

10 October.2022

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The Presence and Influence of Finnish Education Sector Expertise in International Organisations

**Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland**

Publications of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2022:8

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Íris Santos, Elias Pekkola, Rediet Abebe, Emmi-Niina Kujala,
Jussi Kivistö and Hanna Ilola

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland Helsinki 2022

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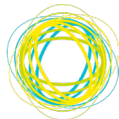
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ISBN pdf: 978-952-281-342-8

ISSN pdf: 2737-0844

Layout: Government Administration Department, Publications

Helsinki 2022 Finland

The Presence and Influence of Finnish Education Sector Expertise in International Organisations

Publications of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2022:8**Publisher** Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Author(s) Íris Santos, Elias Pekkola, Rediet Abebe, Emmi-Niina Kujala, Jussi Kivistö and Hanna Ilola**Language** English**Pages** 92

Abstract

The study analyses how Finnish education experts have been positioned within international organisations and have influence on development cooperation in the education sector. In addition, the study identifies the career paths of the experts and explores their views on Finland's role in global development cooperation in the sector.

The analysis concludes that the participating education experts identify Finland as a small player compared to other reference countries involved in development cooperation in the education sector. Consequently, resources, funds and room for influence of these experts are limited. Furthermore, contacts between the Finnish government and education experts placed abroad are described as very limited. Based on the study, experts would benefit from a more active role of Finnish government agencies and ministries. The main recommendations of the study are: active strategic positioning of Finland in the global educational architecture, development of national strategy for development cooperation in the education sector, increased support for international careers and international education expertise as well as increased communication and facilitation of education experts' networks by the government agencies.

Provision

This report is commissioned as part of UniPID Development Policy Studies (UniPID DPS), funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and managed by the Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID). UniPID is a network of Finnish universities established to strengthen universities' global responsibility and collaboration with partners from the Global South, in support of sustainable development. The UniPID DPS instrument strengthens knowledge-based development policy by identifying the most suitable available researchers to respond to the timely knowledge needs of the MFA and by facilitating a framework for dialogue between researchers and ministry officials. The content of this report does not reflect the official opinion of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The responsibility for the information and views expressed in the report lies entirely with the authors.

Keywords

Education and training, educational policy, development cooperation policy, professional development, international organizations

ISBN PDF 978-952-281-342-8**ISSN PDF** 2737-0844

URN address <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-281-342-8>

Suomalaisten koulutusalan asiantuntijoiden asiantuntijuus, työ ja vaikuttavuus kansainvälisissä järjestöissä

Ulkoministeriön julkaisu 2022:8

Julkaisija Ulkoministeriö

Tekijä/t
Kieli

Íris Santos, Elias Pekkola, Rediet Abebe, Emmi-Niina Kujala, Jussi Kivistö ja Hanna Ilola
englanti

Sivumäärä 92

Tiivistelmä

Tutkimuksessa analysoidaan, koulutusalan asiantuntijoiden sijoittumista strategisesti kansainvälisissä organisaatioissa ja heidän mahdollisuuksiaan vaikuttaa koulutusalan kehitysyhteistyöhön. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa kartoitetaan asiantuntijoiden urapolkuja ja tutkitaan heidän näkemyksiään Suomen roolista alan globaalissa kehitysyhteistyössä.

Analyysin johtopäätöksenä on, että tutkimukseen osallistuneet koulutusalan asiantuntijat pitävät suomen vaikuttamismahdollisuuksia vähäisinä verrattuna koulutusalan kehitysyhteistyötä tekeviin vertailumaihin. Asiantuntijoiden resurssit ja vaikutusmahdollisuudet ovat rajalliset. Opetus- ja ulkoasiainhallinnon sekä ulkomaille sijoitettujen koulutusasiantuntijoiden välisiä yhteyksiä kuvataan vähäisiksi. Tutkimuksen perusteella asiantuntijat hyötyisivät julkishallinnon ja ministeriöiden aktiivisemmasta roolista. Tutkimuksen tärkeimmät suositukset ovat: Suomen kehitysyhteistyön aktiivinen ja strateginen aseointi globaalissa koulutusarkkitehtuurissa, kansallisen kehitysyhteistyöstrategian kehittäminen koulutusallalla, kansainvälisen uran ja kansainvälisen koulutusasiantuntemuksen tuen lisääminen sekä koulutusasiantuntijaverkostojen viestinnän lisääminen ja aktiivinen ylläpito.

Klausuuli

Tämä raportti on osa ulkoministeriön rahoittamia ja UniPID-verkoston hallinnoimia kehityspoliittisia selvityksiä (UniPID Development Policy Studies). Finnish University Partnership for International Development, UniPID, on suomalaisten yliopistojen verkosto, joka edistää yliopistojen globaalivastuuta ja yhteistyötä globaalien etelän kumppanien kanssa kestävässä kehityksessä. Kehityspoliittinen selvitysyhteistyö vahvistaa kehityspoliittikan tietoperustaisuutta. UniPID identifioi sopivia tutkijoita vastaamaan ulkoministeriön ajankohtaisiin tiedontarpeisiin ja fasilitoi puitteet tutkijoiden ja ministeriön virkahenkilöiden väliselle dialogille. Tämän raportin sisältö ei vastaa ulkoministeriön virallista kantaa. Vastuu raportissa esitetyistä tiedoista ja näkökulmista on raportin laatijoilla.

Asiasanat koulutus, koulutuspolitiikka, kehityspolitiikka, ammatillinen kehitys, kansainväliset järjestöt

ISBN PDF 978-952-281-342-8

ISSN PDF 2737-0844

Julkaisun osoite <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-281-342-8>

Finländsk utbildningsexpertis närvaro och inflytande i internationella organisationer

Utrikesministeriets publikationer 2022:8

Utgivare Utrikesministeriet

Författare Íris Santos, Elias Pekkola, Rediet Abebe, Emmi-Niina Kujala, Jussi Kivistö och Hanna Ilola

Språk engelska

Sidantal

92

Referat

Studien analyserar hur finländska utbildningsexperter har positionerats strategiskt inom internationella organisationer och har inflytande på utvecklingssamarbetet inom utbildningssektorn. Dessutom identifierar studien experternas karriärvägar och utforskar deras syn på Finlands roll i det globala utvecklingssamarbetet inom sektorn.

Analysen drar slutsatsen att de deltagande utbildningsexperterna identifierar Finland som ett land med begränsat inflytande, jämfört med andra referensländer som deltar i utvecklingssamarbetet inom utbildningssektorn. Följaktligen är resurserna, medlen och utrymmet för experternas inflytande begränsat. Vidare beskrivs kontakterna mellan den finländska regeringen och utlandsstationerade utbildningsexperter som mycket begränsade. På basis av studien skulle experterna kunna gynnas om de finländska myndigheterna och ministerierna hade en mer aktiv roll. Studiens huvudrekommendationer är en aktiv strategisk positionering av Finland inom den globala utbildningsarkitekturen, utveckling av en nationell strategi för utvecklingssamarbete inom utbildningssektorn, ökat stöd för internationella karriärer och internationell utbildningsexpertis samt ökad kommunikation och underlättande av utbildningsexperternas nätverk från myndigheternas sida.

Klausul

Denna rapport är beställd som en del av UniPID Development Policy Studies (UniPID DPS), finansierad av Finlands Utrikesministerium (MFA), och hanterad av Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID). UniPID är ett nätverk av finska universitet som etablerats för att stärka universitetens globala ansvar och samarbete med partner från det södra halvklotet, till stöd för en hållbar utveckling. UniPID DPS-verktyget stärker en kunskapsbaserad utvecklingspolicy genom att identifiera de mest lämpliga, tillgängliga forskarna för att svara på utrikesministeriets kunskapsbehov i rätt tid och att underlätta ett ramverk för en dialog mellan forskare och departementstjänstemän. Innehållet i denna rapport återspeglar inte Finlands utrikesministeriums officiella uppfattning. Ansvaret för informationen och åsikterna i rapporten ligger helt på författarna.

Nyckelord

utbildning, utbildningspolitik, utvecklingspolitik, professionell utveckling, internationella organisationer

ISBN PDF 978-952-281-342-8

ISSN PDF

2737-0844

URN-adress <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-281-342-8>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study's objectives are: 1) to identify Finnish education experts placed within international organisations, e.g., UN agencies, the World Bank and EU; 2) to scrutinise the influence and impact of Finnish education expertise on these organisations; and 3) to understand how to improve this influence and impact as well as to increase the number of Finnish education experts placed within these organisations.

The study is expected to support implementation of a road map for Finland's education sector cooperation within international organisations. Furthermore, the study seeks to support the initial phase of the Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development, located within the Finnish National Agency for Education, which aims, among other functions, to set up an expert pool that will support deployment of Finnish education sector experts to international organisations.

This study employed mixed methods, but had an emphasis on qualitative methodological approaches, utilising relevant data collected through surveys (N = 31), semi-structured thematic interviews (N = 31) and a review of available secondary materials, e.g., policy documents, reports and academic publications. A snowball method was used to identify experts in development cooperation in the education sector because one of the criteria for identifying expertise is a consensus among peers that one is an expert. Furthermore, the survey respondents and interviewees viewed themselves as education experts, as they held institutional positions as experts in their fields.

The following key results were elicited:

Most identified experts were placed in senior positions at different levels of UN agencies. Besides those working for UN agencies, we identified and interviewed experts working for the World Bank, Global Partnership for Education, Save the Children, Finn Church Aid and the Asian Development Bank, among other organisations. Previously, all the interviewed experts were involved in projects for myriad organisations, including international organisations themselves, private companies and under bilateral agreements, mostly in African countries. Furthermore, all interviewees also had experience working in the Finnish context in a variety of positions, making the pool of participants rich and diverse. However, according to the survey, less than half the participants had work experience in the education sector in Finland.

Most of the experts identified themselves as representatives of Finland and as international education experts, but education experts would benefit from improved communication and a greater understanding of Finnish policy aims and agendas, as well as more clarity about what is expected from them (guidance and coordination). Only a few education experts were well-informed about education within Finland's development policy. Many experts working within international organisations feel that they do not know the Finnish development policy and its aims in education well enough, leading them to follow the agendas of the organisations in which they are placed.

Regarding international organisations with whom Finland works and should intensify its collaboration, experts argue that investing in UN agencies, particularly UNICEF and UNESCO, is a positive move. Furthermore, participants recognise Finland as a small player compared with other countries involved in development cooperation in the education sector. Consequently, resources, funds and room for influence naturally are limited. Contacts between the Finnish government and education experts placed abroad are described as very limited or even non-existent. Experts welcome more guidance from Finnish government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Based on this study's results, this report's principal recommendations are:

1. *Strategic positioning of Finland in the global educational architecture*
To prioritise certain international organisations in the field of education, Finland needs a more explicit strategy for education in development policy and cooperation.
2. *Development of national strategy for development cooperation in the education sector*
If Finland wants to be relevant in development cooperation in the education sector, it needs to be focussed and strategic. We recommend that the following be emphasised:
 - Assessing and defining education focus and content in the context of Finnish development policy.
 - Defining the Finnish niche/focus in development cooperation in the education sector.
 - Defining the role of Finnish (higher) education institutions in development policy.

3. *Increased support for international careers and international education expertise*

International experts' careers need continuous support, which should focus on:

- Early exposure to international activities as part of university study and early careers of education experts in Finland, including internships and student exchanges.
- Coordination of early and mid-career international positions and increased possibilities and awareness of short-term consultancy in the context of technical advice for development.
- Increased provision of information on international careers and employers.
- Accessible and recognised professional training for experts working towards international careers.
- Promotion of international expertise in relevant Finnish government ministries and agencies.

4. *Increased communication and facilitation of education experts' networks*

International experts would benefit from better communication and networking among Finnish experts and between these and Finnish government ministries and agencies. The following aspects in particular should be considered:

- Increased collaboration between experts working at multilateral organisations and in other sectors, e.g., education export and civil society organisations.
- Increased communication about Finnish policy priorities.
- Increased communication about recent developments in the Finnish education sector and its expertise.
- Further development of the *Koulutus kehittyvissä maissa*' platform.
- The MFA should develop its work on education sector development policy and cooperation further so that external stakeholders and experts working in the field can access and understand it.

Overall, Finnish development policy in the education sector would benefit from a more explicit strategy and increased collaboration among various actors.

THE PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE OF FINNISH EDUCATION SECTOR EXPERTISE IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs commissioned this study to contribute to its systematic efforts for stepping up Finland's global role in education. Education is a top priority in Finland's development policy. It is an important element of our country branding and in Team Finland export promotion. Education is also a frequent topic of political dialogue with our partner countries and international partners.

A growing number of Finnish education actors, including educational institutions, private sector and civil society organizations are willing to participate in addressing the global learning crisis. Cooperation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, the National Agency for Education and these education sector actors has been strengthened to increase Finland's contribution to global education development.

Finland has a long tradition of sending Junior Professional Officers and United Nations Volunteers to UN organizations. A number of them have been working in the education sector. Finland has also made a few strategic placements to the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in support of education operations of these financing institutions. Finns have also independently sought and established a career as education experts in international organizations. A few have made it to senior positions in the global education landscape. However, little has been known on their influence on the global education development landscape and on the use of Finland's education sector strengths and best practices in their work.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs' evaluation, published in 2020, of Finnish Development Policy Influencing activities in International organizations, recommended that staff placements should be used more strategically and more effectively for multilateral influencing. The study on the presence and influence of Finnish education sector expertise in international organizations is an effort to follow up on the evaluation's recommendations. One of its objectives is to deepen our understanding on the influence of Finnish education sector expertise in international organizations.

In 2021 FINCEED, the Centre for Expertise in Education and Development at the National Agency for Education was established as a joint effort of both the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education and Culture. One of FINCEED's key tasks is to facilitate

capacity building and career paths of Finnish experts in education and development and hence increase Finland's international influence in education. This study, with its recommendations will be used to develop the work of FINCEED further. The study also provides an important lesson for the Finnish education export sector: It concludes that Finnish education experts in international organizations are to a large extent underutilized as a network and as entry points for sharing Finnish expertise internationally. Only a few experts had contacts and networks with Finnish education export actors.

The study provides also important lessons for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture: Finnish education experts in international organizations are keen to be more in contact with Finnish government officials and they are willing to use Finnish education sector's best practices and policies for the benefit of their work in international organizations. Yet they feel official contacts and opportunities to do so have been insufficient.

The study concludes that the global education architecture is complex and Finnish experts are relatively few. Therefore, it is essential to focus our efforts to those actions where Finland can have strategically most influence and impact.

Marjaana Sall, Ambassador for Education
September, 2022

1 Introduction

In this introductory chapter, we present the report's aims and structure. Furthermore, the report's policy context is explained, as well as the documents and events that guided this study's first steps.

1.1 Study's aims and the report's structure

This study aimed to identify the extent to which, to date, Finnish education sector experts have been positioned strategically in international organisations regarding development cooperation in the education sector, as well as to discuss and analyse the influence and impact of their expertise within these organisations. The study starts by identifying key education actors positioned within international organisations and examining whether and how the positions that these Finnish education experts have held – in the past and present – have been influential within these organisations. Furthermore, we identified these experts' career paths in the education sector development cooperation. Finally, this report aimed to understand how these experts view Finland's role in global development cooperation in the education sector and what they suggest should be done to strengthen its role in future work by the Finnish Centre of Expertise in Education and Development (FinCEED).

Thus, this study is expected to support implementation of the road map for strengthening Finnish stakeholders' education sector cooperation with developing countries. The road map was developed and is monitored by a coordination group (*koulutusala kehityskaissa-koordinaatioryhmä*) established in 2020, co-chaired by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), to strengthen Finland's efforts towards education sector cooperation in Global South countries. Furthermore, the study sought to support the initiation phase of FinCEED, located within the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), one of whose functions is to set up an expert pool to support deployment of Finnish education sector expertise throughout international organisations. Furthermore, the study examined and supplemented recommendations from the report *Stepping Up Finland's Role in Education* (Reinikka et al., 2018) concerning the need to strengthen Finland's voice in international forums, and it also examined organisations and strategies in terms of how to better utilise Finnish human resources

in development cooperation in the education sector. The present study's insights could be useful in mapping the best practices and challenges related to the international engagement of Finnish education experts working towards global development.

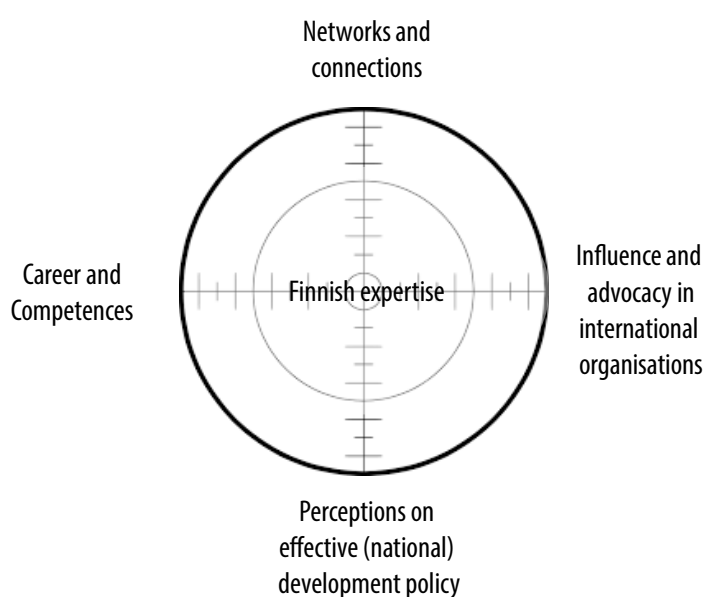
To sum up, this work comprises three overarching tasks:

- To identify Finnish education experts placed within international organisations, namely UN agencies, the World Bank and EU, among others.
- To scrutinise the influence and impact of Finnish education expertise on these organisations.
- To understand how to enhance influence of Finnish education experts placed within these organisations.

