of the iceberg. And it's interesting because when we talk about government, we often talk about them as a, as a monolithic and it's interesting, the commissioner from Nigeria this morning talked about the preponderance of top-down initiatives. And so I, part of my work sometimes I work with Chemonics as a partner with them and in designing systems strengthening initiatives for systemic transformation or systems transformation, it always starts with the central government and then trickles down to local government. And oftentimes, as we know with development projects, the trickle down doesn't always reach where it, where it needs to to happen. But still, when the initiatives come again, it still starts at the top.

So I think just understanding the relationships before we get to the relationship between government and civil society, the relationships between various levels and elements of government actors and government stakeholders and understanding how they can work more effectively together and what they need to be able to work more effectively together.

Similarly with civil society, I think just understanding and maybe it's just my own bias, but when we talk about civil society and systems change, I often think initially about national level organizations that have a clear policy advocacy agenda and overlooking or not necessarily appreciating the power that exists at the grassroots level and at the district and regional levels with civil society, and how those, organizations within a country or within a region, the importance of networking them so that they can learn from each other and, and strengthen relationships among each other so that, as Juan said, when civil society creates the conditions within which government can act, that they, that the conditions are relevant to all the levels in the system.

And an example of that I can say is the Regional Education and Learning initiative that I've been working with. It's a project that's, or a strategy that's funded by Wellspring Philanthropy Advisors that networks 70 civil society organizations across East Africa to help them to speak with one voice, to push for change on behalf or to improve learning outcomes for, for vulnerable children. So they are actually creating the conditions within which, within which governments can act to shift, to shift systems and create policy change.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Thank you.

Rakesh Rajani: Let me tell you about a mistake I made for probably a decade or 15 years. So I'm Tanzanian, for about 25 years in Tanzania and Kenya and Uganda, I've worked for civil society, and the kind of primary model we had was as a civil society organization, our job was to hold the government's feet to the fire. We were the watchdog, we would speak the truth to power, we would use data evidence, show all the ways that the government is failing to do what it itself did, right. And it was, it had an effect. It was important. But at the end of the day, that model assumes that saying that truth will somehow shame government into doing the right thing.

Now, in our contexts, that's not how the political economy of governments works. It actually probably throws their back up, they become closed, they become defensive. You actually incentivize in government the kind of hiding of truth telling because it doesn't serve them well to do so. And what that also fails to do is empower the, the people inside government, the reformers, the people who have ethical standards, to Alicia's point, government is not monolithic. There are some incredible people in government at all levels who are trying to make a change happen. The question for civil society should be how are we acting in a way that strengthens their ability, their incentives, and the enabling conditions for them to be able to do more powerful work.

And it's only, sadly for me, it took me too long to figure that out. And when we did, we started seeing greater results than when we were just playing the watchdog role. So I would say two things that are really important in my experience. One is empathy for people in government. I'm not trying to be naive. Yes, there is corruption, yes, there are people who do, you know, who don't do their jobs. There's all kinds of problems in government, absolutely, and we should be we should not lose sight of that. But if we want to make change happen, we need to show up with a posture of empathy towards those in government who are trying to make things happen and see how we can bring out their better selves.

The other thing I think that we often do is in our relentless critique of government, we actually undermine the role of government and the position of the idea that government is us. It's not this big bad thing up there that does bad things to us, but rather it is a reflection of our public compact and the government is going to be as good as we make it. So unwittingly, very progressive civil society organizations by critiquing government all the time, playing to a right-wing agenda, the government should be small and should be out of our way.

So these are two things that I think are really crucial for civil society to get right. I want to be very clear; I don't mean just mollycoddle; I don't mean hide things. I do think truth and purpose should always be guiding. But with that there, our goal should be how do we get government to make work better for us rather than just critiquing government?

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Thank you so much. I want to take a moment to see if there are any questions among the rest of you. So does anyone have a question? We have microphones. I can, okay. We have a question over here. If there's another one, we can take maybe two and then have some responses.

Audience Member: Thank you. I'm Don Peurach, I'm from the University of Michigan. What's interesting is you've juxtaposed civil society and government, but there's been no discussion of markets and commercial organizations or the professions. All of which bring stability to education systems in a lot of cases. And I'm wondering where those organizations fit in the narrative that you're crafting about transforming education systems.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Okay. Is there another question that we want to add to that before we respond?

