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A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The function of "purpose" as an indicator of quality education at HEIs

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ABBREVIATIONS

UN	United Nations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
EUA	European University Association
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
QA	quality assurance
QAA	quality assurance agency
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CADE	Convention Against Discrimination in Education

ABSTRACT

Ensuring access to quality education is the main purpose of SDG 4; however, how quality is defined and conceptualised in higher education remains unclear. Many researchers analysing quality assurance and ranking systems in HE point out a lack of standardized practice in the selection of indicators or criteria for assessing quality in HE. Historical accounts of the development of HEIs suggest that ensuring quality in HE is not a phenomenon of recent years, rather a concern for centuries that will continue to garner attention. This thesis analyzes quality in education through the lenses of human rights perspectives on the right to education, as well as sociology, and economic theories of education. The methodological approach used is a comparative analysis between UNESCO–OECD indicators as benchmarks for quality education, against a list of rankings on one hand and quality assurance indicators on the other, to determine congruence with the right to education and more specifically to quality education. The results suggest that incongruence exists between the indicators, and "purpose" is proposed as an indicator that can bridge the gap.

Key words: higher education, quality assurance, purpose in education, the right to education, quality indicators

INTRODUCTION

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become the defining challenge of Gen Y and Gen Z. Our predecessors, Gen X, were raised and mentored by the Baby Boomers whose parents would have experienced the atrocities of WWII, exposing massive inequality and exploitation, that led to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1948. At the time of adoption, preventing any reoccurrence of massive human rights abuses was of the utmost importance in international relations. Nestled under article 26 of the UDHR is the human right to education, recognized globally for its necessity in the enjoyment of all other human rights. Kate Halvorsen wrote that the debate on whether to include protections for the child was efficient, quoting Eleonor Roosevelt who said during the drafting discussions, “as the child is too young to defend his rights, his right to education should be protected for him” (1990).

The right to education laid the foundation for several successive international instruments in which equal access to all levels of education is a protected right. It appears in the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and under article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1966) – an essential, legally binding document that holds states responsible for the implementation of the rights contained. Fifty years later, the goal of providing equal access to primary education was included in the UN Millennium Declaration (2000). Even though access to education increased globally during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), much more ground needed to be covered to close gender attainment gaps, increase government investment into universal education, reduce inequalities between rich and poor regions, and improve the quality of education (UN Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015). The results and lessons from the previous 15 years were applied during the formulation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015). The 2030 Agenda is an affirmation of

the commitment made by all states leaders to work together to improve environmental, economic, and social circumstances for all human beings and the planet. It is a commitment to "leave no one behind" (UN, A/RES/70/1).

Quality education (SDG 4) has the stated goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The 10 targets contained outline benchmarks for all countries to aspire to, at all levels of education attainment – early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary. Of the 10 targets, only 4.3 explicitly mentions increasing access to tertiary education, including university. Increasing access to education through public investment has been linked to increased quality in education (Aksoy, 2013), higher levels of education attainment, better employment outcomes, increased future earnings and lower inequality (Checchi, 2006; Aksoy, 2013). The OECD (2012) shows evidence that making quality education equitable at early stages has the same positive effects as observed those by Checchi (2005).

UNESCO, in 1995, released a *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education* with observations about the current and projected trends in HE. The paper asserts that "higher education needs to assume a leading role in the renovation of the entire education system", since HEIs tend to lead research in the development of new teaching approaches and methodologies. HE also provides advanced skill training in "autonomous learning and critical thinking" for primary and secondary school teachers, as well as technical and vocational school instructors". Moreover, the OECD projects that demand for HE in OECD and G20 countries will surpass 300 million by 2030 (OECD, 2019). Since universities play an important role in the dissemination of education, improvement in the quality of that education, and have historically participated in shaping the social, economic, political and scientific fabrics of society (Ruegg, 2004; Geiger, 2015), these high-level institutions of learning are leading the charge in ensuring quality in/of[1] HE as prescribed in UN and

[1] "Quality in" and "Quality of" are used interchangeably in the literature. I speculate that the two could have different connotations depending on the context and interpreter. However, to avoid long philosophical discussion on the lexicon, the two shall be treated equally for the purpose of this thesis.

other international documents. Despite increasing interest in assessing the quality of HE, there remain discrepancies in definitions of the term and assessment criteria between and within regions (UNESCO 1995; Kis 2005; World Bank, 2010; Hrnciar & Madzik, 2013; Grudowski & Szczepanska, 2021).