Finally, the report at hand also addressed the aforementioned experts' support needs, and described how they view Finland's role in global education development and how this role can be boosted efficiently.

In Figure 1 below, we illustrate the study's focus. While we targeted Finnish education expertise, the experts' careers and networks, as well as their influence and roles within Finnish development policy, we also analysed education experts' perceptions of government ministries and agencies' work.

Figure 1. The study's focus



This report is structured as follows. First, we describe the study's policy context by referring briefly to prior studies and activities related to education and development cooperation. Second, we present and define the principal concepts used in the study. Third, we introduce the data and methods used in this analysis. Fourth, we analyse the survey data. Fifth, we present the findings from interviews with 31 identified education experts. Sixth, we summarise our principal findings and draw conclusions, then end the paper with some policy recommendations.

1.2 Prior studies and policy context

As mentioned above, our study builds on the work of Ritva Reinikka, Hannele Niemi and Jukka Tulivuori, commissioned by the MFA. Their report, *Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education* (2018), examined how Finland has taken advantage of and has utilised its capacity and resources to benefit other countries, particularly those affected most by the global learning crisis. The overarching theme of Reinikka et al.'s (2018) report concerned 'education quality and learning', targeting Finnish development interventions in primary and lower secondary education.

The report also summarised how the complex phenomenon known as the global learning crisis has been described in earlier research and offers recommendations on how Finland could help mitigate it. Following the report, the learning crisis is also a) a teaching crisis, with teachers being poorly prepared for teaching and lacking enthusiasm due to the profession's low recognition and poor salaries, as well as b) a structural crisis, with schools functioning in poor conditions, with insufficient materials, e.g., low-quality textbooks and poor management and governance, among other deficiencies. In this sense, addressing the global learning crisis requires systemic reforms and system-level interventions, rather than only targeting specific disadvantaged groups, e.g., girls' education or educating children with disabilities (Reinikka et al., 2018).

The report suggested strategic areas in which Finland could help address the global learning crisis, namely:

- Supporting the entire education system's coherence
- Strengthening school leadership and teachers' professional development
- Collaborating on teacher education programmes
- Supporting learners' focus in basic education
- Sharing Finnish experience with education reforms

The report also helped establish the present study's initial focus and priorities. Furthermore, it helped identify the organisations in which we could locate Finnish education experts working in development cooperation in the education sector, e.g., United Nations (UN) agencies, the World Bank, the European Union (EU) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

The present report also benefited greatly from a seminar taking place in late 2019 and organised by EDUFI, MoEC, MFA and Fingo (a Finnish Development NGO platform), titled *Finland as a Strong Actor in the Global Learning Crisis – a National Education Sector Development Cooperation*. In this seminar, policymakers, academics, teachers, representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs), private organisations working in education and international organisations (e.g., the World Bank and UNICEF) discussed global education issues, presented initiatives of different stakeholders for the development of the education sector and identified possible future synergies that aim to improve Finland's role in addressing education sector development challenges, particularly the global learning crisis.

Furthermore, the present study also assumed a stance from the national development policy, namely the *Report on Development Policy Across Parliamentary Terms* (MFA, 2021a). Education is identified as one of the key priority areas of Finland's development policy and a particular area of expertise offering opportunities to influence sustainable global development. The other four priorities are: rights of women and girls; sustainable economies and decent work; peaceful, democratic societies; and climate change, biodiversity, sustainable management and use of natural resources. Cross-cutting objectives in Finland's development policy are gender equality, non-discrimination, climate resilience and low emission development, as well as environmental protection, with an emphasis on safeguarding biodiversity.

Overall, the Finnish Parliament report concurs with several recent international documents related to development cooperation by stipulating that it must focus on countries' interests and needs, be established with a long-term perspective, ensure sustainable development and help support democracy, maintain peace and safeguard human rights. Development cooperation is part of Finnish foreign and security policy, and its basic premise is that, due to the world's increased interconnectedness, better levels of development in other countries and regions will carry positive repercussions in Finland (MFA, 2021a).

The Finnish Parliament report also identified major opportunities and challenges contributing to or impairing development of Global South countries, e.g., the leaps that many countries have made towards developing more democratic regimes, climate change restraints and a lack of local infrastructures. Regarding education, Finland's development

policy aims to increase access to quality basic, secondary and vocational education and training, with a particular emphasis on the education of girls and other vulnerable groups (MFA, 2021a).

Furthermore, MFA has set its objectives and means for development policy research and higher education institution collaboration (MFA, 2021b). Universities, including schools of applied sciences (higher education institutions [HEIs]) play multiple roles in education and development. They function as educators of experts, knowledge producers for development and institutional actors in education export and development of bilateral projects. The report, *Kehityspoliittinen tutkimus- ja korkeakouluysteistyö : Tavoitteet ja keinot ulkoministeriössä 2021–2023* [Development policy research and higher education cooperation: Objectives and means at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2021–2023], focusses on creating development partnerships.

The document emphasises the importance of aligning different policy programmes and instruments to reach national and international development goals. Even though the policy document aimed to describe HEIs' role, particularly from the perspective of their research work, important instruments for development cooperation in the education sector are also mentioned, including global pilot projects funded by MoEC and the Team Finland Knowledge programme, which is coordinated by EDUFI, and the new substituting instrument of the Higher Education Institutions' Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI ICI). These are examples of projects located at the nexus of education, development and education expertise. However, the funding instruments for development-related activities in HEIs are fragmented (MoEC, 2022), and these instruments need to be aligned and combined, instead of establishing new ones. Another emphasised strategy is to support other education sectors, e.g., vocational educational institutes and schools that municipalities administer. However, the document noted that in these latter contexts, the government's role and any possibilities to steer progress are even more limited than in the case of autonomous HEIs.

2 Conceptual Background

Several concepts guided this study and are the backbone of the conversations developed with interviewees. The global learning crisis, the role(s) of international organisations (governmental and nongovernmental [NGOs]) in development cooperation in the education sector, and experts and their influence are some of the concepts discussed further in the following subsections.

2.1 The global learning crisis

The global learning crisis is the principal issue on the agendas of a vast number of programmes for the global development cooperation in the education sector. A report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), *The Global Learning Crisis – Why Every Child Deserves a Quality Education* (2013), describes the global learning crisis phenomenon as a situation in which (even if) children are attending school, they are not learning. Even though in the past two decades, the number of children attending school has increased significantly (for both genders), they are still not learning: '[In] 2016, over 600 million children and adolescents were estimated to be not reaching minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics' (UNICEF, 2020, p. 2). Although the learning crisis is a global issue, it tends to be more acute in low- and lower-middle-income countries (mostly Global South countries) (Friedlander et al., 2019; Kabay, 2021; UNESCO, 2019b).

In this report, the global learning crisis is defined as a system-level inability to offer safe and fair quality basic education services that enable individuals' learning.

Some key obstacles to progress in education, particularly in Global South countries, include teachers' low professional status and development, educators' weak participation in policy development, underfunded public systems and intensifying privatisation, inequitable education systems that exclude minorities, lack of holistic curricula and marginalisation of education for sustainable development (Education International, 2019).

However, other reasons are societal and more indirect, e.g., families' economic situations (leading to a lack of fulfilment of the most basic human needs, e.g., health, food, clean water and safety), long commuting distances to school and countries' political situations, e.g., ongoing armed conflicts (UNESCO, 2011, 2013; Friedlander et al., 2019). Conflict and violence trigger hidden crises in education that aggravate difficulties in ensuring the protection of schoolchildren's rights, provision of education, reconstruction of education systems, peacebuilding and social justice by using education as a prominent development vehicle (Rose, 2011; UNESCO, 2011).

Failing to educate students adequately is believed to exacerbate complex and adverse socioeconomic conditions. For example, UNESCO and other UN agencies recognise that the global learning crisis relates to slow progress in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) expressed in the 2030 Agenda including the goal that focus on education, namely SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations General Assembly, 2015; Education International, 2019; UNESCO, 2019a, 2019b). This is particularly significant because SDG 4 is viewed widely as an inevitable step toward achieving other SDGs. Furthermore, the unprecedented disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to worsening inequalities in access to quality education due to disparities in digital learning opportunities worldwide, exacerbating learning losses and overall well-being among marginalised and vulnerable children and young people (Kyei-Blankson et al., 2021; Scigliano & Parker, 2021; Tucker-White, 2021; UNESCO et al., 2021).

In this study, we are interested in how Finnish education experts define the global learning crisis, how they understand their work and how their organisations have addressed global education issues, e.g., the learning crisis, as well as what actions they suggest taking to mitigate global education development challenges sustainably. We also are interested in the institutional and accountability setting for SDG 4 as a context for Development cooperation in the education sector. In the next section, we provide a short overview of the principal institutions examined in this study – UNESCO, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank – and of SDG 4's global coordination mechanism.

2.2 The global education architecture

Global education architecture is a term used by many scholars, politicians and practitioners involved in or studying development cooperation in the education sector, but it does not have a universal definition. Probably one of the most prominent authorities on this topic is Nicholas Burnett. Burnett (2019) and colleague Marco Schäferhoff closely evaluated the global educational architecture and identified several deficient aspects

of it, e.g., insufficient global leadership, including priority setting, norms and standard setting; knowledge dissemination and generation; performance monitoring; provision of accountability; and inadequate funding (Schäferhoff & Burnett, 2016). For this study's purposes, the quantitative observation of development (aid) in education has only limited value, as it is more important to understand the complexity of the international landscape of development work and aid in the education field.

In recent years, a shift has occurred in the global governance of education, from a multilateral (government-centred) system to a multi-stakeholder system in which an increasing number of private organisations and CSOs, e.g., philanthropic foundations, have become highly influential. These new stakeholders can push their own agendas, thereby increasing the global education architecture's complexity. However, they also can address global issues that governmental organisations can no longer address alone, e.g., climate change and security issues (Elfert & Ydesen, forthcoming; Menashy, 2018). The GPE is a good example of a multi-stakeholder organisation with significant influence on global governance of education, particularly in low-income countries, i.e., the Global South (Menashy, 2018).

2.2.1 Sustainable development goals and the global education architecture

Presently, most actors engaged in cooperative international development activities are connected through UN SDGs. The SDG agreement was enacted in 2016 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to construct a new, more collaborative, equal and sustainable road map for development by 2030 (UN SDGs webpage, accessed 13.05.2022).

SDG 4 – 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' – comprises seven targets, three for implementation. UNESCO has the overall mandate for monitoring progress against these targets. Countries, regions and international development actors are expected to align their support with these targets and set specific national and regional benchmarks for progress.

The 2015 World Education Forum, a key high-level meeting on the buildup of SDG 4, brought together officials from major donor countries and international organisations related to SDG 4 that aim to address challenges regarding education financing and improving collaboration among donors (UNESCO, 2020). During this forum, the Incheon Declaration was signed, laying the foundations and setting guidelines for implementing the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda. The declaration also attributed the leadership and coordination of SDG 4 to UNESCO (UNESCO, 2016; Mundy & Manion, 2021).

The Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (GCM), defined as an ‘ecosystem comprising all global education actors that participate in the Global Education Meeting [...] joint platforms and initiatives by those education actors in pursuit of SDG 4’, is an umbrella group that covers the entire SDG 4-Education 2030 coordination architecture, established in 2015 at the World Education Forum (SDG 4-Education 2030 webpage, accessed 13.05.2022). It includes the **SDG 4-Education 2030 Steering Committee** (SDG 4-Education 2030 SC), **Global Education Meetings (GEMs)**, regional meetings and the **Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO)** (UNESCO, 2020; Education 2030 Framework for Action, 2016).

Figure 2. Illustration of the GCM ecosystem (extracted from the SDG 4 webpage)



UNESCO established the **SDG 4-Education 2030 SC**, which served as a ‘forum for horizontal sharing of information and consensus building’, comprising representatives of member states, stakeholders and CSOs (Mundy & Manion, 2021, p. 5; UN webpage, accessed 13.05.2022). Some of the committee’s responsibilities include providing guidance, reviewing education reform processes, offering recommendations to education actors and communities, harmonising their activities and advocating for education funding. In July 2021, the SDG 4-Education 2030 SC was revamped and renamed the **SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC)**. The reform decreased the number of member

countries, agencies, NGOs and others from 44 to 28; balanced regional representation; introduced a no-delegation policy for the leadership group (leader office holders as members); created the Sherpa group, comprising senior officials to support and prepare its meetings; and established an inter-agency secretariat (Burnett et al., 2022, SDG 4-Education 2030 webpage, accessed 30.6.2022).

An important part of this architecture is the **Global Education Monitoring report** (GEM report), an editorially 'independent report' established in 2002 to monitor the progress of the Education for All initiative, later focussing on SDG 4's progress. It has been a significant accountability tool since 2016, helping with SDG 4 coordination. It draws from a diversity of data sources and serves the purpose of promoting and supplementing comparative information for evidence-based decision/policy making related to 'inclusive and equitable quality education at national, regional and global levels' (UNESCO webpage, accessed 13.05.2022). This report is coordinated by UNESCO, but the team responsible for it is independent and funded by governments, multilateral agencies and private agencies (UNESCO, 2021c).

Several challenges with this global education architecture have been mentioned in the literature. The global architecture is based on the idea of accountability on SDG 4's quantitative targets. However, according to Burnett, it is not rational to build the architecture around goals that are basically unattainable. Furthermore, to have a global architecture that could be developed systematically, the emphasis needs to change from bilateral to multilateral aid (Burnett et al., 2022). Furthermore, the architecture is facing institutional challenges. As Burnett et al. (2022) stated, 'UNESCO, the lead UN agency for education, has a global budget that is similar to a single medium-size OECD university'. Another challenge has been the United States' official withdrawal from UNESCO in 2019 (the US stopped funding in 2011). These challenges threaten the whole idea of a multilateral architecture. Furthermore, global forums compete in the education field, and these forums are based on multilateral agreements, intergovernmental discussions and multistakeholder interaction.

In this report, we acknowledge the complexity of the global architecture of development aid and concentrate on describing three of the most important international organisations for Finnish development policy: the World Bank; UNICEF; and UNESCO. These organisations were chosen for two principal reasons: a) They are the international organisations where most of our interviewees are working or have worked in recent years and, therefore, are relevant to this report's empirical section, and b) they are major players in the development cooperation in the education sector (Menashy & Manion, 2016) and determine the basic structure of policy, funding and accountability for the global institutional architecture of education.

2.2.2 Institutional overview: World Bank, UNICEF and UNESCO

The **World Bank** is an independent multilateral organisation that is associated formally with the UN as one of its specialised agencies. It was founded in 1944 with the aim of providing loans to fund reconstruction of countries devastated during World War II. Currently, it is a global multilateral development bank with 189 partner countries (World Bank webpage, accessed 21.06.2022; Elfert, 2021; Mundy & Verger, 2016). The World Bank was not originally intended to play a specific role in global education development, but when post-WWII reconstruction was completed, the bank's attention turned to Global South countries. Thus, education's relevance in economic development became evident (Elfert & Ydesen, forthcoming; Elfert, 2021; Mundy & Verger, 2016).

The education sector is one of the 12 societal sectors in which the World Bank functions. Organisationally, education relates to human capital development and gender (World Bank webpage, accessed 21.06.2022), themes that the bank addresses as a means of achieving economic development and the general development of societies. Its actual mandate is to 'end extreme poverty within a generation and boost shared prosperity' ... 'and create more inclusive societies by developing human capital. This requires investing in people through nutrition, health care, quality education, jobs and skills' (World Bank webpage, accessed 13.05.2022).

The World Bank has surpassed many other multilateral agencies, e.g., UNESCO, to become the largest financier of education (Mundy & Verger, 2016). In this regard, Klees and Qargha (2014) stated that 'the bank has been the principal global architect of education policy for decades'. Since 2000, it has committed more than US \$73 billion in grants, loans and 'recipient-executed trust funds' in 160 countries and 25 regional states. In fiscal year 2021 alone, the bank's support for education amounted to USD \$7.92 billion. The World Bank also hosts the Global Partnership for Education fund (GPE), which functions as an independent entity, but within a hosting agreement with the World Bank. The World Bank is also the largest agency involved in implementing the GPE, which focusses mainly on low-income countries, where it has committed USD \$1.98 billion in 2021, translating to 55% of the GPE's total grant portfolio (World Bank, 2022).

The **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)** has more than 190 member countries. It was founded in 1946 to assist children in the most vulnerable contexts whose futures are at risk. Although UNICEF focusses specifically on children, education was never its expressed mandate. More broadly, UNICEF works 'to save children's lives, to defend their rights and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence' (UNICEF webpage, accessed 13.05.2022). UNICEF works in several action areas, with the ultimate aim of granting and promoting children's rights and well-being:

- Child protection and inclusion (promoting children’s right to safety)
- Child survival (reducing child mortality)
- Education (ensuring quality learning for all)
- Social policy (securing the right to an equitable chance in life; reducing poverty)
- Emergencies (providing lifesaving aid and long-term assistance)
- Gender (empowering girls and women and promoting their participation in all social systems)
- Innovation for children (co-creating innovative solutions that accelerate progress)
- Supplies and logistics (providing lifesaving supplies to aid the most vulnerable children)
- Research, evidence and analysis (conducting rigorous research on children’s situations)

Organisationally, UNICEF has seven regional offices under which the country offices work. Furthermore, it has 33 national committees operated by independent NGOs whose principal duty is to raise funds for UNICEF and promote its agenda (UNICEF webpage, accessed in 13.05.2022)

According to *For every child, reimagine: UNICEF Annual Report 2019*, UNICEF committed USD \$1.18 billion in 2019 to support education in 143 countries, plus education programmes in emergency contexts in 82 countries, committing USD \$690 million (UNICEF, 2020). In 2020, the numbers were similar, with USD \$1.17 billion distributed among 151 countries in support of education and USD \$700 million committed to support education programmes in humanitarian contexts in 140 counties (UNICEF, 2021). However, the number of countries supported was significantly higher, which in practice translates into less money for each project and activity supported. UNICEF also hosts Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the UN fund for education during emergencies and protracted crises. ECW operates independently, but within a hosting agreement with UNICEF. Furthermore, UNICEF is a grant agent for both ECW and GPE funding.