Audience Member: Thank you for your comments, all of you in on the panel. I'm Claudia Costin from Brazil. I helped create a civil society organization there in 2006, which had a very important role in the country. It is called in Portuguese, sorry to say the name in Portuguese first, [speaks Portuguese] or all for education. It was created to be an advocacy organization to push for quality and equity in public education, and that nobody was the voice of the children. You know, everybody is talking either for the teachers or for the interests of the government. And we did research and noticed that the parents thought that education was good quality in Brazil, which was not true.

And so we decided to begin to monitor and evaluate learning and quality. And in doing so, we realized that there was a need to increase the quality of schools, increase, ensure that all the kids are in schools, and that they are continuing and progressing in the schools and learning. And I'm just telling this to say that, yes, civil societies organization can, Juan Alfonso, work with governments, and we can think of public schools as schools that belong to the people of a country. And this makes a whole difference. And yes, the professions should be represented. I think this is a very good point, but we need to make sure that the attractiveness of the career of teacher becomes relevant. Otherwise, you're dealing with teachers that are not motivated to do the work.

You are mentioning this and in that aspect also, civil society organizations might have an impact, showing societies that it is not only the unions that want good salaries, it is good for the kids that they have a good salary. It's not, there were only two strikes. Sorry to take so long to make much more of a comment, but I think it was, it was one of the best cases that I saw in my country, especially during this period that we had— sorry to talk about politics— Bolsonaro as a president, I don't envy us.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Okay. So to our panelists, Rakesh, Aleesha, Juan Alfonso, do you want to take on this question of what about the, the market, the professions, others, it's not, it's not just a binary between civil society and, and government.

Rakesh Rajani: I mean, you're right. Obviously, it depends very much on each context, right? So the context that I'm more familiar with, most of the education for primary and secondary is provided by public entities. Private providers play a small role, but they are an important role, and it all depends on what it is you're trying to do. Sometimes they are more relevant than others. The market actors become very important in what's in the winning coalition, right?

So often when you, for example, when we are in East Africa working to refocus on learning outcomes as opposed to schooling inputs, some of the greatest allies were corporate sector leaders, not because they are running schools, but because they are very worried about the kind of skills base that they needed. And they are a key partner in making the case and in some ways are much more effective than the civil society organizations. As far as the professionals they are again, the same thing happens. I think the, as we know, the role of teachers trade unions vary widely from context to context.

In Kenya, for example, to try to work with [inaudible], those who have tried to do that, I'll tell you, it's a very long story whether, you know, depending on what you want to do, you want them either close or very far away from you, other professions. So I think the short answer is yes, they matter. But how they matter varies very much based on where and what you're trying to achieve.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Anyone else want to jump on that? And we have another.

Audience Member: [inaudible] Networks around the country do offer some guidance for those of us on the NGO side about how to navigate the politics of the non-governmental [inaudible].

Aleesha Taylor: How to navigate the politics of the international NGO community.

Audience Member: [inaudible].

Jennifer O'Donoghue: That a separate panel? We need another hour.

Aleesha Taylor: Well, speaking of markets, right. And, and competition and competition. Well, one example, a couple of examples, actually, that I see, I think continuing to build relationships amongst yourselves, either around issues or in the geographies where you work to collaborate to create really tools and products and processes that actually rival those of international NGOs, because I think that will help you get to a space, because I imagine you're talking about the funding issue that'll help you get to a space where I think those that fund international NGOs will have to really do some more introspection on where they put their actual, where they're putting their, their money.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: I'm going to build off of this international question to talk a bit. So, so the focus for our work in CUE and with the, the leadership coalition that we'll be talking about is really trying to work with local organizations to find those national or subnational organizations. And so we've been talking about, about that and sort of relationships in these local contexts, right? So relationships between actors. And we've been primarily focused on government, but I think it is very important to point out that, you know, this role of CSOs in this bridging role is a role that is, you know,

CSOs to school, schools, to communities with young people, with families, with labor unions, with, did I say the young people I think I did already, it's getting late, anyway. So it is this sort of broader thing.

So I say I want to just say that we focus in on that a bit and the government CSO relationship here, but understanding that it's broader than that. But one of the things that local CSOs really struggle with, and I'll speak from the experience here, is one, you know, one other we want to move beyond some of these, these narratives that have been less, less effective in terms of the relationship. It is the reality in many countries where governments use their power to, to limit, to silence, to shut down CSOs, and too that even when local CSOs have the support of the policymakers, for example, there's often resource, important resource constraints and local civil society organizations are competing for, for resources.