In Grudowski and Szczepanska's analysis of the *Quality Gaps in Higher Education from the Perspective of Students* (2021) the issue of adequately and unequivocally defining quality and education is addressed. The authors claim that the failure to define European standards for quality assurance in higher education leads to "problems such as the ambiguity of interpretation and the differentiation of the semantic context of many concepts included in the standards (e.g., qualifications, competencies, design, and relations with the environment)" (p.35). The argumentation in this thesis follows the same logic. The ambiguity of certain terms appearing in SDG 4 leaves a lot of room for misinterpretation and cutting corners in implementation which can in turn hinder the achievement of quality in HE. The terminology used in different publications creates further issues of congruency that are addressed in the analysis.

This thesis examines SDG 4 as an iteration of the right to education, specifically analysing target 4.3. The assumption is that the indicators used to assess achievement of the target are missing aspects that capture quality in HE. Consequently, misinterpretations and misconceptions arise when using different quality assessment tools, hindering the implementation of the right in its full capacity. Through a comparative analysis of select quality indicators used in HE, the thesis aims to fill some gaps in research on quality of/in higher education at universities by searching for the incongruences between UNESCO–OECD indicators of quality education used for SDG target 4.3 and the EUA aggregated indicator data from quality assurance agencies and international ranking systems. The choice use of the word *quality* in the formulation of SDG 4 also strikes with some peculiarity. Why quality and not satisfactory, functional, purposeful, or adequate? Quality refers to the practice of quality assurance which "refers to "systematic, structured, and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and improvement" and can be

attached to context or “stakeholder-specific meaning” (Kis, 2005). How then, is education assessed as being of quality and, are the criteria for the determination of quality education consistent with the indicators of quality education put forward by UNESCO–OECD? Using UNESCO–OECD indicators as a benchmark, the results show that incongruencies appear, suggesting that more reform is required to help countries measure quality in HE in a manner that appropriately meets international standards put forward by the UN through SDG target 4.3 and UDHR article 26. Purpose is proposed as an additional overarching indicator for SDG 4.3. to capture congruency between UNESCO–OECD indicators and other accreditation and quality assurance measures.

Purpose is defined and understood through many terms, some of which are intent, aim, end, function, goal, meaning, objective, reason, and role. Purpose refers to the end-goal of an action or a series of actions, the reason for doing something or for a thing’s existence, that which one intends to accomplish. It can be inferred for an individual or the collective (such as governments, institutions, and societies). This understanding of the concept of purpose is an amalgamation of dictionary definitions (Merriam-Webster & Cambridge) and scientific studies on purpose (More & Lewis, 1953; Rosenblueth et. al, 1943), which form the lens through which this thesis interprets the theories of education.

The first chapter outlines a brief history of education in Europe up to the Middle Ages, then focuses on HE in Europe and North America from the 1800s to the Post WWII period leading up to drafting of the UDHR and article 26. Chapter two contains the theoretical framework, examining theories of education from sociology, economics of human capital and human rights perspectives. These theories are preceded by a section defining “purpose” as a concept subject to multiple interpretations that deserve equal consideration in the achievement of quality education. Chapter three contains the background of research on quality indicators in HE and a comparative analysis of indicators used to assess quality in HE. The results are consistent with previous studies that suggest that quality assurance in HE needs to find more congruency across assessment criteria. The conclusions and

suggestions for implementation are that purpose could be included as an indicator of quality for SDG 4.3 to capture the parameter of congruency. The scope of analysis only covers HEIs in Europe and North America; however, the findings could have implications for quality assessment at all levels of education and in other regions.

CHAPTER I – A BRIEF HISTORY OF HEIs AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

This chapter focuses on the history of higher education in Europe, the progression towards mass education in America, and the events that led to the development of the right to education, which has spearheaded a body of international, regional and national efforts to increase access to and improve the quality of education. Francesco Cordasco, Walter Ruegg and Roger L. Geiger are the three historians from whom we borrow contributions for this chapter. Universities colleges on both continents have undergone tremendous changes through civil wars, mass migration, First and Second World Wars, and several cultural transformations in societal ideals that influenced the purpose and quality of education. The structures and characteristics of institutions reveal struggles between religious authoritarianism versus secularism, imperialism versus nationalism, and scientific innovation versus classical instruction, that enabled mammoth institutions like Harvard University, University of Bologna and University of Berlin to survive over decades and maintain reputational authority in an increasingly globalised education system. The second half of the chapter describes the origins of the right to education and the UN's goals to increase access to quality education.