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** is a specialised UN agency (UN website, accessed 22.06.2022) created in 1946 to achieve and maintain peace through cooperation in education, sciences and culture by ‘bringing people together and strengthening the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind through mutual understanding and dialogue between cultures’ (UNESCO webpage, accessed 13.05.2022). UNESCO is the only multilateral organisation originally created with a specific education mandate.

UNESCO is a policy-intensive organisation with a strong emphasis on production of normative documents and universal values for its member states (Elfert, 2021; Elfert & Ydesen, forthcoming). Under UNESCO's education philosophy, education is a good in itself – a fundamental human right – rather than a means to improve other areas of society (Elfert, 2021; Elfert & Ydesen, forthcoming). However, UNESCO has had to deal with reduced operational budgets. In 2022–2023, UNESCO plans to commit more than USD \$207 million of its USD \$588.587 million total budget to education.

In 2015, UNESCO was given leadership over SDG 4 following its coordinating role in the previous Education for All (EFA) initiative. In its task of coordinating the Education 2030 agenda, UNESCO is responsible for ensuring that its members commit to the SDG 4 target of improving education worldwide in terms of access, quality and equity.

In 2020, as a strategy to cope with the negative impact from school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO members created the Global Education Coalition (GEC), comprising 200 partners from UN agencies, CSOs, HEIs and the private sector from 112 countries. It aims to protect the right to education despite the unprecedented disruptions caused by the pandemic and to facilitate learning recovery (GEC webpage, accessed on 23.06.2022; UNESCO, 2021a).

UNESCO and the World Bank have a long history of collaborative work. For example, in 2019, the World Bank and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics teamed up to collect data systematically on learning outcomes with the aim of helping countries strengthen their schools' efficacy and performance (Mundy, 2019). However, despite regularly working together to improve education systems, ideological differences separate these two organisations. UNESCO views education as a good in itself, while the World Bank views education as an economic development tool (Elfert & Ydesen, forthcoming). Thus, UNESCO presents a much more intellectual, humanistic and immaterial vision of education development (Elfert & Ydesen, forthcoming). This idealistic vision can be found in the recent report *Futures of Education: A New Social Contract*, which emphasised the need for a transformed education system built on the principles 'that underpin human rights – inclusion and equity, cooperation and solidarity, as well as collective responsibility and interconnectedness' (UNESCO, 2021b). Key global public goods that UNESCO is responsible for include the GEM report; the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), which produces all SDG 4 data; and the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP).

2.3 The roles of International organisations in development cooperation for education

Despite existing criticism regarding some of the dynamics of their practices, international organisations are fundamental actors in development cooperation. They function in partnership with member states and a diverse set of stakeholders that work on development cooperation in the education sector. In this study, we utilised the term *international organisations* to aggregate multilateral or intergovernmental organisations (IGOs, which intergovernmental agreements establish) and international nongovernmental organisations (INGOs, which associations and individuals establish).

International organisations are important institutional actors and platforms for agenda setting and the formulation of global educational policies. They help define the role of education in economic development, equity and societal development, as well as for human capital development. They participate in the implementation of global educational policies by financing, creating shared knowledge and providing expertise for the development of national and local education systems.

These organisations can mobilise, coordinate and facilitate efforts aimed at tackling complex challenges, e.g., education quality, inclusion, gender equality, etc. Thus, international organisations – e.g., the World Bank, UNESCO, EU and UNICEF – as well as NGOs, e.g., Save the Children and Finn Church Aid, play an indispensable role in this regard. International organisations play numerous multifaceted roles in contributing to the development of quality education, including addressing the global learning crisis, providing technical assistance, producing knowledge and sharing expertise, which helps raise awareness and resolve pressing challenges in education. They also operate extensive data banks and statistical databases used to monitor progress in education globally and provide various forms of development assistance and financial aid to support countries, institutions and other stakeholders' development initiatives. By leveraging this technical expertise and financial aid, international organisations can influence global discourse on education, set agendas and initiate and disseminate policies, models, standards and regulatory instruments that seek to reorient strategies or introduce innovative approaches at national and international levels (Martens & Windzio, 2022; Niemann, 2022). Moreover, international organisations can foster supranational linkages and provide crucial platforms

that facilitate dialogue, negotiation and exchanges of experiences between stakeholders working on education.

Considering the roles briefly emphasised above, strategically positioning education experts in international institutions can enhance the impact that countries could make in shaping global education policy and interventions in this sector. This report also focusses on how Finnish education experts assess their own roles within these organisations and what they understand to be their organisations' role(s) in addressing the challenges of global education development.

2.4 Experts, expertise and influence

The definitions of *experts* and *expertise* differ among research fields, but in this report, we used Shanteau's (1992, p. 255) explanation that experts are 'recognised within their profession as having the necessary skills and abilities to perform at the highest level'. Expertise also can be assumed through academic qualifications, 'seniority or years performing the task, or consensus among peers' (Chi, 2006, pp. 22–23). This latter assessment form was the tool utilised in this study to identify Finnish education experts working, or who have worked, within international organisations in recent years to address education development challenges, e.g., the global learning crisis.

The role and influence of professional experts (e.g., the ones interviewed in this study) in, e.g., policy and decision making, also have been discussed without reaching a consensus. In education, studies have made clear that the advice of professional experts (e.g., teachers or other civil servants) often is not considered, even after years of experience in evidence and knowledge building. However, some studies demonstrate that other actors seem to play a more significant role, e.g., people placed in high-level technocratic positions (Brint, 1990, pp. 362–363).

In this study, we understood that the role of expertise in decision making depends on the expert's professional position. When strategically positioned, experts can play a relevant role in the development and interpretation of knowledge. As such, experts can have 'a specific activity of knowledge production participating in the process of negotiation and orientation of public policy' (Normand, 2017, p. 74, in Rinne et al., 2018).

In development cooperation, experts can be located at varying levels, including the international organisations policy level, where they can inform and steer decisions or embassies in Global South countries, or at the implementation level in the local community, where policies are enacted. Tiessen et al. (2020) called attention to the importance of providing a stronger voice to local actors' expertise through construction of teams that include these local experts, listening to their understanding of the complex

world to which they belong and giving them the lead in international development projects. Thus, it is fundamental that development cooperation activities become embedded in the countries where interventions take place. In this sense, international experts working for such activities need to adapt their own work to the goals of local governments, which often does not happen, generating conflictual situations among local and international actors (Evers & Gerke, 2005). Consequently, expertise should be built collectively, as an outcome of partnerships.

2.4.1 Finnish expertise in the education sector development cooperation

Due to the past success of its performance in international large-scale assessments, e.g., the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Finland's expertise in education has been recognised globally. Although Finnish performance in these assessments has been declining in recent years, Finnish education sector expertise is still valued internationally. In global education development, it can be understood broadly as the advanced knowledge, insight, experience, innovation and resources accumulated by Finnish actors who participate in development cooperation. Finnish education experts are positioned in international settings, e.g., Finnish embassies or bilateral and multilateral institutions, networks, projects and advisory and working groups. These experts, when connected to national policies and national policy actors, can be informed about these policies' aims, and in this way, purposefully can influence decision making within international organisations, as well as address education development challenges, e.g., the global learning crisis. This study's focus rests on the opinions expressed by Finnish education experts who work or have worked in recent years within various levels of international organisations and participated in initiatives regarding development cooperation in the education sector in these organisations' headquarters and in Global South countries where interventions take place. In this study, we excluded bilateral projects, CSOs and the private sector, focussing only on international organisations.

3 Methods and Data

This study employed mixed methods, but had an emphasis on qualitative methodological approaches, utilising relevant data collected through surveys (n = 31),¹ semi-structured thematic interviews (n = 31) and a review of available secondary materials, e.g., policy documents, reports and academic publications. Data collection was undertaken remotely due to pandemic-related restrictions.

A network analysis was conducted by utilising the professional networks of members of the study team, a pool of experts obtained from MFA, a snowball sampling process starting from Reinikka et al.'s (2018) report *Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education* and names collected from the seminar *Finland as a Strong Actor in the Global Learning Crisis – a National Education Sector Development Cooperation* (2019), followed by survey and interview participants referencing others belonging to their networks. This facilitated identification of the most important Finnish actors and experts in the field of education and global development. Thematic interviews were conducted with 31 selected Finnish education sector experts to deepen their answers to the initial survey. Thus, these questions focussed on their career paths, positions held within international organisations, their understanding of international organisations' roles in addressing global education issues and their contributions' perceived impact.

Furthermore, as explained in Section 1 of this report, the review of secondary sources enabled us to examine Finland's development cooperation in the education sector, as well as delve into the nature of the global learning crisis, international organisations' role in addressing the crisis and key issues underlying experts' engagement in and impact on education development agendas.

The data obtained from the aforementioned primary and secondary sources were analysed qualitatively using content analysis deductively and inductively. Deductively, categories were created beforehand to help retrieve data for this analysis. These categories then were complemented inductively with the information that interviewees provided. The analysis was developed using atlas.TI software.

1 Further developed in Section 4.

The analysis focussed on identifying and analysing the extent to which Finnish education expertise has been positioned strategically at the international level to influence and impact global education development, including the global learning crisis. The analysis was informed by the emerging theoretical notion of education diplomacy (e.g., Cardarelli, 2018; Fuller, 2019; Persaud & Murphy, 2019) to emphasise the crucial role that education plays in the advancement of national influence beyond its domestic contribution to societal development. This notion was useful in analysing how Finnish education experts can promote Finland's influence on development cooperation in the education sector. Based on the findings from the analysis, the study team formulated recommendations on how to improve the positioning of Finnish education expertise to enhance Finland's global role in education (Section 6.2).

4 Findings From the Surveys

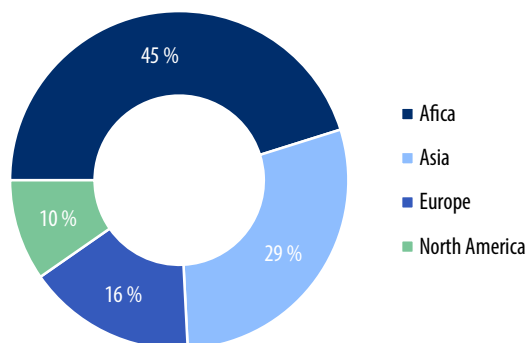
In the next subsections, the report presents the survey participants' professional characteristics and examines their answers to the survey questions.

4.1 Respondents

The online survey was conducted in February and March 2022, and included both open-ended and structured questions. The initial idea was that the survey would function as an instrument for network mapping and for organising interviews. The survey was distributed through open channels (e.g., *'Koulutus kehittyvässä maissa'* Howspace, the GINTL network) and by identifying relevant actors through the MFA and later through the interviewees. Altogether, we received 31 completed surveys.

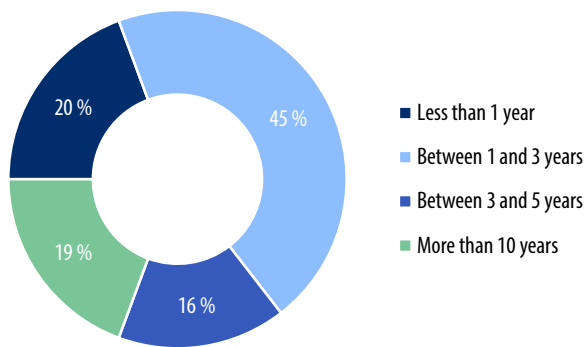
The respondents were asked several background questions. They currently were working or previously worked for multiple international organisations, e.g., UNICEF, the EU, Fida, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Bank, UNESCO, Save the Children and/or different embassies. When asked where they were placed or had been placed most recently, the most common answers were Africa (n = 15), Asia (n = 9), Europe (n = 5) and North America (n = 3), as Figure 3 below demonstrates.

Figure 3. Where are you/were you placed when you were working for an international organisation?



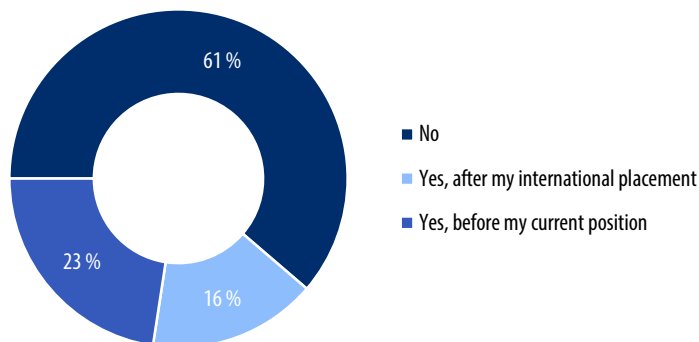
More than half the respondents had been working for an international organisation for less than three years, and almost a fifth of all respondents had been working for less than one year. Simultaneously, one fifth of respondents had worked for international organisations for more than 10 years (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. How long have you been working/how long was your last placement in an international organisation in the education sector?



Of the total respondents, 61% had not worked in education expert positions in Finland. Furthermore, 23% had worked in these positions before their current positions and 16% after their international placements (Figure 5).

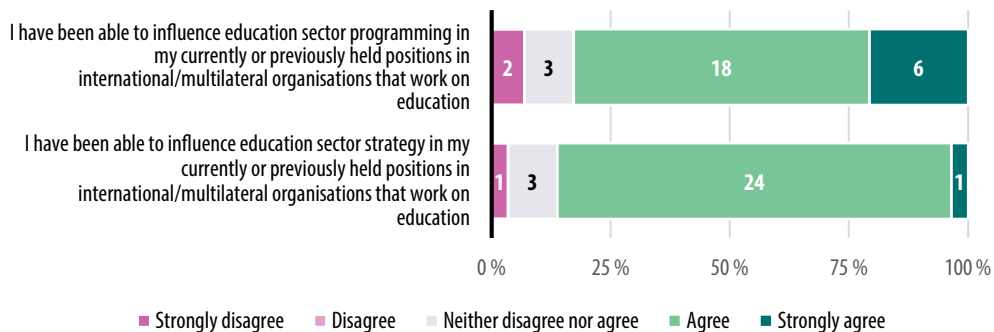
Figure 5. Have you worked in an education expert position in Finland?



4.2 International experts' work

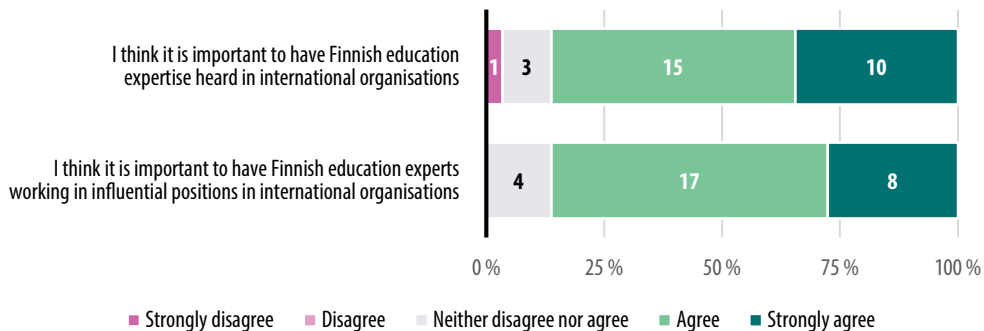
Overall, based on the answers to the surveys, the Finnish education experts working within international organisations view their work as important, and they somehow feel that they can affect the policies and programmes within these organisations' education sector (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Experts' views on their influence



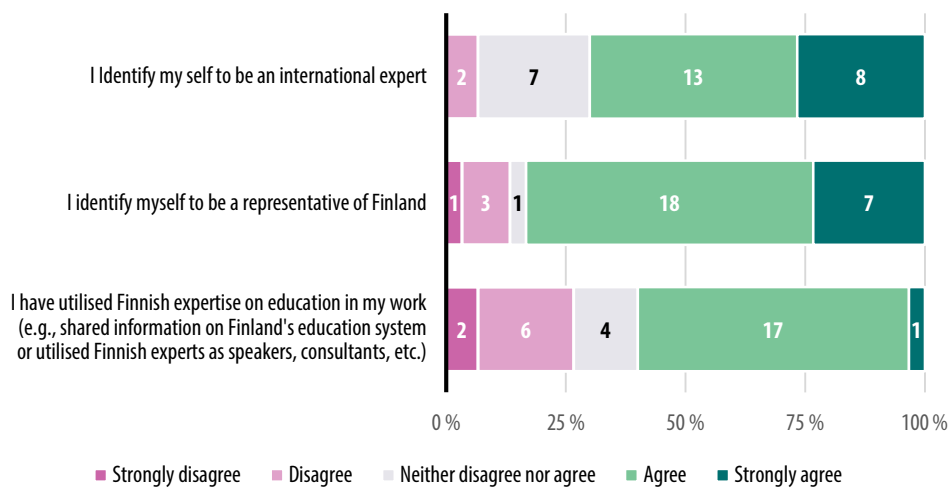
In the survey, almost all the respondents agreed that it is important to have Finnish education experts working within international organisations and that Finnish education expertise is valued within international organisations. Only one expert strongly disagreed with the statement on the importance of Finnish education expertise, which might indicate that even though most experts are working for employers other than the Finnish government, they almost unanimously view 'Finnish expertise' as recognisable and important (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Experts' views on the importance of having a Finnish voice in strategic positions within international organisations



Most experts identified themselves as ‘international education experts’, however, most experts answering the survey indicated that they felt that they were, one way or another, representing Finland. In the surveys, almost all experts indicated that they had utilised their Finnish education expertise while working on education development within international organisations (Figure 8).