And, you know, and those I know, for example, in Mexico that, you know, when COVID came, what happened to civil society was really dramatic because suddenly resources were directed to, you know, I think importantly so but emergency, right. And so a lot of the institutions that make up a democracy around civil society organizations that weren't doing emergency response work really lost funding and many of them shut down. So just thinking about these challenges that civil society organizations face in local contexts, I wanted to invite us to talk a bit about the role of external supports and specific, specifically external supports at the global level and how these types of supports can, can, can play out at the local level.

And what we should think about, and I know, Aleesha, this is something that, that you've been working on and has been a particular concern of yours for years. So I'd like to start with you and just the question around what types of supports do CSOs, local CSOs need to do the type of work we're talking about in education systems, systems transformation. And if you have any examples of where those supports have, have worked well and where they haven't, what we should avoid doing.

Aleesha Taylor: I think first of all, when thinking about the role of global actors, I think the role should be to create space for local, for local CSOs and then the supports that can be deployed to do that are, first of all, trust. And we talk about trust-based philanthropy and trust-based funding. I think sometimes we might talk about it more so in the global North as opposed to or amongst global actors as opposed to local civil society organizations. And then the other piece, more importantly, or connected to the trust is funding and unrestricted funding for organizations to be able to carry out their missions and do their work in a way, in ways that they are able to conceptualize and define as

opposed to being in response to requests from donors or donor trends or international, international trends.

So those two things definitely step out, stands out for me, trust and trust and funding. An example that stands out, one being the Regional Education Learning Initiative, another being, another network that operates across East Africa is Amplify Girls, and they have a very interesting mission. It's a network of about 25 to 30 community development or community driven organizations that or that work with or support girl's agency. And their mission is about shifting or addressing the development narrative or providing a counterbalance to the development narrative by and by networking and supporting org, community driven organizations to define their own agendas, to define the narrative, and then also driving resources to them.

So it's really interesting to see the extent to which you are seeing networks popping out, popping up, or intermediary organizations that exist specifically to amplify the voices of community-based or grassroots organizations and to serve as a, as a, as a go between or as a fundraiser, in a sense, to drive resources directly to them.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Rakesh, I was wondering, were there any.

Rakesh Rajani: Yeah, just building on what Aleesha said. So four things come to mind, right? How is the agenda set and framed? Who, how are decisions made? Decision making happens, how are they made, who is involved in those decisions? Third, how are budgets set and how are budgets allocated. Very curious of the 24 billion, how much of that is going to go here and how much is going to go to your partners? For example, and the, the fourth one is, is the way in which that relationship unfolds and that and the work unfolds, does it build the capabilities of organizations in the Global South? Or does it just use them instrumentally to deliver certain outputs and outcomes? Right.

So at Co-Impact we are a funder now, one of our goals is that not only when we fund not only that, some wonderful things will happen in terms of people's lives and systems changing, but we are on the hook to make sure that those organizations we support are more powerful, more capable, more confident, more independent as a result of how we structure our support to them than when we started. So those four criteria, I think are pretty good ones to look at the nature of this relationship and kind of decolonizing development.

Juan Alfonso Mejía López: Well, I just keep thinking about this word that Rebecca told us at the beginning, one of the Ps, which is the purpose, and I think that maybe you can add a fourth one

which is power, but we will talk about it. But I propose I think that is very related, I just I will ask the Brookings Institute to think what does it mean to a local organization to be linked to the Brookings Institute in Washington? So think about the cities, the cities, not the countries, not the states, but the cities maybe that are working and trying to find new waves, that are trying new ways, that are trying to find a new perspective, and they are alone. Alone. Alone, yeah. Okay. So but they are linked to the Brookings Institute.

So this goes to a question of what kind of civil society do we want to build? So you're going to meet some organizations that work in practices, okay. But then you're going to need another kind of organizations of working agenda. That's going to be hard, both because in Mexico, if a professor is very good and wants to do his or her system, it will be impossible because he has to follow the rules, okay. But if this professor or this school finds a new way and kind and can be link it to an organization that is linked at the same time to the Brookings Institute, that's different for the minister, okay.

