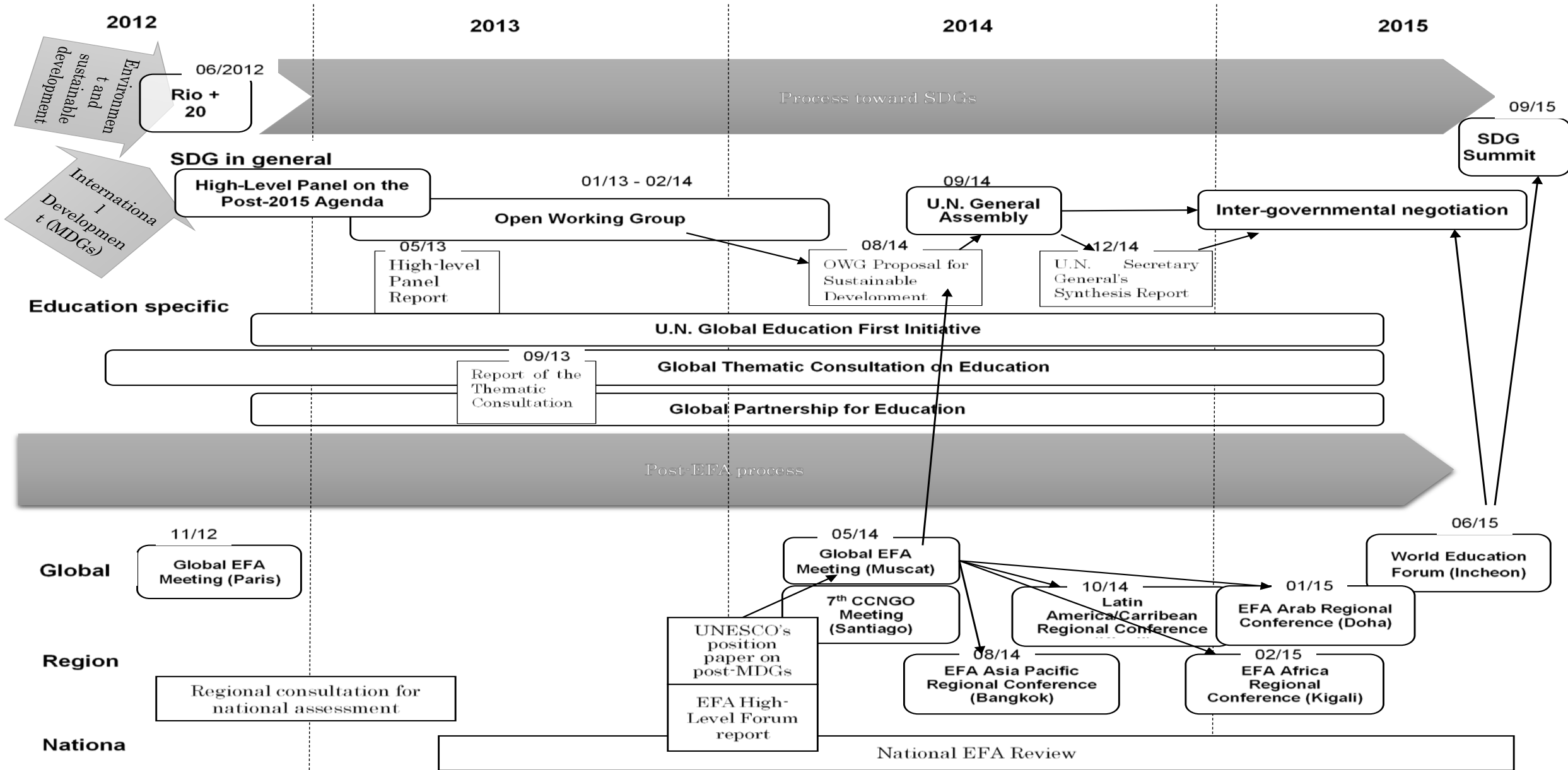


Civil society actors in the process of developing SDGs: The analysis of discourse on the education sector goal (SDG4)

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The process has been too complicated: But what did it really mean?