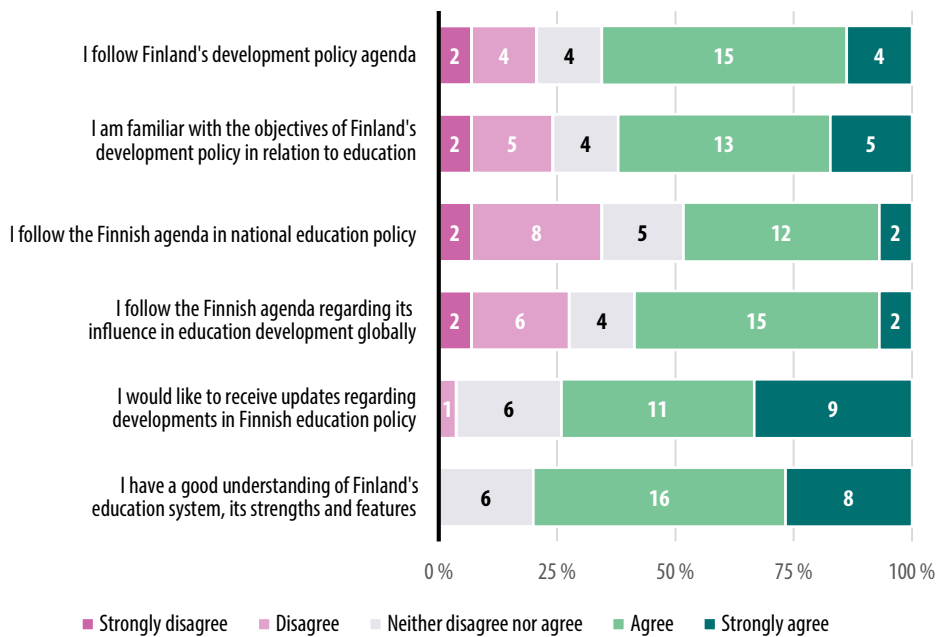
Figure 8. Experts’ views on their representation of Finland within international organisations



4.3 Experts' work and Finnish education sector development policies

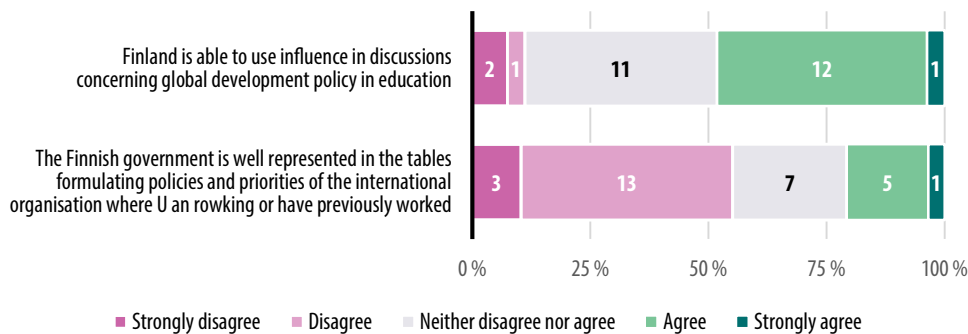
Four out of five of the experts participating in the survey indicated that they have a reasonably good understanding of the Finnish educational system. However, more variation was observed in the answers regarding how closely the experts followed the Finnish policy for education and development cooperation. Nonetheless, approximately half the experts viewed themselves as up-to-date with Finnish policy development. The experts indicated that they follow the development policy more closely than the national education policy. However, not all respondents were familiar with the development policy objectives related to education or the development policy agenda in general (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Experts' knowledge of the Finnish education system and development policies



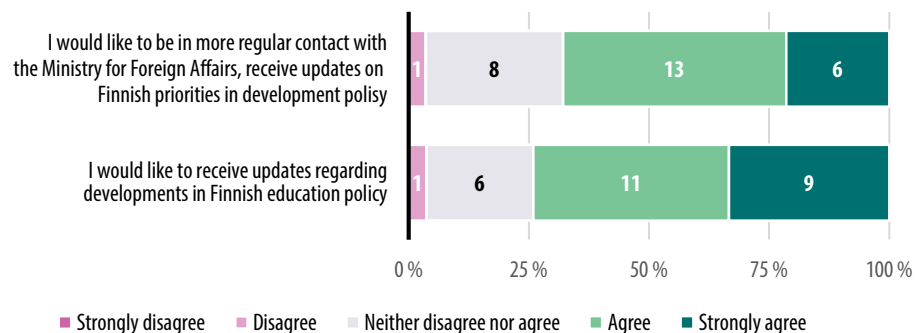
When asked about their views on the Finnish government’s representation in the tables formulating policies within international organisations, the experts’ perceptions were significantly more negative. More than half disagreed with the statement, and only six agreed that Finland is well-represented in these tables. However, half of the same respondents stated that Finland influenced discussions on global educational policies overall, with only a few disagreeing (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Experts’ views on Finland’s influence in policy making within international organisations



The experts who answered the survey would welcome more updates on the development of Finnish educational policy. They also indicated that they would like to be contacted by the MFA more often (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Experts’ opinions of MFA’s role in their work

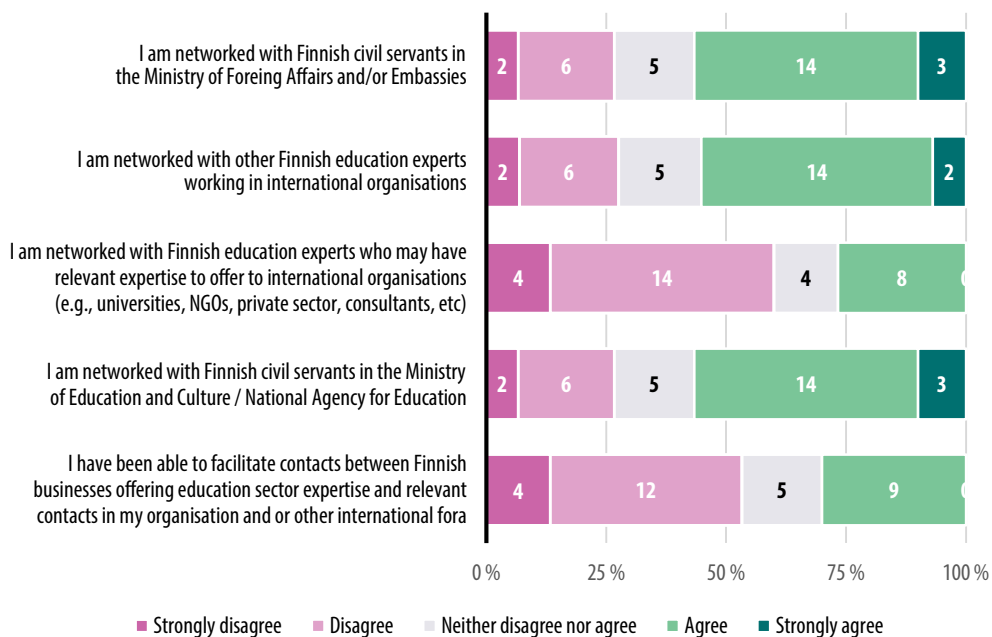


4.4 Networks

Based on the surveys, it seems that improvement is needed in all dimensions of network building, facilitation and maintenance. More than half the experts agreed (but only four strongly agreed) that they networked with officials from the MFA (and embassies). Direct contact with the MoEC or EDUFI was far more irregular.

Most experts also indicated that they networked with other Finnish experts working within international organisations, as well as other Finnish experts who have relevant expertise within international organisations. However, some experts did not agree with these statements. Less than one-third of the experts said they could utilise networks with private Finnish actors operating in the field (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Experts' views on their networking with Finnish government agencies and other experts



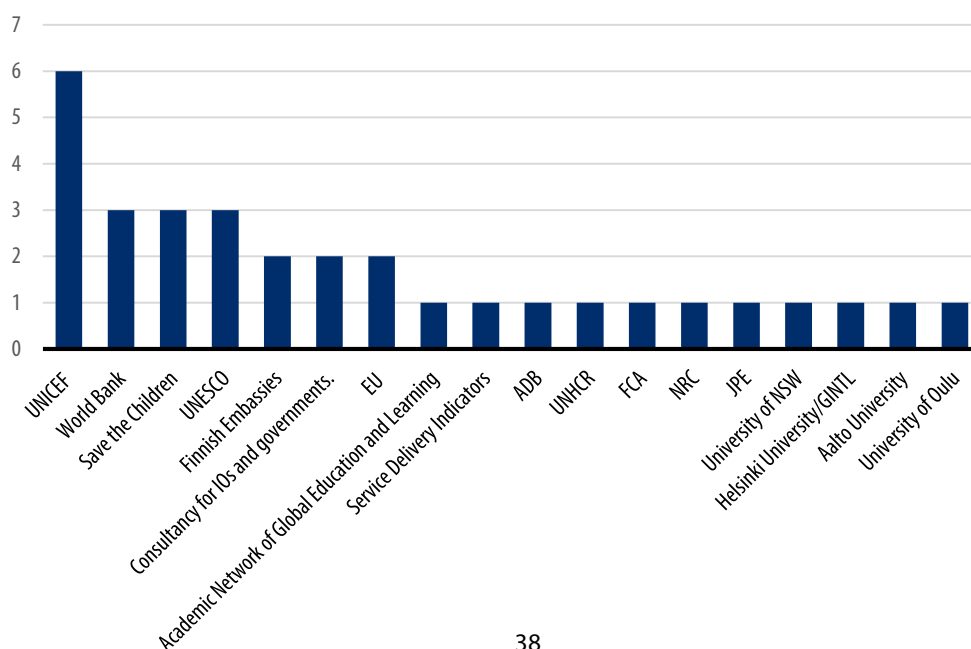
5 Findings From the Interviews

The survey data were supplemented with semi-structured thematic interviews, in which the experts had the opportunity to explain their answers to the survey in more detail. Moreover, the experts' education backgrounds and career paths were examined during the interviews. Thus, the analysis of the interviews is presented in the following subsections.

5.1 Interviewed education experts: sample, organisational affiliation and employment

The participants in the interviews were Finnish experts who work or have worked within international organisations in Global South countries' education sectors or in these organisations' headquarters. They were selected through a snowball sampling strategy starting from the experts identified in previews of Finnish documents and seminars on development cooperation in the education sector. As a second step, we asked the interviewees to identify other Finnish education experts that they knew and who are or recently were working within international organisations (governmental and nongovernmental). Ultimately, 33 experts were contacted by email and invited to participate in interviews, of which 31 volunteered as participants. Of these, 19 were female, and 12 were male. Their current organisational affiliation is distributed as shown in Figure 13 below.

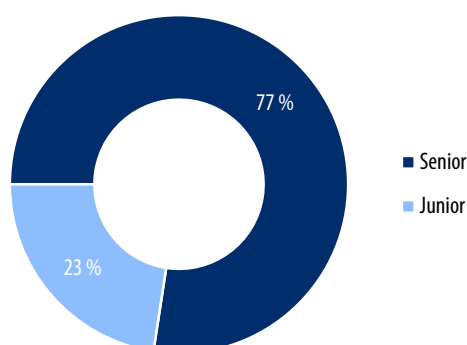
Figure 13. Participants' current organisational affiliations



Most participants at the time of the interviews were working for UN agencies, namely UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (n = 10). Three were working for the World Bank, four at Finnish universities, two in the European Union, two in Finnish embassies abroad, one in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), one in the Asian Development Bank (ADB), five in NGOs (three in Save the Children Finland, one in Finn Church Aid and one in the Norwegian Refugee Council) and two as independent education consultants working for a wide range of organisations and governments. A few of the interviewees worked in more than one organisation at the time of the interview. The participants' career paths are discussed further in the next section.

Out of all study participants, 24 are or were in their previous placement working within international organisations in senior positions at different levels, while seven are or were placed in junior positions, e.g., junior professional officer (JPO) or United Nations volunteer (UNV) programmes or other early-career positions (see Figure 14 below).

Figure 14. Participants' seniority positions in their current/most recent work with international organisations



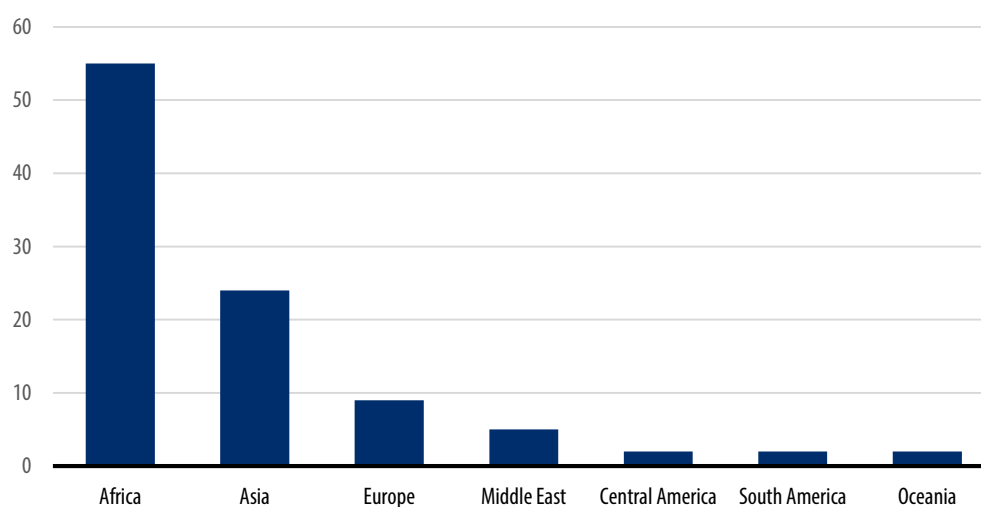
5.1.1 Education backgrounds and career paths

The experts participating in this study all had higher education degrees in a wide range of academic fields. As such, eight had master's degrees in education (e.g., primary education, adult education, early childhood education), and the other 23 had a variety of academic backgrounds that included, e.g., studies in development and international cooperation, development management, strategic human resource management, international law, social sciences, public health etc., i.e., most of the 'education experts' interviewed did not focus their studies on the education field. Thus, these actors' education expertise developed through years of experience in the education development field and through responsible tasks in projects within this sector.

The expert group of interviewees also comprised a mixture of senior and junior Finnish actors working abroad or in Finland at the time of their interviews. Nevertheless, all the interviewees have worked for other international organisations, particularly UN organisations, FCA and the World Bank, which are present in many of the participants' CVs. The vast majority of the interviewees started their international careers young, sometimes through internships, but also through early career programmes, e.g., as JPOs or UNVs, and progressed from there to senior positions, where they now are within the organisation they started or in a different one.

All interviewees have work experience unconnected with international organisations – mostly as teachers, academics and professors – or junior or senior positions in national and regional government agencies in Finland (e.g., Finnish Board of Education, MFA and MoEC) or at private companies. Furthermore, the participants presented vast experience in diverse Global North and South contexts, as Figure 15 shows.

Figure 15. Regions where participants have been working during their careers (%)



The vast majority have been involved in projects for international organisations or private companies, or related to bilateral agreements in African countries (most often Ethiopia, Tanzania and Eritrea). The number of experts deployed at some stage of their international careers to Asian countries is also high (with Nepal and Myanmar cited most often). On the European continent, some development cooperation in the education sector has involved Finnish experts, particularly in Eastern countries, e.g., Ukraine.

5.1.2 Challenges in international experts' careers

The participants described several challenges regarding entering and maintaining careers within international organisations. They identified the small number of Finns working within these organisations in development cooperation in the education sector as a significant limitation in how effectively Finland can have a voice within these organisations. Participants also indicated reasons why they think that, compared with other reference countries (e.g., the UK, US and other Nordic countries), Finland has a small presence within these organisations. Furthermore, among the interviewees, an overall perception was observed that Finnish education experts are less interested in international careers than experts from other sectors.

One of the reasons identified for such a lack of interest is the fact that Finnish youngsters studying in the education sciences have only a few opportunities to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, e.g., either by going abroad to experience diverse contexts, or slightly more frequently, by interacting with peers from other countries visiting or studying in Finland.

'And then having international Finnish students working together, have my former doctoral students working together, from different countries, with my students. Imagine that experience, and now they both are in international careers. This is just a minor example, but I really think exposure even during their studies is very important.'

The participants also said that too few funded early-career positions were available. Furthermore, after these positions end, continuity and progression are not guaranteed, leading to professional precarity.

Another reason cited by the interviewees as a factor that might reduce Finnish education experts' interest in international careers is the process of returning to Finland. This process can be complicated because no defined mechanisms exist to help these experts reintegrate into the Finnish work market after a short- or long-term career within international organisations, if the experience does not work or whenever the expert simply decides to return home. Some of the expressed concerns relate to finding jobs in Finland, a lack of interest in and recognition of government agencies and citizens in general in the knowledge learned through international experiences, and a lack of interest in including this knowledge and these skills in national practice.

'... but what was very clear, especially in the educationist [sector] ... was that there was a big separation between those who worked globally ... a few who have really honed their skills in international education, having worked in the countries where Finland works: Ethiopia, Nepal, Mozambique and some others. ... Then there are the ones who work in Finland and the Finnish system. There is hardly ever an overlap.'