And I don't want to, just very quickly, I just had this experience when I was as a minister with Phillips and said, we're never coming to Sinaloa because you don't have the 3000 engineers that we would need. So I started working right there with elementary schools in creating opportunities for the kids. Okay, so one kid goes to a school, that school is completing his or their mission, as they are allowed in, allowing a kid to go to look further, that that's one kind of a problem. When you work with universities or with professional entities, it's about specialization. I don't know if it's the well, say it or not. But competitiveness? Yeah, sometimes, I'm sorry about the pronunciation. It's not between countries it's between regions. And regions, it's about localities, cities. And cities, it's about human resources.

So I went with the Engineers Association, Association and says, well, I want as an educational minister to Philips to come over and stay here. So what kind of specialization do we need? And then I went to the universities and then I went to the national level. So I try to change the curriculum. And so I think that the universities, entrepreneurs, the ministers, social organizations, the civil society organizations, that's where you can work very nearly or tied with these kinds of professional organizations.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: I think one of the pieces that we've been reflecting on and that I think has come out of the conversations today and to be honest, I'm sorry you all missed our, our preparatory conversation because that was also a really good one, in that conversation as well is

really how, you know when you want to support something you often end up interrupting processes that are in motion already, right. And so we've talked a bit about this sort of local, you know, being municipal as you were saying Juan Alfonso, or being state level national.

And, you know, I'll just share a personal experience when we were in Mexico that we, at the national level, at the CSO that we were working with, did a ranking of the states in terms of their compliance with the right to education. And in the end, we ranked at someone first. And even though that person, as Claudia, you said, it wasn't like they were doing a really great job. We couldn't say like, this state has the high-quality education, it was just that this state is better right now than anyone else. But we went to the state, and we were going to present this report and the governor found out and got so excited and had a huge event with like a band, like a marching band and balloons and all of this to announce that they were number one.

And after even though in my, you know, when I gave the speech, I sort of said critiqued and said like, okay, yeah, it's in first place. But look, red here and red, you need to work on this. But that message didn't make it through. But afterwards, the civil society, local civil society organizations came up to us and they said they were so angry because they had been working for 15 years to try to get the state together to move forward on this agenda that they needed to improve quality in the state. And they said in one day you came here and now the governor says, look, I'm number one, we're number one, you can't tell me that we're not doing what we need to do, etc.

So for me that was an extremely important lesson. And in this relationship between the levels, right, and how we don't want to do that. So are there tips, guidance, thoughts, reflections that you have on that as how, as Brookings we can partner as Juan Alfonso said. What does it mean for a local organization to be partnered with the Brookings Institution? How might that impact local processes, local power relationships, power dynamics, and what can we do to try to, I guess, mitigate undesired consequences like that.

Aleesha Taylor: I think, well, for a start, one thing is just thinking about the questions that you're asking yourself. So even just having some, you know, good contemplation and maybe some, doing some in your conversations, asking the questions, what are we disrupting? It was actually in your opening, you talked about how the, the, I think leadership council like you'll be, you'll be identifying ten organizations who will be leading systems of the agenda. And when you said that, my question, my, in my mind I thought actually, who are the organizations that are already doing that?

Because they do exist in the individual organizations and those networks in geography. So trying to, paying attention to what's already happening, I think could strengthen your agenda. And also build on what's already, what's already going on.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Rakesh, you look like you really want to talk.

Rakesh Rajani: I think whenever you have a partnership between the global North and the global South, it's really important, I think, for the Global North organization to take a posture of we are in, we are in service mode, right? We bring certain attributes and certain connections that can be helpful in service of organizations in the Global South that are leading the work, right. And you need to really interrogate that what leadership means here, right. And how you how you make space, including when they go in directions that don't feel cool to you or don't feel comfortable to you. That doesn't mean, I'm not trying to romanticize that everybody in the Global South knows what they're doing, and in the global North, no, no, I'm not trying to say that. But it's when you invest in those relationships, it happens.

I, I'll give you one quick anecdote. When I was running Twaweza, which is an East African organization, we had many partnerships with the Global North. We had a partnership with elite institutions, MIT, Princeton, UCLA, for example, around evaluation. The way it worked, first, we got the money from the donor. We set the agenda. We selected them, not the other way around. We paid them. We set the scope of work, and they did work in a way that was intellectually robust. We learned a lot from them, but that was the term of it. It was, it was, there was no question as to who was in charge.