1.1 Development of Education in Europe

An historical recount of education in Europe as chronicled by Francesco Cordasco in his 1976 book, *A Brief History of Education,* begins in Ancient Greece around 459-431 B.C. marking the distinction between The Old Greek education and The New Greek education. The Old Greek education "was determined, in its character and its organization, by the dominant social institution, the polis, or city-state. The city-state was the outgrowth of the tribe and council of [this] period and

furnished the basis and ideals of education" (p.3). The Old Greek education emphasized social and institutional characteristics as opposed to individualistic motives. The Spartans placed both their male and female children, from the age of seven, in the care of elder males who educated them to obey authoritarian instruction and instilled qualities of courage and subservience to the state. Like the Spartans, from the age of sixteen, Athenian young received direct military instruction from state officials; however, prior education concentrated on reading, writing, oratory, drama, music, and gymnastics. In contrast to the Old Greek education, the New Greek education placed "greater emphasis on the individual, and not on the citizen [and] … many transitional forces induced change … (1) political changes; (2) literary development; (3) introspective psychology and philosophy; (4) greater freedom for the individual" (p.4–5). Sophist teachings began to spread during this period, downplaying the importance of familial education while propping up utilitarian objectives; resulting in a clash between the conservatives who aimed to preserve the traditions of old Greek life, and Sophists who amalgamated the old and new Greek educations. The disruptive popularization of Sophist criticisms of old Greek education paved the way for intellectual instruction in education, thus setting the stage for Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Greek influence was present in early Roman education as well, with strong orators like Cicero advocating for more general education backgrounds like in humanities, as an essential base for success in private and public affairs. In fact, it was in the Roman empire that schools became spaces for training orators, rhetors and grammatists in preparation for public careers in the senate and belonging in the senatorial class (p. 5–7).

Monasteries and cathedral schools dominated as the sole educational institutions for teaching in the medieval ages. Their purpose was to teach children reading, writing, and the value of hard labour, revering the ideals of chastity, poverty and obedience (Cordasco, 1976; Geiger, 2015). Between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, "scholasticism or education as an intellectual discipline" had blossomed into universities (establishing seventy-nine universities by the 1500s) with the purpose of infusing intellectual thought into support for the church and its followers.

Higher Education Institutions in Europe until the 19th century

Today there are no longer any French, Germans, Spanish or even English, in spite of what they say: there are only Europeans. They all have the same tastes, the same passions, the same morals, because none of them has received a national moulding from a particular institution. - ***Jean-Jacques Rousseau***

In 1088, University of Bologna, the oldest HEI in continuous operation, was established in Italy as a revered school of canon and civil law studies. Scholasticism served to "develop the power of disputation; systematize knowledge; [and] give individual mastery of this system of knowledge …" Universities held special privileges not afforded to other schools in prior existence, among other distinctions including having democratic governance and establishing premises in populous centres (Cordasco, 1976, p.21-25). University (*universitas*) referred to "a corporate body of persons, usually a guild", while *stadium generale* which is synonymous with the contemporary university was "a school with at least a faculty of arts and one in medicine, law, or theology". The medieval university had tremendous political influence, training numerous teachers in the Arts, setting an example for future leadership that emerged in the State and the Church, and illustrating the first sample of democratic organization. By the end of the Middle Ages, knowledge exchange between the Muslim Arabia, North Africa, Spain and eventually the rest of Europe advanced study in sciences, mathematics and Greek philosophy within European universities (Cordasco, 1976, p.28-36).