Finally, the social and retirement schemes for experts working within international organisations, e.g., UN agencies or the World Bank, are a concern, e.g., the years spent abroad might not count toward retirement benefits in Finland.

5.1.3 Government agencies and international careers

The participants view national government agencies and ministries as fundamental to increasing the presence and influence of Finland within international organisations and in the contexts in which they intervene. They are viewed as key in supporting the entry and maintenance of education experts within international organisations and later during their return to Finland.

The interviewees also mentioned the need for an attitude shift regarding how the Finnish government selects, prepares and maintains the experts they send to work within international organisations. If they are meant to represent the country's values and policy agendas, these experts must be selected not only based on their education background, but also on their personal skills. They also must be well-trained in Finnish development cooperation policy. Subsequently, the interviewees argue that frequent retraining and updating sessions while education experts are working within international organisations (in-service training) would be fundamental to ensuring that deployed experts are well-informed about what policies are in place and what are the Finnish government expectations regarding their work within these organisations.

Some interviewees also expressed the need for better work coordination among the actors involved in development cooperation in the education sector. This entails an expansion of the alignment of resources and objectives between interventions made by government ministries and agencies, CSOs, the private sector and universities.

5.1.4 Good practices supporting international careers

While the interviewees often identified the challenges and constraints they encountered, they also were eager to offer suggestions to improve the efficacy of cooperation initiatives and the Finnish experts working in these initiatives. Overall, early exposure, good preparation and training, continued contacts that enable development of a community focussed on Finnish policies' aims and well-structured mechanisms to welcome experts back are the suggestions most often provided in regard to attracting Finnish education experts to international cooperation careers.

The table below summarises both challenges and suggestions for improvements regarding Finnish education experts placed within international organisations and how to improve their interest in starting and continuing within international organisations as actors that represent Finland, its values and policies.

Table 1. Challenges and suggestions for improvement that the interviewees offered regarding Finnish education experts working within international organisations

Challenges	Improvement suggestions
Entering international organisations	<p>Open more junior positions (JPOs, UNVs and other paid government positions) and promote them widely</p> <p>Develop programmes/conditions for experts working in Finland who can take a break from their regular jobs for a couple of years to engage in and experience international cooperation without the risk of losing their permanent jobs</p> <p>Educate and prepare people within government agencies to take positions at the policy level of international organisations (IOs)</p> <p>Provide pre-career opportunities for young people to be exposed to international environments, including within IOs and Global South countries</p>
Maintaining an active role as representatives of Finland within IOs	<p>The government should assign staff to be responsible for informing experts working abroad about policies and any changes</p> <p>Frequently conduct touch-base meetings with education experts sent abroad to maintain contact and assess the work being developed</p> <p>The government should have mechanisms to help 24/7 if an emergency occurs, and experts working abroad need support</p> <p>Have materials about the Finnish education system and education cooperation policies ready that experts abroad can use when making presentations in work contexts</p> <p>The government could be more active in developing a sense of belonging to Finland among experts placed internationally to reinforce Finland's values and policies through regular contacts, and to define clear expectations</p>
Returning to Finland	<p>Develop mechanisms that make international positions within international organisations appealing, including the phase of returning home, e.g., social and retirement benefits</p> <p>Develop mechanisms to reintegrate experts working in education cooperation actively into the Finnish context when they return, e.g., find them professional positions in which their knowledge acquired abroad can be valued and integrated into the national Finnish context</p>

5.2 Education expertise and the global learning crisis

In this section, we present the interviewees' perspectives on the role of expertise in development cooperation in the education sector, their understandings of why a global learning crisis exists and how it can be mitigated, and the role of education export in education development as a source of expertise.

5.2.1 The role of education expertise

In relation to education expertise and education experts' roles, most interviewees understood that having an academic and professional background in education and teaching is vital. Nevertheless, they also emphasised that being a Finnish education expert in Finland does not necessarily mean that one is an expert in the country where they are intervening; education transfer *per se* does not work due to vast contextual differences that must be considered. Thus, to be effective on the ground, the participants understood that, aside from education expertise about the Finnish education system, one also must be an expert in the receiving country's education systems.

'It is not to bring the Finnish model, because when you have four great teachers teaching Portuguese and math in Mozambique and their level of knowledge is about one year of primary school, these are the teachers. You are in another world, and the Finnish stuff doesn't work there at all. So as long as you have the credibility of coming and knowing the Finnish system, that gives you credibility, but then you have to have much more to be functional in these situations.'

In addition to expertise in education, it is important to be an expert in diplomacy, policy, international dynamics, etc. Some interviewees stated that being skilled in these areas of expertise, together with having good communication skills and a desire to listen to context actors' priorities, enables international actors to better advocate for their agendas, as they can adapt these agendas to those of the local contexts' actors. The interviewees stated that international actors who master these skills become more efficient at the policy level, allowing them to monitor how policies are implemented at the grassroots level of each context.

At the international organisational level, some experts explained that they have a great deal of latitude to apply their expertise autonomously within their organisations, in which education expertise is viewed as fundamental. Furthermore, the participants noted that, due to Finnish students' excellent performance on international large-scale assessments, e.g., PISA, Finnish education expertise has become visible internationally. To be more effective within international organisations headquarters, for example, policy

and economic expertise also are required in addition to education expertise. Finns, along with other Nordic countries' experts, are described as being experts in developing holistic, integrated views on public policy sectors' interconnectedness. This can be a strong mindset advantage that can be used to help increase influence within international organisations.

5.2.2 Global education development and the global learning crisis

Most of the interviewed experts shared vast and deep knowledge about education development challenges and advocated for the need to emphasise local contexts' characteristics and priorities. Thus, the initiatives in the development cooperation in the education sector are described as being sustainable only if global/international actors support local/national actors' initiatives, instead of replacing them. The interviewees repeatedly mentioned the well-known principle that the Global North cannot solve the Global South's problems. They understood education development as locally situated, just like other sectors on which international cooperation focusses.

'My view has been and continues to be that countries solve their problems themselves. There is no, this saviour mentality. ... Education is a national mandate; every country wants to oversee the education system, and it is so fundamental to citizenship, ... so these countries finance the system, even the poor ones. Their donors, the North, contribute and provide funding, but I have always advocated that it has to be a country-specific approach. You work there in the country ... at the country's terms.'

Regarding the global learning crisis specifically, many interviewees demonstrated that they understood that the learning crisis is not a phenomenon specific to Global South countries, as it also exists in Global North countries. Some participants described this phenomenon as being global, but also local, as it is a consequence of each local context's situations and characteristics.

Many interviewees also described the global learning crisis ultimately as a transectorial phenomenon, i.e., a consequence of a poor quality education system (e.g., poorly trained teachers, poor infrastructure quality, unsuitable or nonexistent school materials), but also a consequence of other global and contextual issues and events, e.g., conflict, hunger, families backgrounds, government priorities and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, COVID-19 sometimes is identified as the reason why so much attention has been paid to the global learning crisis in recent years, as long school closures have aggravated what the World Bank (2019) calls *learning poverty*.

'There is a strong desire for a more sustainable economy, greener values, greener production, greener energy, everything is supposed to be more and more green, but there are no skills. And the skills gap is the product of low-quality education. And that's one way it carries over to sustainability.'

The interviewees recognised the impacts that the learning crisis can make on all sectors of a country's development, as a good education is viewed as enabling citizens to address and better cope with other social issues, as well as develop the skills and knowledge needed to respond to systems' modernisation needs globally and sustainably.

5.2.3 Finnish education export and development

Education export was not a focus of this study, however some interviewees mentioned its role as a type of education expert activity. Only a few of the interviewees had active connections with Finnish education export organisations. Only one interviewee was able to provide case examples or mention good practices related to education export services in relation to development work. This interviewee said that the idea of having strong public-private partnerships and networks was supported within international organisations.

A lack of understanding of the dynamics between education export and development cooperation also was identified in the interviews. Only a few interviewees actually have worked in both 'sectors' and have a vast and thorough understanding of the nature of the work within international organisations and the possibilities they offer for intersectorial cooperation, while also deeply understanding the interests, dynamics and capacities of institutions involved in education export.

When education export was mentioned, its role in development cooperation also was discussed. On one hand, it was acknowledged that when development work is based on customer relations (emerging in education export-import dynamics), it may be more equal and efficient than in traditional development aid, in which the power balance is unequal (donor-receiver). However, the emphasis on education export in the context of development is pointed to as possibly deepening the gap between countries that are in a position to generate funds to import education packages and countries that cannot function on this level based on this business model. Another important mentioned aspect related to Finnish development partnership was the overall idea of the Finnish education system is a non-fee-based system, thus some doubts were expressed as to whether and how this type of system can be commercialised to other countries.

Box 1. Education Export as a way of Partnering for Development

The interviewees mentioned a joint project of the Finn Church Aid and Omnia Education Partnership Ltd., which have a commercial component as well as NGO participation. The project was implemented with funding from UNHCR and provided a platform that offered refugees a chance to obtain a recognised diploma meeting Finnish quality standards and based on Finnish curricula. During the project 20 trainers for the Finnish Diploma for Entrepreneurs were trained and after the first phase, 5 of these trainers proceeded to train 60 participants at the Rwamwanja settlement, in Uganda, out of whom 32 received the Finnish Diploma for Entrepreneurs recognised at the European Qualification Framework levels 4 and 5 in the EU and most OECD countries.

Source: based on the authors' summary of publicly available information²

5.2.4 Challenges in utilising Finnish expertise in development cooperation for education sector

One issue that some interviewees pointed out is that for a long time, Finnish actors (individuals and government ministries and agencies) have failed to take full advantage of the international recognition from high scores on international large-scale assessments, e.g., PISA (a conclusion already reached in Reinikka et al.'s [2018] report), and have struggled to make their voices heard in international forums and discussions on education – sites that comprise important grounds for sharing expertise, including in the education sector. Now that Finnish results on international assessments are declining, having space to share expertise might be more difficult for these experts.

Another challenge that the interviewees mentioned is that Finns are naturally quiet, which often leads to difficulties being heard and actively participating in discussions. Training experts in communication skills and positioning them strategically, where they more easily can have space to advocate for their agendas and use their expertise to influence decision making, were identified as fundamental.

2 <https://www.oep.fi/>, <https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/>

At the ground level, paternalistic attitudes, in which experts present themselves as the owners of all knowledge and expertise, were condemned as counterproductive. Finnish expertise must be aggregated with local expertise at the country level, as each education system works differently and has various weaknesses and strengths. One's expertise is not universal, i.e., what works in Finland very likely will not work elsewhere in the world. This leads to the idea that expertise concerns the context that an expert occupies and the work that one is doing. Many interviewees became professional experts in the education sector by working on international projects, not due to their education background; thus, this expertise is interlinked with the context in which the expert is working and intertwined with the expertise of the other actors with whom they interact locally. This view of expertise sometimes is neither recognised nor acknowledged by experts (particularly early-career experts) who integrate both projects in Global South countries and at international organisations' headquarters.

Another challenge that some experts indicated is the inability to act effectively on education development issues due to a lack of interest from national governments in Global South countries. As mentioned earlier, governments might have other priorities or focuses, or even demonstrate a lack of interest in developing education, as a society that is well-educated might start questioning the government's decisions, practices and the general *status quo*. Of course, these aspects are not directly under international experts' control, but it is precisely in these situations that communication and diplomatic skills can become even more helpful in creating a mindset shift that enables improvement paths to start in these contexts' education systems.

'I think it's a deliberate decision by governments who quite like the idea of an illiterate (or a population that's) not going to challenge them, because the more educated they are, the more information they have available, the more literate they are, then they start to question.'

5.2.5 Suggestions for good practices to improve interventions in development cooperation in the education sector

The expertise of the actors involved in development cooperation in the education sector is an element that can change the outcomes of initiatives in Global South countries. Thus, these actors need a good understanding of their own expertise, knowledge and where and when to put this expertise in action, as well as an understanding of how education development challenges, e.g., the global learning crisis, develop; what their consequences are; and how they could be mitigated. This is a long task with many challenges. The table below summarises the principal challenges and suggestions for improvement. Most of these already have been mentioned in previous sections.

Table 2. Challenges and improvement suggestions that the interviewees offered regarding Finnish influence on development cooperation in the education sector

Challenges	Improvement suggestions
Finns fail to take advantage of their education expertise and are quiet	Select and train experts to be proactive and take advantage of the international recognition of Finland's education expertise within IOs
Expertise is not universal, but rather locally situated	Develop skills that include acknowledgement of other cultures and local knowledge
National governments are not interested in educating their citizens	Develop communication and diplomatic skills that can be used efficiently in steering national government actors and help them recognise the benefits of having well-educated citizens

5.3 Finnish education experts networks and connections to Finnish policy processes

In the following sections, we examine interviewees' answers regarding their connectedness with both Finnish government agencies and ministries, and other education experts working within international organisations.

5.3.1 Involvement with expert networks and the Finnish government

Having a background network of support and cooperation seems relevant for the interviewees, and they often referred to this in the organisations where they work. However, when asked about the connections and networks they maintain with other Finns working in development cooperation in the education sector and Finnish government agencies, several participants declared that they do not maintain such relations. Most interviewees who keep in contact regularly with other Finns working in the same field argue that the contacts that they maintain regularly are tied to personal interests and initiatives.

Participants recognised the existence of the platform that the Finnish government created (*Koulutus ja kehitys*, i.e., Howspace) as the basis for developing this kind of interconnectedness. Some participants said they simply did not have the drive to engage with the

platform's dynamics, while others found it limited and unappealing (without further explanation).

Nevertheless, experts in junior positions have noted the existence of a rather active WhatsApp group through which all junior experts (from the education sector, among others) connect and discuss issues. However, they recognised the limitations of only conversing with experts at the same level and would be interested in also involving senior experts to discuss and engage, while all providing mutual help.

'We have a strong network and WhatsApp group and everything with all the other JPOs who are basically on my level. However, I'd be very keen to be more connected and part of any networks that there might be, with more experienced Finnish experts that are out there...'

Another aspect discussed was the possible benefits of creating events or meetings with Finns working in the same region despite their home organisation because it could be beneficial for developing activities for Finns dealing with similar regional issues, giving them the opportunity to brainstorm on possible improvement strategies together instead of continuing to work in silos (a problem already identified by Reinikka et al. (2018). Overall, most interview subjects indicated that they would welcome being included in a Finnish-oriented community that could more efficiently keep them connected with their roots and grounded in the Finnish agenda for development cooperation in the education sector.

'...I would really like ... sit downs actually with these other organisations in the Eastern Asia-Pacific area. Then we could maybe plan something together ...'

5.3.2 Challenges and constraints regarding networking

In short, respondents identified two principal challenges: a) Finnish government agencies have little contact with Finnish education experts working within international organisations, and b) experts have little contact with other Finnish education experts working within international organisations.

Box 2. Briefing on education expertise and Development

British Expertise International has a mission to help its members explore, assess and win business opportunities globally, e.g., through collaboration, information sharing, networking, raising profile and providing industry insights. It is working also in the field of education. The agency hosts Education Working Group that collects actors from private and public sector to discuss and learn on international challenges in education. The working group works for showcasing UK expertise and innovative solutions in education. The activities of the working group include facilitation of events on current issues on global education and UK expertise, sending out a weekly update on education as well as preparation of a briefing paper for working group members to be in the frontline when talking about the Learning Crises, in partnership with government and donor partners.

Source: based on the authors' summary of publicly available information³

Although many experts who were interviewed stated that they have at least an idea of Finnish development cooperation policy, it seemed common among the interviewees to disconnect from the Finnish cooperation agenda when working internationally, particularly among experts who have been abroad for many years. As mentioned in the previous section, the interviewees noted that after deploying experts to international organisations, Finnish government agencies failed to maintain contact with these experts to clarify and reinforce the national agenda within these organisations. This disconnect between the Finnish government and its education experts leads to these experts assimilating quickly into the host organisation, including adoption of its values and agenda. Through regular meetings, the Finnish government and education experts could design strategies to advance the Finnish agenda for development cooperation in the education sector. Furthermore, this is the opposite of what some interviewees have observed in other countries (e.g., France, UK, US etc.), where meetings to discuss clear strategies and orientations take place on a regular basis. Thus, Finnish education experts working within international organisations have provided indications that they would welcome a more active and focussed attitude from Finnish government agencies and ministries that would keep them grounded in Finland while guiding and informing them more frequently.

3 <https://www.britishexpertise.org>

'... the French, for example, ... they meet every week. and they are given, this is Paris's position, this is what you should be doing, and you see them systematically going out to drive whatever Paris's position is within the EU ...'

The interviewees also mentioned that regular regrouping meetings and conferences that government agencies and ministries organise with CSOs or the private sector would be very welcomed. One example is the 2019 conference *Finland as a Strong Actor in the Global Learning Crisis – National Education Sector Development Cooperation*. At such events, government members and education experts working within international organisations can discuss and share what they are working on, their activities' outcomes, the challenges they have encountered and how they overcame these challenges. These events can take place on site, but also would be welcome online in a webinar format, although some experts have mentioned their preference for networking with peers on site. Events such as the one mentioned above offer opportunities to address both limitations: the lack of contact with Finnish government agencies and the reduced opportunities for experts to network with their peers. Furthermore, at these events, Finnish education experts can learn not only from each other, but some interviewees argued that Finland also can learn from these experts' knowledge and experiences.

'[In] 2019, there was an event that was organised by the National Agency of Education, and it brought different Finnish actors together. ... That type of virtual format could perhaps be utilised. There's a lot that Finland can actually learn, not just Finland only giving. So I think there could be more of that ...'

5.3.3 Good practices in improving expert interconnectedness

Based on interview answers regarding experts' connections and networking with the Finnish government and Finnish experts working for international organisations, we identified the principal challenges that these experts indicated and what they suggest as possible solutions for these challenges, summarised below in Table 3.