And at the end, what are we trying to achieve, which was something that was in that, which was an agenda set by us in Tanzania, and that was meant to further advance the work we were trying to do there. And the value of MIT, Princeton and UCLA in this case was to actually support us, that sort of thing. When you, when you get that right, it can be really powerful. We were stronger in East Africa as a result of that Global North partnership than if we had not had it. But you have to get it right and you have to pay a lot of attention to getting it right.

Jennifer O'Donoghue: Thank you.

Aleesha Taylor: Can I add something there as well? I mean, so you've mentioned, you've said that you'll be identifying ten organizations. I'll be fascinated to see how many actual applications you get. So I think one of the things you could also be thinking about is surely if you're selecting ten,

you'll probably have 25 that could easily be in the mix, if not 50. So what are you going to, so you'll have the top ten. But what about that next group of 20?

And when we think about the point that, a point that Rakesh made earlier about supporting organizations, making sure that organizations strengthen their, their capabilities, are there ways, additional resources or networking opportunities or access to conversations or exposure that you can also be providing not just to the ten organizations, but to those that are finalists or even semi semifinalists?

Juan Alfonso Mejía López: One last intervention is just talking from the local organization's perspective. But let me talk about from the Brookings perspective. Secretary Gutierrez, Carlos Gutierrez just made an announcement last September in the United Nations, calling them, I think, Barbara, also talk about it, asking for, pay attention to, to the recovery of learnings because we have a problem as a generation. But I think that the countries— mine, for example— I think Mexico was not even there, but I can imagine as working with a minister ten years ago, maybe he could have been there and give some round of applause and that's it.

But I think that is different from a, for an institute like this one, when he can support a local organization and then with those local organizations, maybe at the state level, then put some pressure at the national level. And I mean pressure just getting to talk with, with him. So [inaudible] used to visit Mexico, I mean, you had the minister and everyone right there listening to him and the entrepreneurs and right there. So our organization was trained like to set an agenda and keep the pressure with that discussion. So I think with the Brookings Institute, if you support some local organizations, then you can put some pressure at the national level and bring together some countries and then universities and then experts and then and there you go with that coalition that has an local impact, so.

Rakesh Rajani: Jen, can I sneak in a footnote? I also think you may want to think about, when you think of your ten local organizations, think of them as ten, maybe some global organizations just locally rooted in the Global South. When I was at Twaweza we did not identify, we were based in East Africa, but we did not consider ourselves a local organization. That was not our identity. We were a national, regional and in some ways a global organization.

There's something called the Open Government Partnership that some of you may have heard. We helped set it up out of Dar es Salaam. So I think one way of doing this is to think of some

of your partners as intellectual peers in global leadership. But just because they are based in Dar es Salaam or Lima or Delhi, it doesn't make them just local and then you global. So interrogating what is local and global may also be useful.

      Jennifer O'Donoghue: Thank you. I'm going to pull this to the end. And just want to thank, I don't know if I took a lot of notes personally for our own work. And so for me, this was a really rich discussion and opportunity to learn with you. And I hope for all of you that it was as well. So I want to thank our panelists and I'm going to transition and take a few minutes away from the reception to just quickly tell everyone about the launch of this global coalition. So I'm going to stand here so you can stay, or you can leave if you want to. Okay.

      So in the morning you saw this slide, it probably looks familiar, Rebecca presented it. This is our new Knowing-Doing Network the way that we will be pulling together our thematic workstreams and thematic workstreams that others are working on under this one umbrella of a shared vision for systems transformation, a network of networks for learning and action in support of inclusive and holistic education, collaborative knowledge creation, strengthen ecosystems, a coordinated action for systemic change. So this is the big network of networks that we're hoping to work with. And then within this, the model that we have is to work with a group of ten organizations, you've heard it repeated here many times in the conversation today, and this is really thinking about, you know, how can we have shared decision making and shared creation of that, you know, what is really going to be the agenda moving forward.

      So to co-creating that, that agenda for this Knowing-Doing network, what we, what we didn't want was to have a Knowing-Doing network with CUE and the center saying this is what we should all be doing, but really pulling together a group of partners and peers. And I think importantly, as you were saying, intellectual partners in this work who may be rooted in the Global South, who can think together about what this, what this work might look like moving forward.