Discourse analysis

Investigation of the process how certain ideas take shape

- Diverse groups of people discuss about “Post-EFA”, “Post-2015 and “SDG”
 - ← Ideas do not exist there from the beginning but are *Socially Constructed*
 - ← It reflects the **power** relationship among **actors** involved
 - ← Discourse shapes the **structure**, while the structure conditions the discourse
 - ← It is a linguistic approach to know the background of building consensus
- Foucault, “History of Insanity” (1964)

Post-EFA discourse is the momentum to know how different ideas are expressed to shape the “consensus views” of “global education community”

Then, the question is....

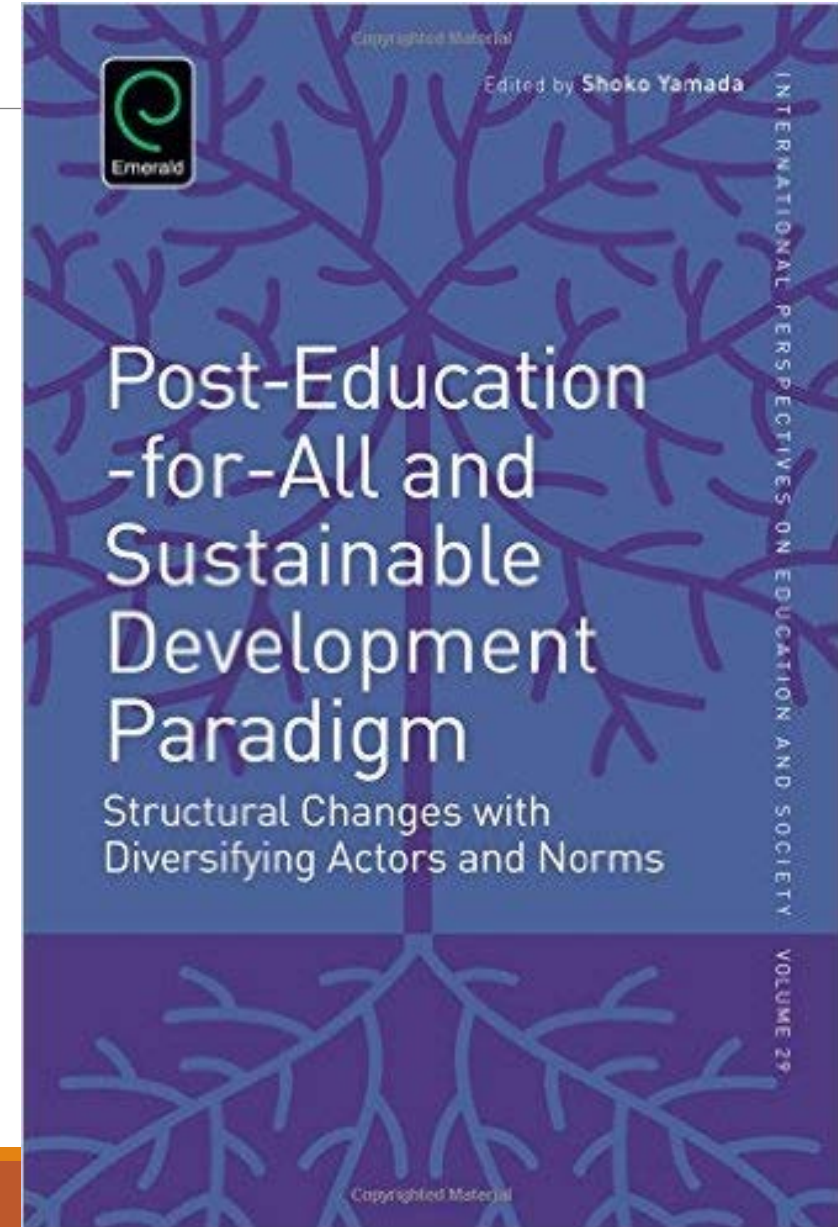
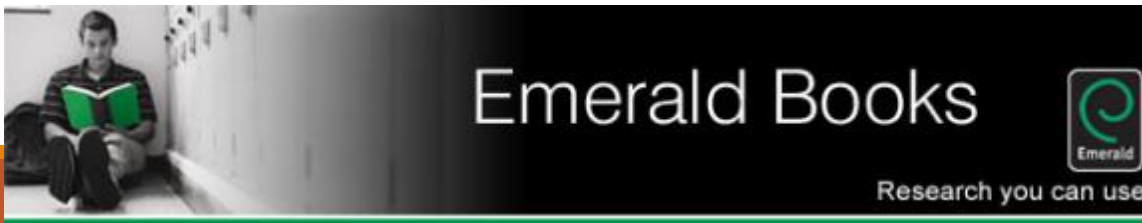
- Who took part in the process?
- What kind of ideas did they bring into the discourse?
- What are the institutional background?
- What kind of structure did it create?