Table 3. Challenges and suggestions from interviewees regarding networking difficulties

Challenges	Improvement suggestions
Minimal contact between the Finnish government and Finnish education experts working abroad within IOs	<p>Assign government staff to be responsible for informing experts working abroad about policies and changes</p> <p>Conduct frequent meetings between government and education experts sent abroad to assess the work being developed and draft action strategies</p> <p>Organise seminars or webinars in which the government and experts can discuss and share their experiences and knowledge</p>
Reduced networking between Finnish education experts working abroad within IOs	<p>Create networks in which experts can form organisations. Experts placed at various levels within organisations can support each other and share experiences informally</p> <p>Organise seminars or webinars in which the government and experts can discuss and share experiences and knowledge, and experts can meet each other</p> <p>Create regional activities in which experts from the same region can discuss commonalities and cooperative forms to address regional issues</p>

5.4 Finnish development cooperation in the education sector

In the following subsections, the report focusses on analyses of the interviewees' opinions regarding Finnish policies for development cooperation in the education sector, challenges and how actual policies could be improved.

5.4.1 Policies' focusses and aims

Knowledge about Finnish development policy, particularly policies related to developments in/through education, was limited among the interviewed experts. Overall, the interviewed education experts could identify the Finnish emphasis on equity, the education of girls and vulnerable groups, and teacher training. They believe that the Finnish policy for development cooperation in the education sector focusses are important and a reasonable policy choice for Finland, but that it could be emphasised further. However, distinctions were observed on the level of policy knowledge between experts: Some demonstrated that they were very well-informed, while others did not.

The interviewees' professional specialisation impacted their answers regarding development policies. Roughly two principal approaches to Finnish policies for development cooperation in the education sector appeared among the interviewees. Those working closely with local education realities emphasised Finnish policies' role in shaping and developing education systems in general (macro-perspective). Other interviewees emphasised Finland's role in supporting vulnerable groups and acute (humanitarian) issues (micro-perspective). Nevertheless, both groups of interviewees noted that the overall development cooperation policy aims to focus on the intervening countries' interests and needs, become established with a long-term perspective, ensure sustainable development, support democracy, maintain peace and safeguard human rights, as well as Finland's policy for development cooperation in the education sector. It also aims to increase access to quality basic, secondary and vocational education and training, with a particular emphasis on the education of girls and other vulnerable groups. The interviewees approached these aims from either a macro-perspective, with an emphasis on developing entire education systems and teacher training, or a micro-perspective, responding to acute (humanitarian) issues and working directly with people in need.

Many interviewees recognised the previous work by Ritva Reinikka et al. (2018). They closely associated the current policy work and advocacy of Finnish education expertise with implementation of the *Stepping Up* report (e.g., the coordination group and electronic platform). This can be viewed as a clear indication that policy processes and evaluations, with a wide hearing from the field, not only play a role in defining policies and recommendations, but also carry importance as a process that builds a shared understanding and common ownership of policies.

5.4.2 Finnish development policy and international organisations' role

The interviewees believed that in terms of advancing Finnish policy aims in development cooperation in the education sector, the most important international organisations for fulfilling this are UNICEF and UNESCO. Generally, the interviewees who adhered to a 'micro-definition' of Finnish policy emphasised UNICEF's importance, and the interviewees who followed a 'macro-definition' of the policy often emphasised UNESCO's role. However, almost all the interviewees mentioned these two organisations' importance to Finland in advancing its education cooperation aims. In addition to these organisations, other international organisations were mentioned, including the World Bank frequently, as well as the OECD, with some references to regional development banks and INGOs.

'Finland should put people in country offices, not the headquarters, or both. It doesn't matter whether it's UNICEF or UNESCO or World Bank, but the country offices in my thinking would benefit most from Finnish expertise.'

When thinking more specifically about how these organisations could function as avenues for advocating the Finnish development agenda, contrasting views were observed. Some interviewees argued that the headquarters are where advocacy can take place, while others suggest that countries' offices are the place for realistic possibilities to make an impact with the limited resources available. Overall, this discussion relates to the question of what the geographical focus of the Finnish development policy should be and how much it should be emphasised at the expense of, or in relation to, other policy aims.

Several of the interviewees also mentioned the EU as an international organisation worthy of investment. The interviewees were well aware of the EU's various logics for recruitment compared with other international organisations. The EU does not have education experts, thus, Finland could have a window of opportunity to participate in the development of EU-level expertise in education and development sectors.

The interviewees argued that although international organisations raise awareness about development issues that need addressing and gather stakeholders willing to commit to addressing these issues, they often replace governments in decisions and funding, which is viewed as negative for long-term and sustainable development.

'You see international organisations replacing governments in service delivery and governments choosing to invest in other things, like defence and military, for example. So you get into this trap of externally funding a sector that is just not sustainable.'

The participants argued that if a project is to be impactful, it must be long-term and sustainable. To be sustainable, it must be led by national and local actors, and grounded on features tied to the context and local actors' needs and interests, instead of international actors. In these cases, after international experts leave, the project tends to end, which is not a successful approach. International organisations cannot replace tasks and services that should be governments' responsibility, although it might be positive at the community level to have these services that otherwise likely would not be available. At the governmental level, it can lead to a worsening of the situation in which, after international organisations leave, the government does not continue to fund initiated education projects, e.g., buying school materials or maintaining school infrastructures.

5.4.3 Challenges in the Finnish policy approach

The Finnish development cooperation policy's overall aims were viewed as important and impactful. The fact that Finland has emphasised and focussed on education's role in development was viewed as important. However, one of the principal challenges that the interviewees identified was a lack of focus on a specific geographic area. Several interviewees asked questions about the definition of *education* in development cooperation and raised concerns, expressing that it should be narrowed and, depending on their professional background, suggested alternatives for a focus, e.g., teacher training, inclusive education, vulnerable groups, preschool education etc.

'I do think that there should be some prioritisation, because right now, it's so broad that anything remotely related to education will be like, yeah, yeah, oh, you are doing education, brilliant, let's do this.'

The most-mentioned challenge regarding development cooperation policy for education was a lack of resources. First, it was noted that Finland, as a small country, has limited resources for implementing and funding development policy initiatives. Second, it was noted that Finland has a limited presence within international organisations (in the number of staff) and forums (e.g., GPE and Education Cannot Wait). Third, it was noted that Finnish government agencies and ministries have limited resources to react, follow and report on development.

'The resources are limited, so I would think that it is better to focus on some organisations and contribute adequately to those organisations rather than doing a little bit here and there.'

Another challenge for advocacy of Finland's development aims that the interviewees presented was a lack of communication. The interviewees mentioned that the communication is, at most, unidirectional, and that reporting for the MFA from seconded experts does not attain policy-relevant answers. Moreover, regarding the discussion of Finnish development policy, the challenges related to coordination and networking between the Finnish experts and ministerial staff were mentioned frequently.

Combined with limited resources, inadequate coordination, a lack of clear substance and geographical focus, and a need for a clear definition of *education*, the development strategy could be cited as a challenge. The interviewees also expressed that for Finland, making an impact through UN channels was the most dependable path because of limited resources. Corresponding with this, multilateral support was described as being efficient in advocating Finnish policy aims. This is a problem that has no easy or optimal solutions. With limited national resources, impactful development collaboration is difficult, and its leverage within international organisations to influence policymaking is limited.

'Finland likes to put their money into bigger pots. [...] The point being is that, that dilutes perhaps, sort of the Finnish drive and the Finnish agenda, because you sort of put it into large, bigger pots, but because your contribution is still so limited, you don't have much voice in how that pot gets out.'

5.4.4 Good practices that experts identified

The interviewees did not recognise many good practices that could be met with current resources, but some were mentioned. First, the interviewees appreciated the development initiated by Reinikka et al.'s report, *Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education* (2018). They believed that collaboration between ministries has raised education's profile in the development of a policy agenda. The fact that the MFA (the principal policy actor in development cooperation, from the perspective of international experts) has a contact person for educational development also was appreciated highly as a 'single window' policy. However, none of the respondents recognised this 'one-stop shop' or thought that resources were limited.

'Well, in general, if we look at Finland and education, we're definitely a step ahead compared to many other countries, and so that's why I think it's very good that we keep education as an important point in all our development co-operation policies.'

The online cooperation development in the education sector platform was mentioned several times as a fairly good attempt to share information, connect experts and start discussions. However, contradictory opinions were expressed on the platform. Many interviewees still said that although they know it exists, they do not use it regularly or at all.

One interviewee mentioned that countries with major development agencies are developing experts for junior consultant positions actively to increase their knowledge on development policy and build the national development capacity needed to govern experts not directly working with the 'development industry'.

The table below summarises the principal challenges and proposed improvement suggestions that the interviewees presented.

Table 4. Challenges and suggestions for Finnish policies for development cooperation in the education sector

Challenges	Improvement suggestions
Lack of focus	Concentrate on some aspects/levels of education
Lack of geographical focus	Make a deliberate decision between national/regional/international channels to impact global educational policies
Limited resources	Increase financial and human resources. Focus on financial resources and improve coordination and collaboration. Emphasise the one-stop-shop principle
Need for a more strategic approach	Critically assess the costs and benefits of supporting international organisations' policies vs. investing in bilateral development collaboration

5.5 Impact and influence

In the following sections, we discuss the interviewees' arguments about how their work has influenced both Global South countries and international organisations.

5.5.1 Influence of education expertise

Several interviewees stated that they believe that merely being a Finnish national generates interest and gives them a voice due to international recognition of the Finnish education system's quality. Furthermore, Finnish experts have a different way of thinking and practising education, e.g., teachers are very autonomous, valued and trusted; students do not undergo national large-scale assessments; and competition and meritocracy are not promoted like they are in English-speaking countries (e.g., the UK, US, Australia etc.), giving Finns flexibility to influence their professional contexts. Nevertheless, although most of the interviewees stated that they believe they hold some level of influence in their positions, and that they view their work as impactful, at least at the technical level, they also understand the limitations of their influence when they are placed in lower-level or junior positions within international organisations. In such positions, they noted that they have little power to influence their organisations' decisions or those made by the governments in the countries where they work. They described their work's impact as being more localised and focussed on the communities with whom they work directly. To be more influential, the interviewees suggested that the government focus more on placing experts in higher positions within international organisations,

where these experts could have more latitude to advance the Finnish agenda within international organisations' agendas, or alternatively, fund junior positions long enough for them to rise within the organisations' professional ranks.

'But of course in leadership positions one must have.. good skills in listening. And a will to understand local contexts and... humility somehow as well. There are too many people... think they have the answers and.. Finns really are, of course, experts in education but are not experts in how things are at the local level!'

Nonetheless, both senior and junior experts emphasised important aspects of any expert working in development cooperation. In Global South countries, one must consider the characteristics, knowledge and interests/needs of the local context and its people. The interviewees described how paternalistic and hierarchical attitudes (i.e., arriving with pre-made solutions and activities that were decided without input from national and local actors, with the attitude 'I am the expert – I know better!') can become more of a limitation in the development of education at the local level than a benefit. First, change must happen from within these countries, involving local expertise, not brought in from abroad. Second, development activities that do not complement the interests of these countries' governments and communities are not sustainable, as they tend to end once the international organisations' experts leave.

The interviewed experts also identified several skills needed to influence either international organisations' decision making or when in the field in interventional contexts. The most-often-mentioned skills include:

- Diplomatic skills and good communication skills in general
- Dynamism, proactivity and taking the initiative of getting involved in ongoing discussions and encountered activities
- Humbleness/humility
- Good knowledge of the intervention context
- Capacity to listen to local actors and accept, respect and value their knowledge

To guarantee that these characteristics are developed in education experts representing the Finland within international organisations, the interviewees urged the government to invest in comprehensive pre-departure trainings, as well as continuous training during work placement.

5.5.2 Influence within international organisations

Regarding influence within organisations, even senior experts recognise that this is not an easy task. It must be planned strategically, and the approach must include convincing highly influential actors within these organisations (i.e., people at the decision-making level) that one's ideas are the best route. This cannot be accomplished through confrontation or imposition, but rather in a diplomatic, strategic way. Otherwise, the best (and more common) outcome is for international experts to adapt to the values and objectives of the organisations in which they work, or that they bring an agenda that can complement, rather than radically change, the organisation's agenda – a strategy that Centeno (2017) termed *synergetic agendas*.

'Three things will happen if the education expert in the World Bank or OECD or European Commission or any organisation try to change their policies and values. One is that you are going to lose your friends. The second one is that your life expectancy will decrease. And the third one is that nothing will change, anyway. So the best thing you can do if you are a Finnish education expert in the large organisation, ... it is, don't try to change the organisation's values or strategies or policies directly. ... So what you need to do ... you have to find ... one of the directors that is serving the board, and you have to help those people to understand that there is a better way to see this function ...'

The interviewees noted that their influence was progressive as they built years of seniority within their respective organisations and moved into higher positions. To sum up, they argued that the higher their position and the longer they were with the organisation, the more power they amassed to wield influence.

Nevertheless, Finland is viewed as a small country; thus, it has a small voice, not only because its funding is small, but also because it has a small quantity of experts working within international organisations, with no specific orientation from the Finnish government. This is a weakness compared with other countries, which have more funding allocated to international cooperation through these international organisations, place more experts within these organisations and clearly guide and coordinate them in a close, strategic manner.

5.5.3 Influence on the education contexts in the Global South

The interviewees indicated that they might wield more influence in the field, i.e., in the countries where they intervene. At this level, the interviewees view their work as impactful at both levels regarding policy and directly at the community level. At both levels, interviewees mentioned the importance of listening to national and local actors,

understanding the context of the intervention and its history and adapting possible solutions, keeping in mind these characteristics and always respecting local actors and their knowledge, interests and needs.

'... so, understanding this other context better. Maybe more country-specific specialists, understanding other countries' education system challenges, their histories, how their education policies were developed. Because there are often quite important things in countries' pasts. Many developing nations or developing economies have colonial pasts, and that has an influence on their systems as well.'

The interviewees argued that, particularly at the policy level, the work done with governments requires time, patience and diplomatic skills to interact with actors at this level, e.g., the long-term benefits of having educated citizens involved in the country's economic development if economics are a concern. In countries that are or were recently in armed conflict situations, policymakers' priorities might be more focussed on imminent needs, e.g., security issues, and education, might become a side-tracked social field. Well-informed education experts with good communication and diplomatic skills can help policymakers in Global South countries to accept education as key to improving the country general development, as well as citizens' quality of life, their understanding global issues and developing tolerance towards people with different backgrounds – all leading to a sustainable state of peace.

5.5.4 Challenges and good practices to increase influence

As a summary of previous sections, in the table below, we present the challenges and suggestions that interviewees offered regarding their impact on both the international organisations they work for and the countries where they intervene.

Table 5. Challenges and suggestions that interviewees defined regarding their work's impact.

Challenges	Improvement suggestions
Junior/lower-level positions have limited room for influencing	<p data-bbox="568 521 1086 555">Train and place people at higher policy levels within IOs</p> <p data-bbox="568 566 1262 633">Employ junior experts long enough for them to achieve positions in which they can become more influential</p> <p data-bbox="568 656 1225 757">Select and train people with the right/needed set of skills, e.g., communication and diplomatic skills, including openness to accepting countries' different ways of living and cultures</p>
Finnish expertise might not be enough to influence	<p data-bbox="568 775 1254 842">Conduct pre-departure training on the local context's characteristics and history</p> <p data-bbox="568 853 1209 887">Maintain continuous training alongside education expert placement</p> <p data-bbox="568 909 1281 976">Ensure that locals lead projects and that projects address local interests and needs (Finnish and other international experts provide support)</p> <p data-bbox="568 987 1270 1088">Place development of communication and diplomatic skills at the centre of the skill set needed to be influential actors in development cooperation in the education sector</p>
Finland is a small player	<p data-bbox="568 1115 826 1149">Increase funding within IOs</p> <p data-bbox="568 1160 1062 1193">Increase the number of education experts within IOs</p> <p data-bbox="568 1205 1278 1272">Coordinate and closely guide internationally placed experts' work and draft strategies together</p> <p data-bbox="568 1283 1082 1317">Set and clarify priorities for experts working within IOs</p>

6 Conclusions

In this chapter, we summarise our findings and reflect on the principal challenges and strengths related to Finnish education expertise and its role within international organisations. We also provide recommendations for the Finnish government related to the Finnish road map on development cooperation in the education sector, implementation of FinCEED's aims and the continuing development of Finnish education expertise, with the aim of influencing global development of education.

6.1 Summary: The role of Finnish education experts working within international organisations on the development cooperation in the education sector

No universal consensus has been reached on definitions of *experts* and *expertise*. Particularly in the context of education experts working within international organisations, the selection and identification of experts is an analytical task in itself. We utilised a snowball method to identify experts working in development cooperation in the education sector because one of the criteria for identifying expertise is a consensus among peers that one is an expert (see Section 2.3). Furthermore, the survey respondents and interviewees viewed themselves as education experts, with institutional positions as experts in this field supporting their professional work.

Type of academic qualification was not the uniting characteristic of the experts participating in this study. Although all education experts have an academic background that includes a master's degree or Ph.D., **most have not focussed their studies on education**. Indeed, they have professional credentials from various fields. These actors developed their education expertise from years of experience with education development projects.

The international recognition of Finland's education expertise was earned mostly through students performing well on international large-scale assessments. This is viewed as effective leverage that Finnish education experts can use to get their voices heard internationally. However, Finnish education experts working within international organisations have not utilised this recognition effectively.