Political revolts over classism, economic growth and resistance against the Church marked the classical renaissance period of the 15th and 16th centuries. Liberal education and humanism in education regained traction, popularising the scholarly works of philosophers like Cicero and Erasmus. Erasmus' works and influences included "teaching; correspondence; efforts at public enlightenment, editions of Greek classics and textbooks" all of which centred classical curriculums, the function of individual endowments amongst children, and granting educational opportunity to the middle class (Cordasco, 1976, p.39–41). Universities had initially pushed back against liberal education, but as Italian universities embraced the

changes by expanding subjects and widening authority, the humanistic movement spread towards Northern Europe and England in the 16th century. These societies valued Greek intellectualism, thus replacing mathematics, sciences and vernacular with philosophy, humanism, and Cicero's Latin; however, central governments still controlled essential aspects of schooling; and the idea of having a state system of schools obligating universal education at the elementary level to enforce the necessity of all individuals to understand religious scriptures gained momentum during the Reformation era. In Germany and England, universities became the hubs of "new learning", eventually shifting loyalties from the Pope to the monarchs and Protestant theology (Cordasco, 1976, p.42-55).

Walter Ruegg, editor of *A History of the University in Europe* (2004), takes us through the transformations at HEIs from 1800–1945. The Enlightenment period saw a rise in the number of students and professors undertaking university disciplines. The French Revolution and Napoleonic wars had wreaked such havoc on the infrastructure around Europe that of the 143 universities in existence at the turn of the century, only 83 had remained by 1815. Before the French Revolution, universities had inadvertently created a sort of European identity in their structure and content of teaching. Established special colleges and institutions of higher education – many of which did not enjoy the same privileges as universities – outnumbered universities prior to WWI. These colleges and institutions instructed in "practical knowledge and useful careers for the public good," similar to applied programs of study today (p. 3-4). In the 19th century, the French and German models of university education emerged. The French model operated along the lines of military discipline, while the German model, whose purpose was to "demonstrate how [the] knowledge [passed on in the colleges and institutions of higher education] is discovered", giving instruction in scientific thinking and characterising all aspects of the university experience by freedom (Ruegg, 2004, p.5).

The Berlin model of the 19th century, which was rather different from the liberal medieval and early modern model, emphasized academic study as its main function. For Wilhelm von Humboldt, a professor of science and advocate for the Berlin model,

universities were first and foremost places for personal and academic development nurtured over years of camaraderie with peers and scholars devoted to mastering and disseminating scientific knowledge – a devotion which superseded lecture attendance. Universities in Paris and Berlin were shifting from authoritarianism to freedom, autonomy of thought and personal responsibility, and this permeated throughout society and government. Special interest student groups called *universitates*, had formed in Bologna, Paris and at colleges in England to represent student interests in matters concerning personal freedom, authoritarianism, and economic exploitation (p.16). Student advocacy groups have continued to exist in a similar capacity on college and university campuses over the centuries. By registering with the university administrative body, they can access funds to support their activities. These groups serve as mediators between students and the university authorities, providing special benefits for their members. The level of bureaucratic involvement depends on the mission statement of the student group. Membership in these groups provides an opportunity for socialisation in a controlled environment, like a test-run for life outside the university. Active members manage to build soft skills and networks that propel them through careers especially if they intend to pursue political positions of power. The sentiments of students today echo those from the 18th century in this passage, “Freedom from the arbitrary use of power as well as responsibility for their common causes had united students since the founding of the *universitates*. Thus, their concerns focused on their own freedom and the responsibility that was directly connected with their studies. Around 1800, students began to feel they were also responsible for the freedom of other social layers or for the whole nation” (p.23).

In Germany, students engaged in political movements against Napoleon and his army in the liberation uprising. Student engagement in political and social discourse is a part of the fabric of the university experience. In 1819, measures were introduced to suppress student gatherings and freedom of opinion, but they only served to ignite further protests and the formation of more student unions across Europe. Today, Gen Z and Gen Y have become the faces of the pressure on

governments to enact climate change reforms. One of the most famous being climate change activist, Greta Thunberg, who has inspired many other activists like Ugandan, Vanessa Nakate and Indigenous activist, Helena Gualinga. Along with special interest groups, these youth are taking responsibility of their futures, using the information available to them through the world wide web, and educating themselves in a manner similar to the Berlin model. “Student movements mark student life to the extent that students are concerned about the lack of political or social freedom in their social environment and use their privileged position to fight for it” (p.24). For instance, in Finland, the years long movement demanded that Flemish students have the right to have lessons delivered in their own language, as there had developed a cultural dependence on the Swedish language.