Recent book published based on this research

International perspectives on education and society series

Post-Education-for-All and Sustainable Development Paradigm: Structural Changes with Diversifying Actors and Norms

Shoko Yamada (Ed) 2016



Methodologies

1. Interviews with 40 key informants in Europe, North America, Asia-Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America
 - Information technology is a breakthrough not only for research but also for global advocacy
2. In-depth qualitative analysis of 270 documents presented / distributed at conferences of formal EFA governance structure
3. Quantitative text analysis of web-based comments, reports, and blog messages
 - Methodological challenge to handle big data for discourse analysis
 - 1,720 documents (2 for year 2011, 60 for 2012, 127 for 2013, 953 for 2014, and 578 for 2015) and nearly 20,000 KB in memory size

Who took part in the discourse?

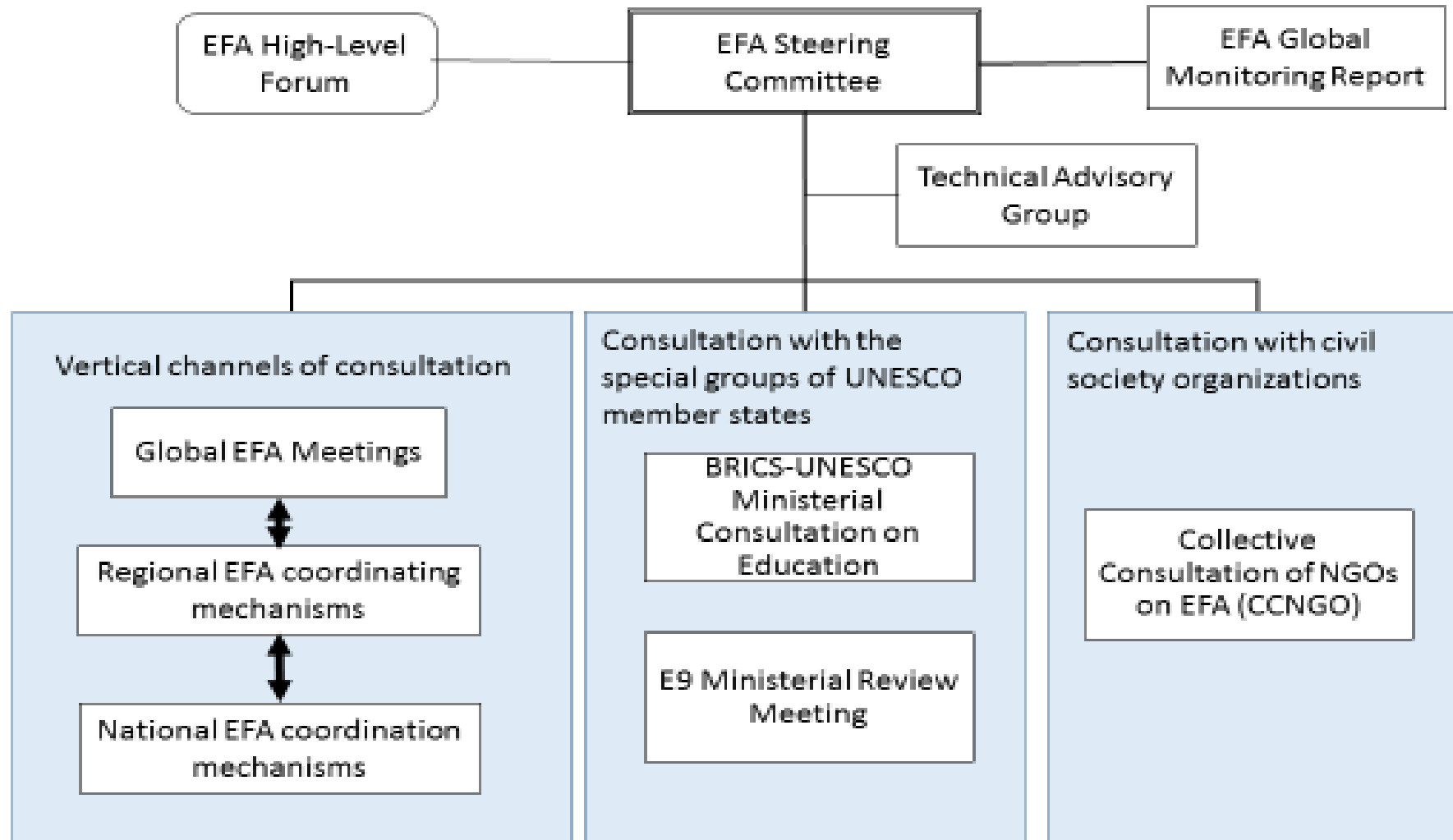