Most education experts started their careers young, as they believe that **early international exposure is an important strategy for promoting international careers**. Consequently, several interviewees agreed on the importance of international placements for Finnish experts, calling for inclusion of international experience in the structure of higher education studies (in the education field). Furthermore, the education programmes' content in higher education institutions should be discussed to integrate information and varied perspectives on topics, e.g., global citizenship, development cooperation in the education sector and international organisations' role. Based on the interviews, the international experience also should be better integrated into a 'national' career structure, i.e., the government should pay closer attention to the selection and training of seconded experts and develop 'returning' packages that facilitate the reintegration of international development experts into the Finnish context. Thus, **their international expertise could be recognised and utilised better as a competence that also can be used in national settings** (e.g., in FinCEED).

Box 3. Education HE programmes in Education and Development

Targeted education for experts in the field of education and development is provided at the universities of Jyväskylä and Oulu. University of Jyväskylä is offering a master's degree programme in in Development, Education and International Cooperation and University of Oulu is providing a programme in Education and Globalisation. Furthermore, many universities are providing degree education in English in the field of education and courses related to different teams and topic on international education. HAMK, university of applied sciences, is providing a specialisation training in educational export. Short courses in relation to education are also provided by CSOs such as Teachers Without Borders (Finn Church Aid) and Fingo.

Furthermore, two Finnish universities (Jyväskylä and Helsinki) currently are offering education in development studies; however, these programmes have no special orientation in education. Furthermore, UniPID-network offers virtual courses and a study module in sustainable development that may have courses in education and development depending on annual course offering of its member universities. In addition to training related to global development some CSO and public agencies provide professional trainings for persons intending to work in developing countries, humanitarian crises or conflict areas.

Source: based on the authors' summary on publicly available information.

Most identified experts were placed in various senior positions at UN agencies, while other interviewed experts worked at the World Bank, GPE, Save the Children, Finn Church Aid and the ABD. Previously, all the interviewed experts were involved in projects for diverse organisations, including international organisations; private companies; and bilateral agreements, mostly in African countries. Furthermore, all interviewees also had experience working in the Finnish context in a variety of positions, e.g., teachers, ed tech industries or public administration positions, **creating a rich and diverse participant pool.** However, according to the survey, less than half had work experience in the Finnish education sector. The interviewed experts would welcome more junior position vacancies, better support to maintain a career inside international organisations and benefit packages to help reintegrate into the Finnish job market or to retire.

Finnish education experts working on education development challenges, including the global learning crisis, shared holistic views on the earlier academic literature and that UN agencies and the World Bank have published (see Sections 2.1 and 5.2.2). More specifically, they understood that although **a poor-quality education carries consequences for other sectors of society** and hinders these sectors' development, education issues – e.g., the global learning crisis, despite being a global problem – are highly contextual, **caused not only by education system weaknesses, but also by other societal issues,** e.g., hunger, conflict, family background, health, etc. Thus, policy-level interventions might make a more sustainable impact than small-scale individual projects. They argued that education development projects must be aligned with local actors' interests, be long-term and sustainable (see Section 5.2 and subsequent subsections).

Based on the survey findings, most of the **experts identified themselves, to some extent, as representatives of Finland** and as international education experts. However, the interviewees argued that **more guidance from the Finnish government would accentuate and make Finnish representativeness more efficient within international organisations**. The interviews demonstrated that, as it is now, many education experts working within international organisations feel that they do not know well enough the Finnish policies and aims regarding development cooperation in the education sector, so they wind up following the agendas of the organisations within which they are placed. These organisations have their own agendas and strongly advocate for them (see Section 2.3 and Section 5.5 and following subsections). **Thus, without strong backup work from the Finnish government, these organisations' agendas easily get Finnish education experts onboard.**

The interviewed experts stated that it was appropriate and important for Finland's policy in development cooperation in the education sector to focus on increasing access to quality basic, secondary and vocational education and training, with a particular emphasis on the education of girls and other vulnerable groups. However, they argued that defining a more specific focus and clearer aims is necessary. As for the **international organisations with whom Finland should intensify its collaboration, the experts argued that investing (financially and with human resources) in UN agencies, particularly UNICEF and UNESCO**, would be a positive move, **as would investing more in GPE and improving collaboration with CSOs**. Furthermore, the participants recognised Finland as a small player compared with other countries involved with development cooperation in the education sector. Consequently, resources, funds and room for influence are limited.

Box 4. Strategic Definition and communication of the work for Education for Development

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) provides 'portfolio overviews' in a comprehensive, condense and informative way. Any external, non-native reader can comprehend the aim, geographical focus and volume, as well as the main partners of Sweden in their actions regarding development cooperation in the education sector.

Source: based on authors' summary on publicly available information⁴

4 <https://www.sida.se>

This study's participants demonstrated that **they are somehow connected with other Finnish education experts working within international organisations**. However, these contacts are described as limited by position level (e.g., junior experts have some means to contact each other) and often only exist due to personal interest and effort. Creating networking systems and activities (e.g., meetings and seminars) that enable more frequent and systematic contact among experts within international organisations would be valuable. **Contacts between the Finnish government and education experts placed abroad were described as very limited** or even non-existent. Experts would welcome more guidance from Finnish government agencies, particularly MoEC and MFA.

Regarding the impact and influence of their expertise and work, the study participants feel they are somehow impactful, at least concerning technical aspects on the ground. However, they understood that it is more difficult to be influential, particularly within large international organisations, as only experts placed in very high positions can influence agendas and decision making. It is not a new finding that people placed in high-level technocratic positions tend to be more influential than actors placed in other positions (see Sections 5.5 and subsequent subchapters). A strategy viewed as relevant to address this issue is to train well-educated experts in **aspects such as communication and diplomatic skills, as well as Finnish policies for development cooperation in the education sector**, and place them in high positions within international organisations or within countries' projects, where these experts can collaborate directly with national policy makers. **These experts also must have a skill set that includes openness and respect towards the locals' knowledge and priorities** (see Sections 2.1 and 5.5).

Table 6. Summary of the principal strengths and challenges that the interviewees identified

Theme	Main strengths	Main challenges
Experts and expertise	Most interviewed experts have longtime experience with education development projects within diversified organisations The Finnish results on education and international large-scale assessments enhance Finnish expertise in education	International recognition of Finnish education experts has been underutilised and is fading quickly after recent years, declining in performance on international assessments
Experts' academic background	All the interviewed experts hold a master's or doctoral degree	Most Finnish education experts do not have an academic education background or teaching experience

Theme	Main strengths	Main challenges
Experts' international career paths	The experts have longtime, diverse career paths that include positions at the national and international levels in public, private and civil society organisations	Only a few Finns are interested in international careers in development cooperation in the education sector The experts described maintaining a long-term career within IOs and being adequately supported when returning to Finland as challenges
Experts' understandings of education cooperation	Finnish education experts demonstrated a holistic view of education development challenges as larger societal problems	Societal factors beyond the education system also elicit education development challenges and carry repercussions for societies' development dialectically
Experts' views on Finnish policies on development cooperation in the education sector	Experts identify themselves as representatives of Finland Finland's policy on development cooperation in the education sector focus is to increase access to quality basic, secondary and vocational education and training, with a particular emphasis on the education of girls and other vulnerable groups The international organisations with whom Finland should intensify their collaboration are mostly UN agencies	Education experts need clear guidelines, aims and an understanding of what is expected from them (guidance and coordination) Only a few education experts are well-informed about Finnish policies on development cooperation in the education sector
Experts' networks and connections	Experts maintain some contact with other Finnish experts working as education experts within international organisations Experts would welcome more events and platforms that enable more networking opportunities with peers and with the Finnish government	Experts do not have enough contact (if any) with the Finnish government Finnish education experts' contacts with peers working within international organisations develop only through their own initiative and rarely include experts at other career levels
Experts' impact and influence	Experts feel that they are impactful (at the ground level) and that they are somehow influential (particularly when working in high-level positions)	Experts often lack the necessary knowledge and skills to be influential, e.g., good knowledge of Finnish policies on development cooperation in the education sector and communication skills Finns often are not placed strategically where they can be impactful or influential More Finnish experts are needed at international organisations

This study has established three overarching tasks (see Section 1) that we now address here individually:

- **Identify Finnish education experts placed within international organisations**

The snowball process of identifying Finnish education experts working within international organisations started from Reinikka et al.'s (2018) report, *Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education* (2018), and from the 2019 seminar *Finland as a Strong Actor in the Global Learning Crisis – a National Education Sector Development Cooperation*. During the interviews, we asked the participants to identify other education experts whom they knew worked within international organisations in the education sector. It soon became clear that only a few people were known by many. Overall, few people worked in international organisations. Only 33 education experts were identified, and at least three were already at the end of their careers or partially retired. The number would be much higher had we reached experts working internationally, while also maintaining a career in Finland (e.g., academics in the field).

- **Scrutinise the influence and impact of Finnish education expertise on these organisations**

Overall, through the interviews, it became clear that the Finnish education experts working within international organisations often are not placed in the most strategic positions, which can offer possibilities for influencing decision making, even in country offices. Furthermore, Finns working within international organisations must develop their communication skills and become more active in offering to be involved in ongoing activities within these organisations. Thus, interviewees all agreed that more well-trained Finnish education experts are needed to influence organisations' decisions and the policymaking of the governments in the countries where development cooperation initiatives are deployed.

- **Understand how to boost influence and increase the number of Finnish education experts placed within these organisations**

The interviewees indicated that it is important to invest in placing younger people not only within international organisations, but also in bilateral projects in which their careers can develop, they can move up in these organisations' hierarchies and assume positions that are more influential. Furthermore, respondents indicated that it is important to train experts for placement directly in higher positions. Thus, a combination of these actions is suggested as a strategy to help Finland improve its influence in both the countries where it intervenes and within the international organisations with which it is involved.

Furthermore, the interviewees called for better pre-departure and continuous training of education experts involved in development cooperation in the education sector. Furthermore, frequent meetings between Finnish government agencies and the deployed experts were viewed as fundamental to improving these experts' representativeness in these international contexts. Finnish experts must be well-informed about Finnish policy updates, their aims and what is expected from them.

Box 5. education expertise and Short-Term Contracts

British Council is providing international development technical expertise for more than four decades. The council has a database of experts that is used for searching suitable consultants and send updates for consulting opportunities. Consultants who contract with the British Council are required to familiarise themselves with British Council policies and values. Through this strategy, the British Council provides technical expertise, e.g., the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and national governments.

Source: based on interviews' authors' summary of publicly available information⁵

In the next section, we introduce our recommendations for enhancing Finland's role in global education development based on the study developed and presented in this paper.

6.2 Recommendations

This study is expected to help implement a road map to strengthen Finland's education cooperation with Global South countries and to propose strategies to increase Finland's influence in these countries and within international organisations. Effective education diplomacy for development is based on institutionalised trust, relationships, shared goals and collaboration between stakeholders (Persaud & Murphy, 2019). Therefore, education diplomacy is key to seeking solutions to complex and multidimensional issues affecting

5 <https://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/international-development>

education globally, e.g., inclusion, quality of education, gender equality, financing, and education during crises and emergencies (Cardarelli, 2018; Fuller, 2019; Persaud & Murphy, 2019). Based on this study's principal findings, we make recommendations below that mainly are related to international experts' roles within international organisations and to their careers. Furthermore, from the perspective of international experts, Finland would benefit from a clearer strategy for education in development cooperation policy. The recommendations are as follows:

1. **Strategic positioning of Finland in global educational architecture**

Based on this study's findings, Finnish education experts have varied views on different actors' importance in the global architecture of education. Their understanding varies because of their varying professional and organisational backgrounds, and they did not have a clear understanding of Finnish policy-influencing objectives or policy development aims. To prioritise certain international organisations in the education field, Finland needs a more explicit strategy for education in development policy and cooperation.

To create an efficient road map that meets strategic aims, the following three educational diplomacy components should be considered carefully (Bartram et al., 2015):

- *Identification of shared issues:* What is the 'Finnish agenda'? Where does Finland want to collaborate in development cooperation in the education sector?
- *Collaborative goal setting:* With whom or through which international organisations/forums does Finland want to enforce its development cooperation in the education sector agenda?
- *Joint work to address identified challenges:* With whom and where should Finnish education experts work? What challenges do Finnish education experts need to address?

Based on what is presented above, Finland can prioritise certain international organisations and programmes, as well as prioritise specific regional/country offices or headquarters. Currently, fewer than 50 identified Finns are working at international organisations in positions related to education, i.e., every placement counts, and all Finns working within international organisations are important. It is also a strategic decision to choose in what way Finland wants to be more influential. Therefore, some positions can be prioritised above others. For example, Finland can decide to focus on the global policy agenda and aim at second headquarters positions, or it can decide to impact national systems or be a regionally impactful player by placing Finns in country and regional offices.

Ultimately, to become more influential, it is fundamental that Finland – and its many different development cooperation actors – collaborate efficiently (rather than in independent silos) and establish a strategy that goes beyond other countries’ practices and international fads and narratives. Such a strategy should go beyond the broad ideas that SDGs promote by clearly and rationally constructing a new and unique Finnish architecture for its policy on development cooperation in the education sector, which could advance education at both the grassroots and policy levels in Global South countries.

2. **Development of a national strategy for development cooperation in the education sector**

Several interviewed international experts recognised the investments made in development cooperation in the education sector and appreciated the coordination work developing between the MFA and MoEC. However, building on the interviews, it can be argued that the ‘PISA effect’ is phasing out and that Finland’s image needs to be clarified as an educational ‘model country’. If Finland wants to be relevant in the development cooperation in the education sector, it needs to be focussed and strategic because as a donor, it is far behind its most important reference countries.⁶ We recommend emphasising the following:

- **Assessment and definition of the focus and content of education in the context of Finnish development policy.** Regardless of the stated aim for education to be one of the priorities of Finnish development cooperation policy, the sector still often holds a secondary position in the implementation of development policy in practice. Our recommendation for the MFA in collaboration with the coordination group (*kansainvälisen koulutuksen ja kehityksen koordinaatioryhmä*) on development cooperation in the education sector is to assess critically and further clarify in more detail the focus of its operational collaborations for education development. This would help define Finnish education expertise as a brand and better steer fragmented resources used for activities that directly or indirectly support the development agenda, e.g., education export and the internationalisation of Finnish (higher) education.

⁶ Compared with Finland, bilateral and multilateral development funding in education in 2019 was 4.5 times bigger in Norway, 2.9 times bigger in Sweden and 1.6 times bigger in Denmark. Source: <https://donortracker.org/sector/education>.

We do not recommend establishing new actors, networks or funding instruments, but rather assessing and aligning existing ones strategically and considering the possibility of having a more explicit policy for development cooperation in the education sector, while developing strong coordination of the projects developed and the actors involved (including CSOs and private sector actors).

- **Defining *education* in education sector development cooperation.**

Because education as a sector is broad, and the global educational architecture is complex, Finland should define its education niche. The following aspects should be discussed and weighted strategically:

- target groups (girls, different vulnerable groups, language minorities, etc.)
- prioritising of a level (e.g., primary) or type (e.g., vocational) of education
- emphasising some actors' roles (e.g., CSOs) in education
- concentrating on teacher education
- placing emphasis more generally on development of entire educational systems
- assessing education's role at the (triple) development nexus, namely the Finnish emphasis on development cooperation, of a) development cooperation, b) humanitarian/emergency assistance and c) peaceful actions
- geographical focus

- **Defining (higher) education institutions' role in development policy.**

Development cooperation policy has inherent connections to the internationalisation of Finnish education, particularly the higher education system. Development policy aims should be communicated more clearly for HEIs. The role of academic staff and students' incoming mobility should be framed in relation to development policy. The MoEC actively should support the internationalisation of higher education in ways that more closely support the development policy agenda. Existing instruments (e.g., global pilot projects) should be linked directly with the development agenda and instruments supporting international students and staff from Global South countries. This would benefit incoming students and staff, and serve as fruitful 'internationalisation moments' in terms of Finnish staff and students' international exposure. Meanwhile, to be able to respond to the development policy agenda, universities need resources and competencies in development-related research.

3. **Increased support for international careers and education expertise**

Based on this study, it is clear that a continuous need exists for support services in the various stages of international experts' careers. The following recommendations are made:

- **Early exposure to international activities.** Early exposure to development agendas and contexts is one of the most important (pre)conditions for international careers in the education and development field. Exposure can take place during studies (in Finland or abroad). Exposure to the development agenda can be based on mobility, internships or the substance of education. FinCEED, the National Agency of Education, MoEC and MFA should collaborate to ensure that students in education and related fields are exposed to challenges in education in the context of development. The early exposure strategy should go beyond formal education and extend to the early careers of academics and other education professionals already working in education institutions. It is important that these entities design a clear understanding of their roles in:
 - a. incoming mobility (students from the Global South studying among Finns) and outgoing mobility (student exchanges and internships)
 - b. global partnerships (development aid related to development of the education sector)
 - c. curriculum content focussing on education and development
 - d. offering more education and training for experts working at educational institutions

- **Coordination of early and mid-career positions.** Good coordination of responsibilities is needed between various government ministries and agencies to establish secondments and short-term consultancies for technical advice in the educational development sector. FinCEED should coordinate this in collaboration with other government ministries, agencies and networks working in the field of international expertise and trade. We recommend that FinCEED play an active role in promoting Finnish expertise for short-term consultancies for international organisations and, wherever possible, provide technical advisory services, as these activities would familiarise experts with the dynamics of international organisations and provide them with the professional expertise often needed to enter a career in these organisations. The short-term consultancies could be viewed as part of Finnish experts' 'exposure' strategy and as a way of transmitting knowledge. Here, attention should be paid to collaboration between FinCEED and other government ministries and agencies, as well as CSOs, and should include experts working not only in education, but also in other sectors as well.