Beginning in the Renaissance, all over Italy, university departments were spread throughout smaller towns as this made Church surveillance more manageable. Since the 1830 July Revolution in Paris, student solidarity had been threatening state authority; therefore, scrambling university spaces of student congregation was essential to maintaining power. When Austrian troops took Bologna, the organization of university groups changed as new measures restricted study to practitioners of Christianity. At the provisional University of Modena, admissions were limited, foreigners were not allowed, and studies aimed “to educate graduates needed by the duchy” with strict regimented schedules and supervised socialisations (p.25). For some students like Nicola Fabrizi (1804–85), Manfredo Fanti (1806–65) and Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–72), involvement in the student movement proved to be great preparation for future political careers. “Modena illustrates the hidden development of the student movement in those closed institutions of higher education …” which functioned as training grounds for the professional labour needs of the territory. Up until the 20th century, student movements had been mainly involved in political freedom movements for the whole nation from foreign domination; but later built solidarity with student groups at other universities (p.26–29).

While university models underwent massive transformation in Germany and France, HEIs in Italy, Spain and Great Britain preserved traditional societal norms up until the beginning of WWI. In Holland, Belgium and Switzerland, the number of universities superseded the national necessity, opening up to foreign students whose tuition fees enabled the subsistence of the institutions. As nation states developed, so did the establishment of HEIs around Europe, some adopting the existing German and French models while making way for new patterns in the Prussian model, which was expressly against the Napoleonic system and; the European model which was a compromise between old traditions and long-overdue reforms (p.53). At the decline of the Berlin model, Friedrich E. D. Schleiermacher (1768–1834) wrote the following referring to the function of universities:

> to awaken the idea of scholarship in noble-minded youths already equipped with knowledge of many kinds, to help them to a mastery of it in the particular field of knowledge to which they wish to devote themselves, so that it becomes second nature for them to view everything from the perspective of scholarship, and to see every individual thing not in isolation, but in its closest scholarly connections, relating it constantly to the unity and entirety of knowledge, so that in all their thought they learn to become aware of the principles of scholarship, and thus themselves acquire the ability to carry out research, to make discoveries, and to present these, gradually working things out in themselves. This is the business of a university (Ruegg, 2004, p.47).

Meanwhile in France, Napoleon's HEI policies had three aims: "to secure for the post-revolutionary state and its society the officials necessary for political and social stabilization; to make sure that their education was carried out in harmony with the new social order and to prevent the emergence of new professional classes; and third, to impose limits on freedom of the intellect if it seemed likely to prove dangerous to the state" (p.44–45). The *Université* of this period functioned under heavy state control and differed from the institutional values of previous older French institutions of HE. The model differed from Humboldt's in Berlin in that the arts and sciences in France were limited to examination and conducting lectures from novices, unlike the German institutions which nurtured innovation, thus surpassing their French counterparts in scholarship (p.47–48).

Between 1790–1930s, the number of universities in Europe grew from 143 to 308; in addition to the nearly 240 academic colleges, part or private universities that had sprung up, adopting the Prussian model. Within the same period, student enrollment increased from 80,000 to over 800,000. The classical university was weakened during the inter-war period (1918–1939) and organizational tasks were transferred "into lower units according to the function, financing, prestige, location or extent of the particular university activity" (p.74). Once the state took over university finances, harmonization of university structures with other state bodies happened smoothly, favouring the establishment of new institutions and expansion of university sizes. An "invisible university" emerged as the mobility of professors and students circumnavigated obstacles placed by nation state politics. "In the case of the professors there was a scholarly interchange by means of conferences and international academic organizations… Even more than the 'real' universities, it conformed to the Humboldtian idea in that it was based on 'open' co-operation of all people interested in scholarly knowledge and, transcending as it did all geographical and institutional barriers, it presupposed a freedom to teach which is not limited by any curriculum" (p.75). Students decided which institution to study at based on free competition and the depth of innovation in the work of various disciplines. Although the atrocities of WWI and WWII tainted Europe in the twentieth century, the university education institution managed to permeate all of Europe by 1939, which was a massive change since the medieval developments of the first universities that were concentrated in just a few regions.