Member states

Education specialists of convening agencies

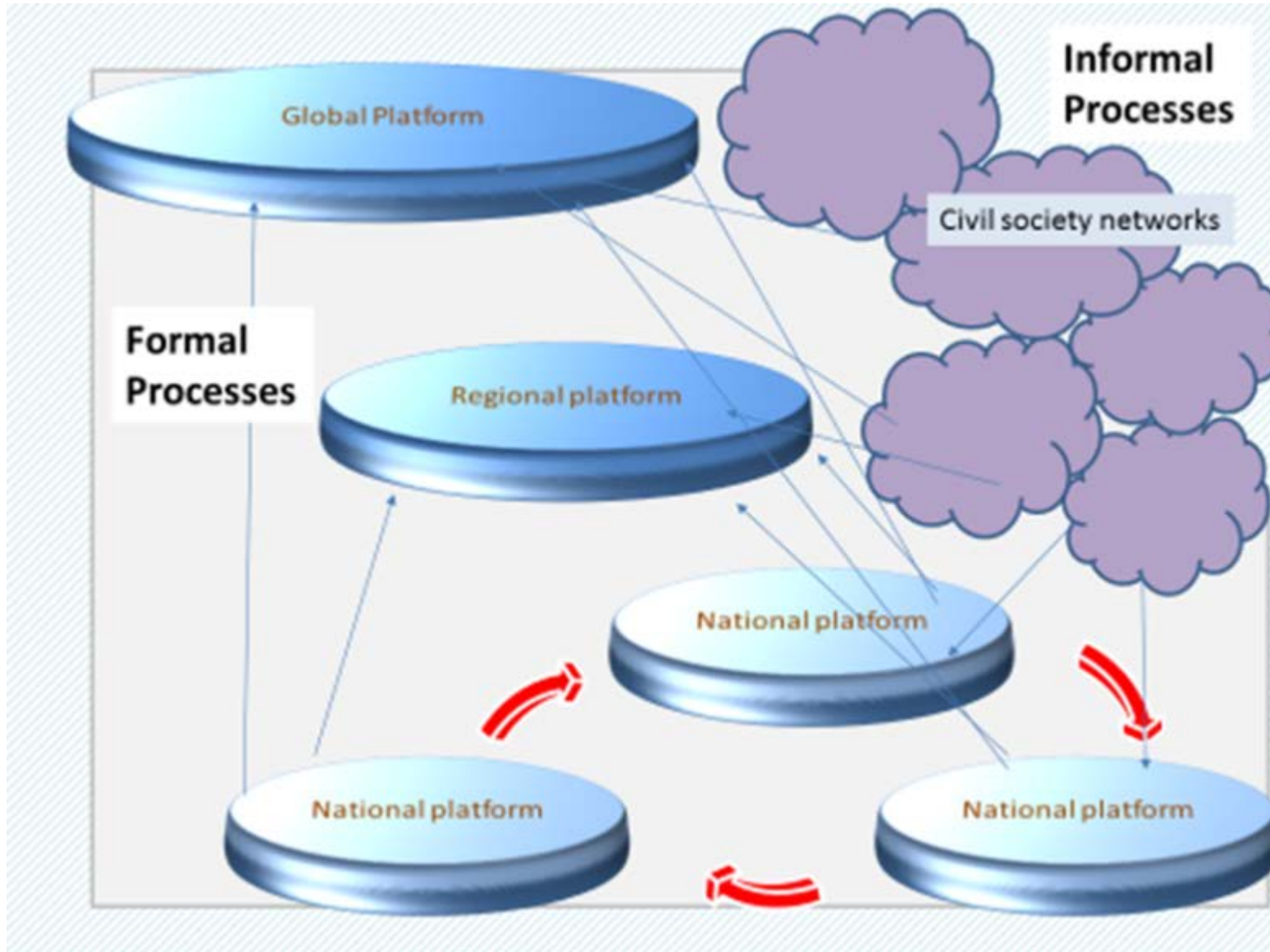
Civil society actors

- Mission-driven CSOs
(e.g. Global Campaign for Education, International NGOs)
- Constituency-based CSOs (e.g. Education International)
- Technical specialist groups (e.g. Learning Metrics Task Force)
- Philanthropies (Open Society Foundations, Qatar Foundation)

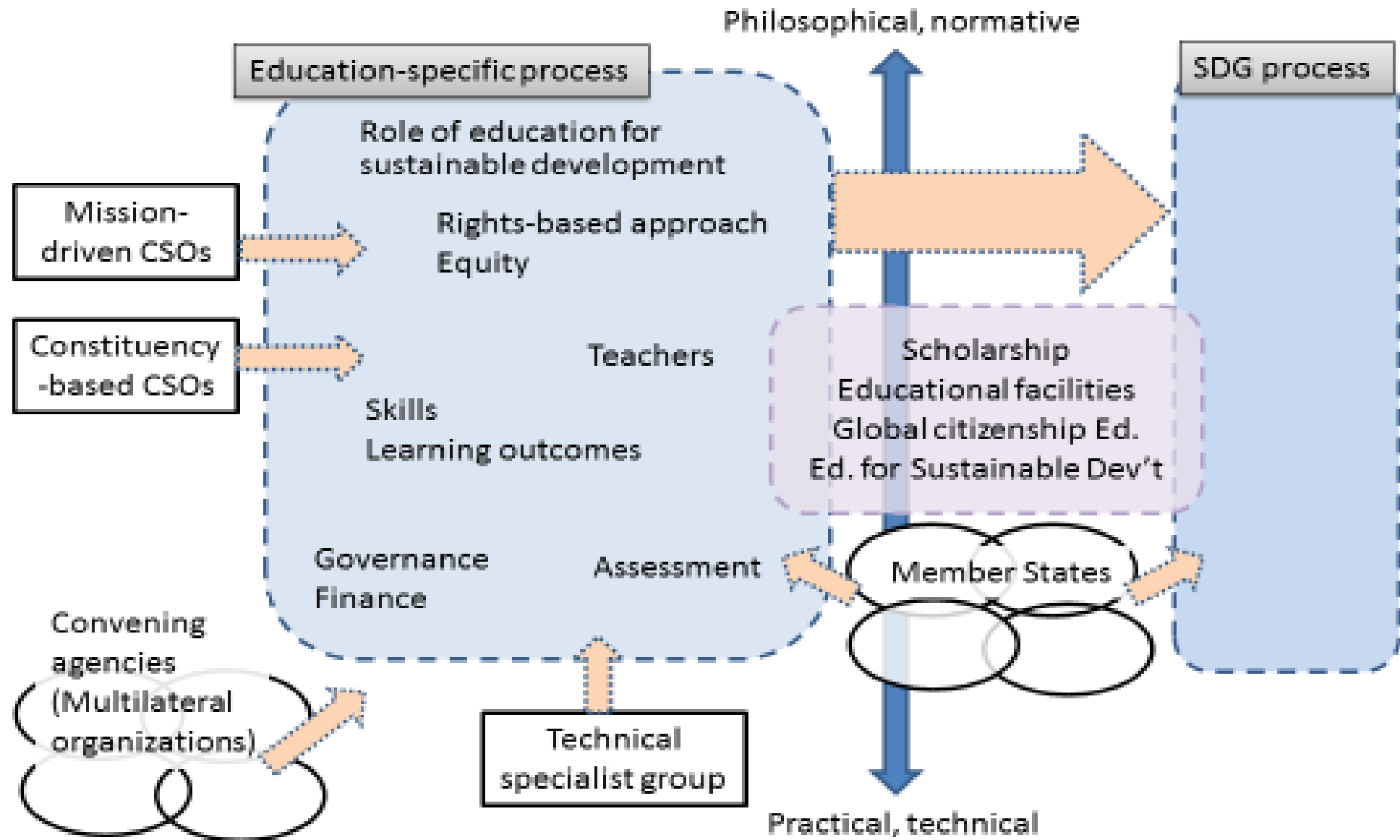
Broad-based participation but narrow basis of decision-making