- **Information on international careers and employers.** Based on the interviews, sharing information about the careers and career planning of experts working within international organisations also is needed. This includes up-to-date information on the organisations themselves, working conditions and other aspects, e.g., retirement policies for international organisations' workers. In particular, coordination and up-to-date information are needed on pensions, taxation and other long-term impacts from having an international career. In addition to information sharing, a mentoring programme also should be developed whereby senior experts can support junior professionals during their careers' early stages.
 - **Professional training for experts working to build international careers.** Training should be done in collaboration with HEIs so that it can be linked in the context of continuous education to degree programmes (master's and PhD programmes). Training should consider the experts' varying professional backgrounds and, thus, have independent modules covering, for example:
 - international organisations and forums' structures and functions
 - educational diplomacy and communication skills
 - development cooperation policy and foreign affairs
 - education and development
 - the Finnish education system (and its development history) and policy in a global context
 - SDGs related to education
 - cooperation dynamics, with an emphasis on local contexts, to enhance local actors' knowledge, priorities and leadership
 - **Promotion of international expertise in relevant Finnish government ministries and agencies.** In Finnish public administration (including HEIs), a more comprehensive approach to identify and recognise the value of international experience and competencies should be promoted, and proactive facilitation of the utilisation of experts' knowledge upon their return to Finland should be promoted.
4. **Increased communication and facilitation of education experts' networks**
- Based on this study, it is clear that regardless of government ministries and agencies' continuous work, the interviewed international experts feel that they work in isolation. Based on these findings, most of the experts are willing and motivated to increase their collaboration with state agencies and other experts. To increase communication and networking, the following recommendations are provided:

- **Increased collaboration between experts working at multilateral organisations and in other sectors, e.g., education export and CSOs.** Based on the survey and interview findings, it is evident that the connections between the public sector, CSOs and the private sector remain in their infancy and should be promoted. Government-relevant ministries and agencies need to take a more active role in communicating with experts abroad and facilitating communication among experts. Almost no contact exists between experts working at international organisations and experts working at CSOs and in the private sector. FinCEED, together with the Education Finland Programme, can become a hub where CSOs and the private sector (e.g., private education export or education technology companies) combine efforts in collaborative development cooperation projects in the sector of education. FinCEED and the Education Finland Programme, along with the MFA and other relevant actors, should promote frequent meetings in which representatives of all these actors brainstorm ideas and make decisions.
- **Increased communication about Finnish policy priorities.** Based on the data analysis, it is evident that the interviewees are not familiar with Finnish advocacy strategies wherever they exist.
- **Increased communication about the Finnish education sector and expertise.** FinCEED should publish an education bulletin (in collaboration with municipalities and HEIs) that includes:

 - updates on Finnish education policy (all levels)
 - good practices (e.g., summaries of government ministries and agencies' funded development initiatives)
 - research updates
- **The *Koulutus kehittyvissä maissa* platform** should be developed, and face-to-face (and virtual) meetings should be increased. The platform's connection to FinCEED's expert pool should be considered carefully.
- **MFA should further continue its work on the education sector development policy and cooperation in a way that is clear for both external stakeholders and experts working in development cooperation in the education sector. In the future, MFA also should have a contact person to whom education experts can reach out and discuss emergent technical, administrative and diplomatic issues.** This person also should coordinate activities related to education internally at the ministry. Collaboration between FinCEED and MFA should be developed closely.

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Appendix 1: List of interviewees

Some interviewees' names were published with their permission; one interviewee did not authorise disclosure of their name. Data were analysed following the principle of anonymity; thus, the quotations used in this report were not attributed.

Aapo Kuusela
Linda Jönsson
Aija Rinkinen
Lyydia Makinen
Anna-Maria Tammi
Maija Lyytinen
Annica Moore
Marianna Miettinen Fosser
Annina Rintakumpu
Marianne Kujala-Garcia
David Korpela
Oscar Boije
Elina Lehtomäki
Pasi Sahlberg
Elli-Noora Heino
Pia Korpinen
Emmi Pakkala
Raisa Venalainen
Hanna Alasuutari
Reijo Aholainen
Ikali Karvinen
Reinikka Ritva
Ilja Riekk
Risto Ihalainen
Jaana Villberg
Sai Väyrynen
Jukka Tulivuori
Sari Bernardo
Jouko Sarvi
Lauri Pynnonen
+ one anonymous participant

Appendix 2: Main international organisations with Finnish representatives identified

International organisations working in Global Education Development

Three different, but complementary, groups of international organisations are the most significant in the education sector and are involved in improving education quality in Global South countries. In this study, we interviewed representatives from each of these three groups. Below, we present the organisations where we found more Finnish education experts to interview for the present study:

*United Nations (UN) system:*⁷ Coordinated by the UN, the system includes diverse ‘funds, programmes and specialised agencies’ with varied levels of autonomy that collaborate to achieve the UN’s overall goals:

*United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF):*⁸ Founded in 1946 to assist children globally in the most vulnerable contexts whose futures are at risk by protecting their rights and well-being, UNICEF, based in New York City, comprises more than 190 member countries and economies. UNICEF works ‘to save children’s lives, to defend their rights and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.’ ‘UNICEF works with partners around the world to promote policies and expand access to services that protect all children’. Its resources include the Convention on the Rights of the Children, an international agreement on childhood and the most ratified human rights treaty in history, and

7 Information retrieved from UN webpage at <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-system>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

8 Information retrieved from UNICEF webpage at <https://www.unicef.org/>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

Education Cannot Wait,⁹ a global fund dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises, with a mission to never leave anyone behind in terms of education regardless of their contextual situation.

- *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)*:¹⁰ Created in 1946 to achieve and maintain peace through cooperation in education, sciences and culture by 'bringing people together and strengthening the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind through mutual understanding and dialogue between cultures', UNESCO, based in Paris, France, currently comprises 193 member states. Among other initiatives, UNESCO 'develops educational tools to help people live as global citizens free of hate and intolerance ... [and] works to ensure that every child and every citizen has access to quality education'. Some of UNESCO's activities and resources are used to lead and coordinate the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda, and within this task, it also produces the Global Education Monitoring Report. UNESCO also coordinates the Futures of Education, a catalyst for global debate in education and learning, which elicited the report 'Reimagining our Futures Together – A new social contract for education'.
- *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*:¹¹ Established in 1950 to help post-World War II Europeans who had to flee their home countries, it has staff working in 132 countries and territories as of 2020. 'UNHCR is a global organisation dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people'. UNHCR works in a diversity of fields to help refugees in need worldwide. Regarding education, UNHCR collaborates with governments and international organisations with the goal of guaranteeing 'quality protective education for refugee children and young people'. Among its most recent resources, in 2020, UNHCR published an education report, 'Coming Together For Refugee Education',

9 Information retrieved from Education Cannot Wait webpage at <https://www.education-cannotwait.org/>, accessed on 14.05.2022

10 Information retrieved from UNESCO webpage at <https://www.unesco.org/en>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

11 Information retrieved from UNHCR webpage at <https://www.unhcr.org/>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

which discussed the topic of education for young refugees, including impacts from school lockdowns due to COVID-19 pandemic on these children's learning.

Development banks and other financial organisations

These banks offer funding and support to weak economies with the goal of accelerating these economies' development.

- *World Bank (WB)*:¹² Founded in 1944 with the aim of funding reconstruction of countries devastated by World War II through loans and based in Washington, D.C., it is a global multilateral development bank with 189 partner countries, with an official mandate to 'end extreme poverty within a generation and boost shared prosperity' ... 'and create more inclusive societies by developing human capital. This requires investing in people through nutrition, health care, quality education, jobs and skills'. The World Bank 'is the largest financier of education', and its strategic approach aims to reduce by 'at least 50% the number (of) children who cannot read and understand a simple text by the age of 10' by 2030 through investments in five education pillars: 'learners, teachers, learning resources, schools and system management'. Among its vast projects, resources and publications, the ones developed in collaboration with other international organisations are emphasised in the report 'The state of the global education crisis: A path to recovery', jointly produced with UNESCO and UNICEF.
- *Asian Development Bank (ADB)*:¹³ Created in 1966, it currently comprises 68 members, 31 of which are founding members. Originally, the ADB focussed on rural development and food production, with the goal of improving the Asian Pacific region's economic growth. Currently, it offers loans, grants and technical support, among other services, with the aim of 'achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty'. In the education sector, the ADB helps its developing member states achieve

12 Information retrieved from Faure et al., 2015, p. 2; The World Bank, webpage at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/what-we-do>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

13 Information retrieved from Faure et al., 2015, p. 2; Asian Development Bank, webpage at <https://www.adb.org/who-we-are/about#history>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

education quality for all. In this sense, ADB supports the SDGs by 'aligning (its) strategy and operations with the SDGs; directly financing projects that help member countries achieve the sustainable development goals; financing the SDGs, including (by) supporting the private sector; supporting the development of knowledge, capacity building and dialogue with developing members; (and) working in partnership with other development banks and a diversity of other stakeholders'. ADB projects focus on primary, secondary, vocational and higher education to improve their quality and equity. Among its many projects and resources, its recently published report, 'Foundational (K-12) Education

- System: Navigating 21st Century Challenges', as part of a collaboration between the ADB and the Australian Queensland University of Technology to analyse the need for basic education (K-12) to adapt to emerging challenges and present suggestions on ways to accomplish this.
- *Global Partnership for Education (GPE)*:¹⁴ The World Bank established the GPE in 2002. Originally known as the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative, it changed its structure and name in 2011 in response to criticism of its functional format. It comprises a partnership that includes countries and organisations as members (including the private sector). GPE is the largest global funder of education, with the aim of 'deliver[ing] quality education so that every girl and boy can have hope, opportunity and agency'. Its interventions focus on system transformation in lower-income countries and those with more children out of school. GPE provides funds and technical support to help countries create and develop their own education systems. It also promotes policy dialogue with the aim of identifying priorities, aligning external support for these priorities and participating in planning, coordination and implementation monitoring, learning and adaptation to develop the best implementation strategy possible. GPE's annual grant allocation was USD \$1.5 billion in 2020, up from USD \$294 million in 2016. The 'Results Report 2021' outlined the impacts of GPE's work between 2016 and 2020, including impacts from its rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in which it 'provided immediate support for contingency and response planning through a multi-country allocation of USD \$8.8 million to 87 partner and eligible countries' just two weeks after the pandemic was declared (GPE, 2021).

14 Information retrieved from Silva & Oliveira, 2021; p. 3; Global Partnership for Education webpage at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

Nongovernmental organisations

- *Save the Children*:¹⁵ – Funded in 1919 in London by Eglantyne Jebb to help children impacted by World War I, it was the first movement especially focused on children. At the present, Save the Children work in 122 countries addressing and mitigating the suffering of ‘the most deprived and marginalised children first, helping them survive, learn and reach their full potential’. In the education sector, Save the Children focuses on early childhood development, global education research, girls education, boosting literacy and numeracy, and promoting school health and nutrition. Save the Children take a multidimensional stance on education that includes not only formal education but also informal education, and as such, it accounts for interrelationships among education institutions, communities and homes. Save the Children collaborates with multilateral organisations in research contexts, among others, e.g., the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF’s Inter-Agency Expert Groups. An example of this collaboration is UNICEF’s commissioned study developed by Save the Children researchers, ‘Leveraging the enthusiasm of parents and caregivers for (lifelong) learning’ (Jo Dowd et al., 2018), examining parents and caregivers’ role in lifelong learning in Eastern and Southern Africa.
- *Finn Church Aid (FCA)*:¹⁶ Established in 1947, FCA’s objective was to minimise the negative effects on Finland after many years of war with Russia and World War II. In the 1960s, Finland’s social problems became secondary in the face of an international context that strongly emphasised developing countries’ difficulties. FCA then shifted its activities and focussed on addressing these countries’ issues. Today, FCA ‘is the largest Finnish provider of development assistance and the second-largest provider of emergency assistance. Finn Church Aid operates where the conditions for life are poorest’ to improve human dignity and international justice. In the education sector, FCA’s programmes depart from Finnish education expertise to support access to education, with a particular emphasis on girls and young women, and those with disabilities by building schools, developing safe and friendly school environments,

15 Information retrieved from Save the Children webpage at <https://www.savethechildren.net/>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

16 Finn Church Aid webpage at <https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/en/>, accessed on 10.04.2022.

and building capacities for teachers and governments with the aim of contributing to both education sector development and education in emergencies. FCA's work in education operates from the principle that 'education is a key for stability, realising human rights and unlocking the potential of children and youth'.

Appendix 3: Survey questionnaire



Section A: Background

A1. Name of the international organisation(s) in which you are currently working, or you have worked

A2. Where are you placed / where were you placed, when you were working in an international organisation?

- Asia
- Africa
- Australia
- Europe
- North America
- South America

A3. My current / last placement is

- full time fixed-term
- full time permanent
- part time (consultancy etc.)

A4. How long have you been working / how long was the last placement in international organisation in the sector of education?

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1 and 3 years
- Between 3 and 5 years
- Between 5 and 10 years
- More than 10 years

A5. Have you worked in an educational expert position in Finland?

- Yes, before my current position
- Yes, after my international placement
- No

Section B: The work of Finnish educational experts in international organizations

B1. Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1-5 (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) by referring to your current position or previous experience in an international organization.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I follow Finland's development policy agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am familiar with the objectives of Finland's development policy in relation to education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to be in more regular contact with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, receive updates on Finnish priorities in development policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow the Finnish agenda in national education policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow the Finnish agenda regarding its influence in education development globally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to receive updates regarding developments in Finnish education policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a good understanding of Finland's education system, its strengths and features.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I identify myself to be a representative of Finland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I identify myself to be an international education expert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have utilised Finnish expertise on education in my work (e.g. shared information on Finland's education system or utilised Finnish experts as speakers, consultants etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am networked with other Finnish education experts working in international organisations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am networked with Finnish education experts who may have relevant expertise to offer to international organisations (e.g., universities, NGOs, private sector, consultants etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am networked with Finnish civil servants in the Ministry of Education and Culture/National Agency for Education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am networked with civil servants in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and/or Embassies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been able to facilitate contacts between Finnish businesses offering education sector expertise and relevant contacts in my organisation and or other international fora.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section C: Role of Finland in international organizations in relation to education

C1. Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1-5 (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) by referring to your current position or previous experience in an international organization.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Finland is able to use influence in discussions concerning global development policy in education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Finnish government is well represented in the tables formulating policies and priorities of the international organisation where I am working or have previously worked.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think it is important to have Finnish education expertise heard in international organisations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think it is important to have Finnish education experts working in influential positions in international organisations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been able to influence education sector programming in my currently or previously held positions in international/multilateral organisations that work on education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been able to influence education sector strategy in my currently or previously held positions in international/multilateral organisations that work on education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 4: Interview guide

This study examines Finnish experts' role working within international organisations and how they influence decision-making through activities that address the global learning crisis.

Following recommendations from the report *Stepping Up Finland's Global Role in Education* (2018), which concluded that Finland should strengthen its voice in international forums and better utilise its human resources in education and development, a coordination group for education in developing countries, co-chaired by the MFA and MOEC, was founded in March 2020 with this purpose in mind.

Thus, this study aims to identify the extent to which, to date, Finnish education sector experts have been positioned in strategic multilateral vacancies, projects, advisory and working groups, platforms and inter-governmental bodies related to education in 'Global South' countries, as well as to discuss and analyse the influence/impact of Finnish expertise in these organisations and forums. This study aims to examine more closely key positions of influence held by Finnish experts in the past and present, as well as their successful project partnerships and career paths. The study also examines how these experts have contributed to Finland's global role in education.

To address the study's aforementioned aims, we pose the following questions. Please let us know whether you have other suggestions or disagree with any of the questions proposed.

The interview will be treated in the report anonymously, if so wished.

Themes	Questions
Personal identification and reflection on work impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education level • Work experience within international organisations/forums, duration and principal culmination points in your career • How would you assess/describe the impact of your expertise on these international organisations/forums?
Initiatives in education development and in addressing the global learning crisis – <u>general</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the global learning crisis concept? • How does the global learning crisis relate to sustainable development? • What do you view as international organisations' (IOs) role regarding education development in the Global South, including how to address the global learning crisis? • Which would you identify as being the IOs with a more positive influence in low- and middle-income countries in the area of education? • Based on your experience, what are the most impactful means for addressing education development challenges, e.g., the global learning crisis?
Activities in education development and that address the global learning crisis – <u>Finland</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you assess current Finnish policies regarding development cooperation in the education sector? • In your opinion, what are the IOs with whom Finland has stronger collaborations in the education sector? • What other IOs should Finland be investing in placing education sector experts? Why? • What are the most significant impacts that Finland has been making to address the global learning crisis and other education development challenges from within international organisations?

Themes	Questions
Actors (networks, expertise and influence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your opinion, are Finnish experts working in IOs located in the most strategic positions to influence decisions regarding education development initiatives? • Do you remain in contact with Finnish education experts working within international organisations? • Can you provide the names of these internationally placed Finnish education experts? • What are unused potentials of Finnish education actors in addressing the global learning crisis? • In your opinion, what are the skills and training that educational actors need to make a greater impact/have more influence in addressing education development challenges?
Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide examples of successful interventions in which Finns have been part of multilateral activities/projects that attempted to improve education, and more specifically to address the global learning crisis? • What do you view as the principal challenges in having the Finnish voice heard in an impactful way within international organisations (and possible solutions)?
Future improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What else could Finland be doing sustainably to help address education development challenges, including the global learning crisis? • What kind of support should the Finnish government give/have available for Finnish experts placed within international organisations working to ease the global learning crisis? • How can the Finnish government help experts launch international careers (trainings, funding, studies, etc.)?



**Publications of
the Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland**

2022:8

ISSN PDF 2737-0844

ISBN PDF 978-952-281-342-8