Higher Education Institutions in the New Republic until the 19th century

> *The early histories of these institutions were characterized not by the unity of church, state, and college, but by conflict and controversy … moreover, the deeper purpose of the college course and the overriding preoccupation of the institutions were to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. – Roger L. Geiger, 2015*

This summary of the history of higher education in North America is extracted from Roger L. Geiger's *The History of American Higher Education*, published in

2015. In the prologue, the book sets the context from the origins of the English, Dutch and German settlers who migrated to the North American continent. Teaching methods at Oxford and Cambridge universities in England followed similar trends as in the rest of Europe, borrowing from their predecessors at the University of Paris. Students were instructed in the medieval arts disciplines, mastering grammar, rhetoric, logic, and Aristotle's three philosophies – moral, mental and natural philosophy, all delivered in Latin. By the time the Renaissance rolled round, writers were beginning to expand their content to attract wider audiences.by encouraging the "study of Greek and Latin literatures, but especially emphasizing reading Greek authors in their original language". By the fifteenth century, English universities had adopted this admirable, worldly, and noble education, persuading the inclusion of Greek into the curricula. Wealthy and aristocratic families took well to the "new education" as it trained their male offspring to be both gentlemanly and men of affairs. By the 1400s, English universities had built endowed colleges that accepted "fee-paying students and provided both residence and instruction". These took over the responsibilities of education by the end of the century. College systems had decentralized teaching with college tutors instructing small groups of students. The result of this decentralization was more diversity as each college had been founded on different terms. For instance, Emanuele College, Cambridge, which was founded in 1584 "to train preaching ministers", was the leading nurturer in English Puritanism "and in supplying leaders for the Massachusetts Bay Colony – including John Harvard". University life was transformed by the increased popularity of colleges, attracting more "future gentlemen" and fewer "ascetic churchmen". Geiger describes the changes here: "By the sixteenth century, college populations spanned a broad social range: high-ranking "fellow-commoners," who paid double fees and dined at the high table with the fellows but seldom took the trouble to graduate; commoners, or regular fee-paying students; and sizars, the equivalent of work-study students who paid reduced fees. This social diversity was product of the remarkable expansion of university attendance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (prologue).

Around the 1630s, enrollments at Cambridge and Oxford began to decline due to the Puritan migration to Massachusetts Bay but, Geiger writes that historian Lawrence Stone speculated that England in 1640, “may have well been the most literate society” in the history of the world. The student body was a mixture of children from noble, bourgeois, and professional families. The latter two demographics had benefitted from the economic growth and philanthropic support to pay for education. Puritans, who sought to purify the Church of England of Catholic practices and briefly held power in England between the 16th and 17th centuries, proposed the expansion of educational opportunities. “The social unit of Puritanism was the congregation and minister, joined in a solemn covenant, as they imagined the early Christian churches. New England Puritanism combined a rigid moral code that eschewed frivolity and demanded strict observance of the Sabbath; intense introspection to sort out the nuances of faith, sin, and inward conversion; and intellectual challenge to read and interpret the Scriptures in light of Calvinist doctrine. Above all, the Puritans considered learning indispensable to lead them through these daunting tasks” (prologue). Nevertheless, Puritanism soon drew widespread suspicion, putting an end to their mission to spread Puritan Christian teachings through education. As persecution of nonconformists increased in England, the Puritans fled to New England, establishing a colony of 12,000 settlers by 1640. Many of these settlers were fairly well educated, and they placed value on educating the community. They brought with them “Reformation theology” and “patterns of governance characteristic of the Reformation era”.

Higher education made its way to British North America in 1636 “when the Great and General Court of Massachusetts Bay agreed to give 400£ towards a *schoale* or *colledge*” (p.2). The Puritans intended to match the standard of education at England’s top colleges. This emulation led to the “first commencement” of Harvard College in 1642. The new college was tasked with graduating ministers who could properly interpret Puritanism and stave off threats from critics. The original Harvard 3-year course taught by Henry Dunster “was meant to convey a liberal education in the arts for the first degree” and a deep understanding of divinity to earn a Master of