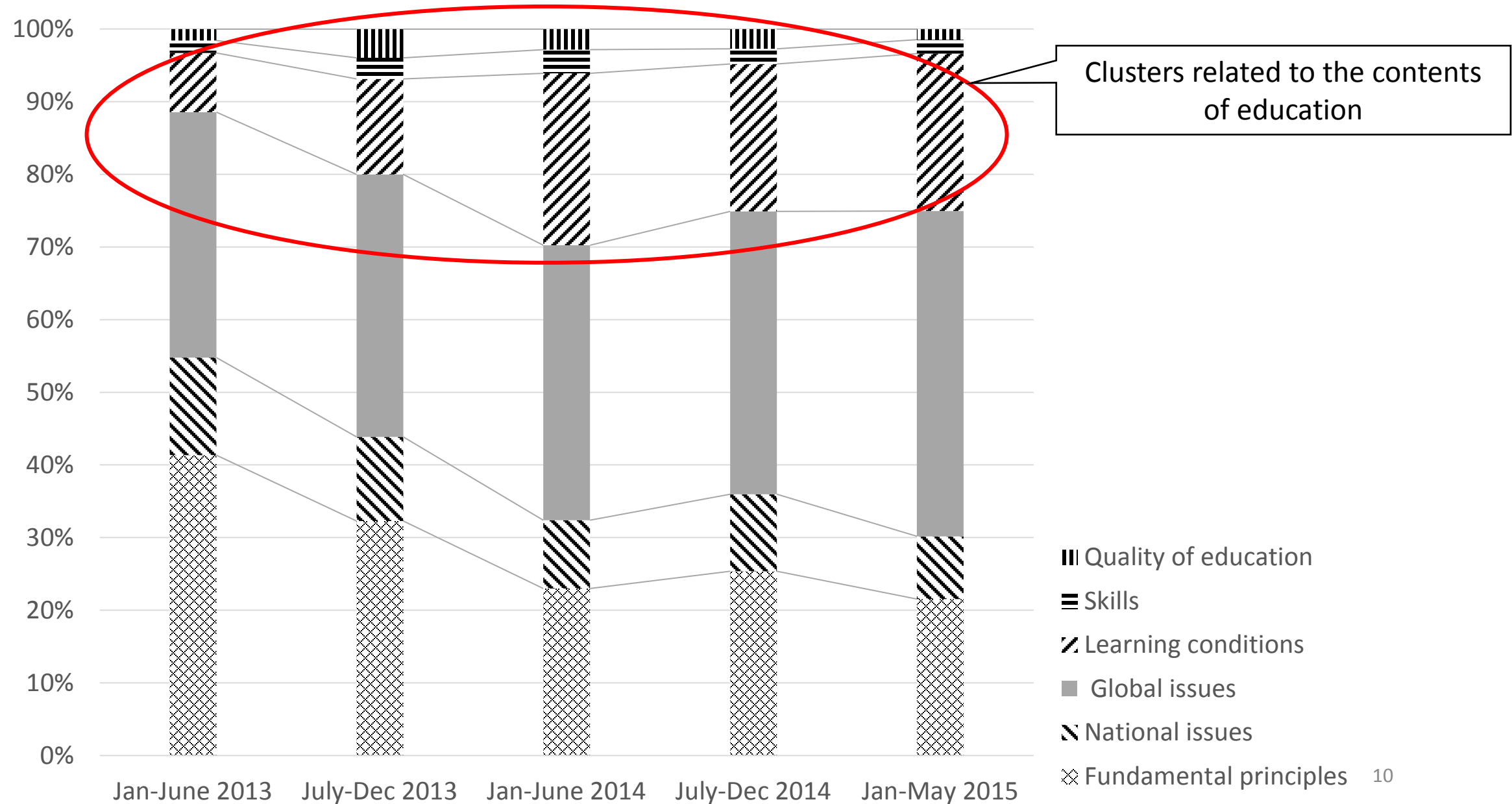
Broadening informal channels of participation
which fill the gap of global governance structure