      So today and now and we're now going live with the website, we're announcing the open call for expressions of interest for organizations to join this Knowing-Doing leadership coalition. The Knowing-Doing Leadership Coalition will work together to co-create the research and research agendas in plural to engage in collaborative inquiry, so we'll be doing research together, shared learning around systems transformation toward inclusive and holistic learning. We'll be thinking together about how we connect the members of the broader Knowing-Doing network across contexts,

across thematic areas, I think importantly from this conversation across those levels that we talked about so much from the very local to the, to the global. And we'll be developing both locally specific and global communication and engagement strategies.

So this will be an important part of our work as well around what, what, what, what are we all doing together, right. And how, what is it that ties us together? How do we talk about the work in ways that both are broad enough and expansive enough to be inclusive, but also hold us together in a way that we feel like we are doing part of the same work? Selected organizations, so these ten will be eligible for subgrants of up to 400,000 USD. So that's 100,000 USD per organization per year, over the course of the project, which is four years from 2023 to 2026. And who will be the KDNLC partners or what types of organizations.

So we're looking to work, as we've been saying, with civil society organizations who are working to inform evidence-based systems transformation. So I should say, Aleesha, that was a misspeak on my part when I said they will be leading, these are organizations that are already leading, as you pointed out, this work in local education jurisdictions across the world. So we are planning to work with organizations that are geographically, economically and culturally diverse in communities across the world, particularly in the global South. So we have a focus on global South organizations. We're looking for organizations that focus on holistic learning, the development of a breadth of skills, which we've been talking about throughout the day for young people, and particularly for young people in marginalized contexts. We're looking to us, to partner with organizations that are actively engaging actors across their local education ecosystem.

So again, we talked a lot about government today, but we really want organizations that are looking across the expanse of the education ecosystem and engaging with partners in multiple spaces and in multiple ways. And we're really looking for partners who are eager to co-construct a collaborative space to explore, experiment and learn with peers from across the world. That is our hope. And we are also really eager to see if we get ten applications or 10,000, I never know which one we prefer. And usually when I look at this timeline, I get afraid of, really afraid of the second.

But so we are now launching the call for expressions of interest. This is our official launch on February 17th. So here we are. The deadline to express interest is March 31st. So this will be a way for organizations to just say, hey, we're here, we're interested, and here's a little bit of information about us. Then we will be inviting eligible organizations, and there's a lot more information about

eligibility on the website, which I'm about to show. So we'll be inviting eligible or all eligible organizations to fill out, to complete applications, and then we'll be having a review process throughout the summer with our selection decisions announced in July and August of this year.

So this is when I say that ten if we have 10,000 applicants, we're going to maybe have to call you all back here to help us to review those 10,000 applications. How to express interest in this opportunity, please visit and encourage to visit all of the civil society organizations that you know, please encourage them to visit the KDNLC landing page, the KDNLC please learn the acronym, it's the Knowing-Doing Network Leadership Coalition, it's a mouthful and it might change, but we wanted to wait and see if the KDNLC decides that's not the name, then we'll change it to something else. But we don't want to make that decision without them. So the website is WWW dot Brookings dot edu slash KDNLC. So you can also use that QR code to go directly there. There's more information on the page. We'll be having an information session for interested organizations on March 14th from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time.

And so I encourage as many people as possible again, and organizations and for all of you who are watching or will watch later in the recorded version, because it's very late at night in most parts of the world at this point, please come to the information session or share your questions with us and we will be answering them and putting them on our website as well, and complete the KDNLC Expression of Interest form online. So again, you can find this information at this KDNLC landing page and March 31st is the deadline for all of that. So with that, I will just say thank you and thank you again to our panelists. Thank you again to all of you for this wonderful day, for staying, making it through to the end, and really being a part with us of this work as we move forward.

You know, Rebecca, as Rebecca talked about this morning, this is a community, a community of learning. We are all part of the community together and we are grateful that you have invested at this time to spend with us today to share your learning, to share your experience, and to really be part of this, this journey that has been ongoing and will continue and that we're really excited to move forward with all of you together.

So thank you, everyone. Help spread the word about the KDNLC, it rolls off the tongue and I forgot my list of housekeeping things, but I know that we have reception now, and so I believe the invitation is to everyone to move out of this space and to join us, we'll have drinks, we'll have snacks,

and just a good time to celebrate the fact that we have had this very enriching and challenging and long day together. Thank you all.