Arts (Geiger, 2015, p.3). The course was inflexible and focused on transmitting literary education, rendering science and mathematics of lower importance. The third aspect was the requirement of active learning amongst students, involving notetaking, text studying, and copying of texts for future recitation. Lastly, for accountability and a "capstone experience", students defended their "*theses and quaestiones*" in front of a public audience. Since gaining employment as a minister was the only career option for graduates in New England at the time, about half of the graduates joined the ministry. Harvard's mission "was meant to convey a liberal education in the arts for the first degree". Graduates were also expected to fill public offices, were exempt from military services, and entered the ranks of "gentlemen" (Geiger, 2015, p.7). The gentleman's culture and well-acting that were core to the Harvard education, permeated status relationships in the Puritan society. Right next door in Connecticut, the colony settlers felt the need to establish their own college in New Haven, named after merchant, Elihu Yale in 1718, who had made a generous donation including 417 books to the college. Prior to it's renaming, this new college had the purpose of upholding and perpetuating religion and learning, thus rejecting the collegiate way of boarding on campus for a more community-based housing situation (p.8). By 1720, it had constructed a building and ascribed to the collegiate way of life; plus, its education "was fulfilling its mission of fitting youth for employment in both church and civil state", and consequently competing with its other mission of upholding Puritanism (p.11). Another institution, College of William and Mary, was established in Virginia to educate the children of Indians (the Barbarians, as the King and Queen referred to them) and mirror the parent institution in Oxbridge (p.11–15). Harvard, Yale and William and Mary, the premiere three colleges of British North America were later joined by Princeton, Brown and Pennsylvania as other communities looked to serve their members' education needs.

Universities in the colonies were "territorial organizations under combined authority of an established church and the civil state" (p.15). Course content revolved around religious contexts and was delivered by members of the clergy. Governance was handled by representatives of the established church, and those of the civil

government, while financing and oversight was provided by the colonies. The same issues of freedom and autonomy that were challenging European HEIs arose in America as new ideas began to develop and spread. Geiger writes, “the early histories of these institutions were characterized not by the unity of church, state, and college, but by conflict and controversy … moreover, the deeper purpose of the college course and the overriding preoccupation of the institutions were to demonstrate the truth of Christianity” (p.16). Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) and John Locke (1632–1704) were two of the most prolific English intellectuals of the Early Enlightenment. Historians are divided on the breadth of influence that these two had on American intellectual thought development as the academic sphere was freshly grappling with the reconciliation of religion and reason. However, a predecessor of Newton and Locke, John Tillotson (1620–1694), may have laid the ground for what is termed as “reasonable religion” of “philosophical Anglicanism” in Geiger’s book (p.17). Up until this point, American colleges had flustered under weak, and sometimes absent institutional governance, not by design, but rather by natural progression. Two governance models were at odds: centralized power in the presidency, or decentralized power amongst tutors/fellows and faculty (p.26). Colony politics were entangled with collegiate affairs and proved to be obstacles to governance since the relationship between state, churches and colleges was one of training gentlemen in religious doctrine in preparation for professional roles in government and ministry. “The American college president evolved as a complement to powerful external governors and weak, temporary teachers. The external governing boards represented the social support that sustained the colleges. Originally, at least for Massachusetts and Connecticut, the colleges drew support from unified Puritan communities, but over time that support increasingly reflected powerful groups within those communities” (p.27). For students, the collegiate bonds formed in residences led by a single tutor for the entire duration of the course proved to add value through lifelong solidarities. Seventeenth century colleges in British North America exercised as their “fundamental purpose that the main end of a student’s life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, Joh.

17.3", which vastly differs from contemporary public education systems (p.28). Thus the college provided education in the areas of linguistics, logical argument and generalised knowledge. Unlike in Europe, the adoption of the "new learning" of the Enlightenment progressed slowly in America. This was due to "the effectiveness of [the existing college] course for its primary purpose as well as its deep immersion in Puritan Protestantism. Gregor writes of these two purposes as intention to ground the graduates in the culture and the oratorical skills for future success, and the full immersion into Christian doctrines long before joining colleges for formal training (p.30). By the end of the first century of HE in North America, colleges were well on their way to following trends at colleges in England.