Educational ideas brought into discourse by various actors

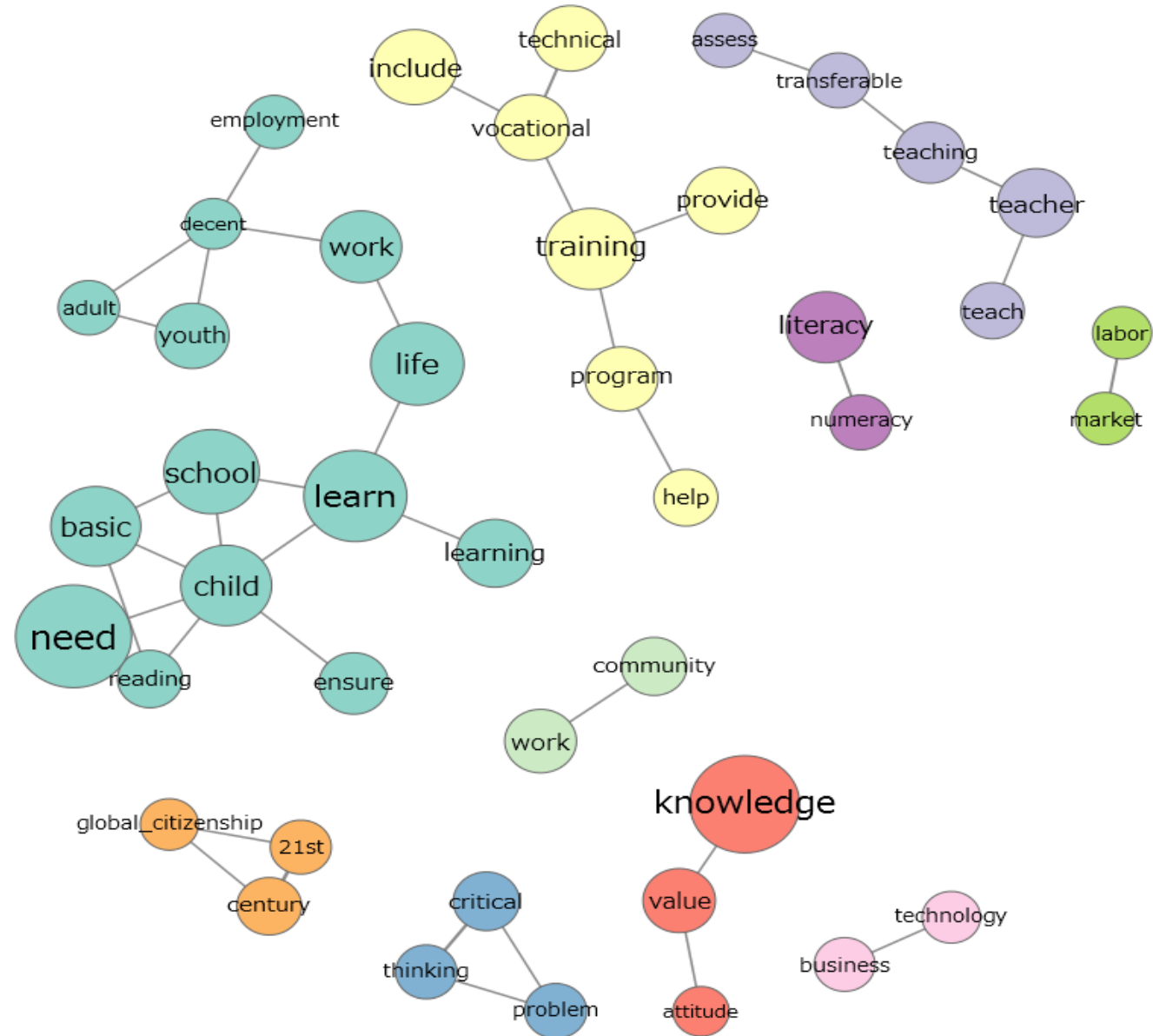


Trend of frequency of usage of words clustered in 6 groups (%)



Co-occurrence network of words frequently used together with the words constituting the cluster “skills”

- This network shows the distance and frequency of words which co-occur with the words constituting the “skills” cluster - Skill,
- The size of the circle: the frequency of the occurrence
- The length of line between the circles: the degree of dependence between the words



Issues on the politics of global discourse (1)

Actors with *Vertical* and *Horizontal* decision-making mechanism

Those actors influential in “Education community” do not have direct control over the process in New York

- ← Gap between the post-WWII assumption of international relations based on the vertical representation of nation states
- ← Various types of *civil society actors* fill this gap mostly in the *informal* space of participation

**Necessity of reshaping the intellectual imagination of
*International Relations and Multilateralism***

Issues on the politics of global discourse (2)

Rhetoric and realities of **broad-based participation**

- Much larger number of people could raise voices in the process of Post-EFA discourse than the period toward Dakar
 - ← Did it mean that their voices were reflected to the final statement from the “Education community?”

Impossible!!

Narrow-based decision-making by well-meant **translators / leaders** of institutional representatives

CSOs – advocacy officers and CSO representatives participating in various formal meetings (same names appear in the participant lists of different meetings)

Regional representatives – difficult for all the ministries of education in member states to be equally informed and participating in building a “regional voice”

Member states – only to express unanimous voices from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a challenge

Issues related to the contents of educational agenda (1)

Normative issues

- Learning outcomes
- Skills
- Teachers
- Indicators and assessment

Focus has shifted from the system-level efficacy to the outcomes of **individual learners**

- ← The process to shape consensus on the importance of *Quality* issues and **measurement** of *Educational Outcomes*
 - ← Nearly three years of EFA reviews (at national, regional, and global level and through virtual consultations)
- ← *Measurability* vs. *fundamental role of education* in human development
- ← Various areas of *skills* and their learning outcomes
 - ← Early grade reading
 - ← Numeracy
 - ← Vocational and life skills
 - ← Global citizenship education, Education for sustainable development, democracy education, etc.

Issues related to the contents of educational agenda (2)

Issues on implementation

- Financing
- Country process
- Indicators and assessment

← Issues on implementation were mostly left for later discussion

After all, Post-2015 discourse was an air fight away from realities on the ground

← Understandable lack of interests by people who are actually involved in educational development activities (Broad-based participation?)

← Different opinions about the value of developing a set of global agenda through laborious and complicated consultation process

Implications of CSOs' participation in agenda setting

- Among CSOs, there is a significant discrepancy between those who are involved and find values in taking part of agenda setting and those who are indifferent
 - ◆ Setting the environment favorable for their activities **in the next 15 years**
 - ↕
 - Issues included in the agenda will be prioritized and be better funded
 - Fight over wording and phrasing, sentence by sentence
 - ◆ Making difference on the ground **today**
- CSOs fill the gap between conventional structure of decision-making and the demand for professional inputs and wider participation
 - ◆ Expanded space for civil society participation balances diplomatic interests with humanitarianism and specialist perspectives
 - ◆ Advocacy becomes growingly important capacity of civil society actors
 - ◆ In the global discourse, diversities caused by the difference of social context tend to be muted, while formation of horizontally shared value is highlighted more as a goal of CSOs' involvement