The number of colleges in the American colonies had doubled and transformed by the mid-eighteenth century. The three new colleges in New Jersey (1746), New York (1754) and Philadelphia (1755) resulted from a "rapid growth of the economies and populations …" (p.33). The religious beliefs of the population were more diverse than at the first three colleges, and the learnings of the Middle Colonies reflected the "spirit of American Enlightenment. But strangely, the catalyst for these developments was the Great Awakening of evangelical religious fervor" (p.33). The Awakening caused division amongst congregations and reduced religious enthusiasm amongst graduated clergy. There was a growing fissure between old-light Presbyterians from Scotland and New England, and the new-light Presbyterians who were freshly arrived Scots-Irish immigrants trained individually by local ministers in the favoured new-light style of preaching. "Both Anglicans and old-light Presbyterians were threatened by what they called the "Jersey College," since, in their apocalyptic views, a monopoly of collegiate education by New Lights could undermine their churches" (p.40). The cultural importance of colleges was evident to social elites who aimed to gain control over the institutions by financial means, political sway or social status; and despite the contestation, the wealthy and high social status individuals achieved their aims. In New York, the possibility of establishing a college financed via lottery arose. The Anglicans sought to control the governance and curriculum but were challenged by William Livingston who proposed

“the creation of a public, nondenominational institution”. He reasoned that a publicly funded college “should be controlled by the [popularly elected] legislature” which should elect the trustees who appoint the president; the students in turn should have the freedom to attend the church of their choosing (p.42).

The struggle for control over HEIs was motivated by the desire to use the New York college to perpetuate the culture, community, and social hierarchies of the gentlemen. The newly established King’s College governed by 41 trustees and 24 governors, signed into its charter assurances of religious freedom for Christian believers. Between 1754–1776, about a quarter of the 226 graduates were related to governors of the college, while the other students came from the same elite social circles. In Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin sought to introduce courses taught in English to promote modern languages, history, science, and business thus, opening an Academy in 1751. Likewise, the College of Philadelphia was influenced by the Enlightenment. As a public institution, it was non-discriminatory, non-denominational and without government ties; however, it was “dominated by a social elite as much as King’s”. The origins of these mid-Atlantic colleges represented the spread of Enlightenment thinking, and although the colleges were considered public institutions, they operated as if under the ownership of external boards of elites, but still tolerant of different Christian denominations (p.44–48). Between the 1730s and 1760s, new knowledge forms were legitimated by the Newtonian revolution in natural philosophy, accelerated by immigration, domestic printing, and trans-Atlantic communication (p.49). In 1738, Harvard employed John Winthrop, who was the leading professor of science, and observation, setting a high standard for teaching in natural philosophy. To facilitate teaching and experimentation, colleges often amassed huge collections of books and apparatus through endowments and donations like the collection of scientific experimental apparatus betrothed to Harvard by the Hollis family. As science courses became staples on college campuses, acquiring apparatus and attracting qualified lecturers became a priority. At Yale, the College of New Jersey, the College of Philadelphia and William and Mary, faculty mastered in moral philosophy, scientific and mathematical studies were

recruited (p.50). The American Revolution that was to come was underpinned by political theorists like John Locke who wrote of “notions of natural rights and social compact”, sometimes called Whig cannon (p.52). Teachers like Witherspoon and Smith from the Colleges of New Jersey, and Philadelphia encouraged their students to pursue extra readings, recommending authors of moral philosophy and political theory, influenced by Latin and Greek classics exploring themes of war and issues of governance. Students showed great interest in *belles lettres* which conveyed useful skills in public speaking, and the “assimilation of the sophisticated culture of the mother country” (p.53) that students pursued through literary societies formed outside the classroom. The embracing of literary composition opened doors for free thinking and exhibition of “American pride and patriotism”. Medical training colleges pioneered by practitioners from Edinburgh became parts of major cities, but the slow advancements in medicine during the Age of Enlightenment rendered them props for elevating social status. Surgery seemed to be the only area of medicine that showed some progressive research and practical innovation in anesthesia and infections (p.57). Enthusiasm for colleges spread, especially in areas that lacked them. Rhode Island, Queens and Dartmouth Colleges were three of the last colleges to be launched before the American Revolution (1765–1784). Dartmouth was the result of “a unique conjuncture of individual enterprise and government sponsorship” while the former two “fulfilled the educational aspirations of denominational communities (p.67). The three colleges share a few characteristics: inspired by New Light or Calvinist beliefs, the founders pursued control over all other aims, and all the colleges prioritized the reproduction of traditional curricula over new learning as the founders feared the threat posed by this new thought on their ways of living. For students participating in literary societies, the organizations provided opportunities to improve oratory skills, form close friendships and take responsibility over their education. The societies had functional procedures and structures and offered various activities in the arts and literature for all to participate, with the deeper purpose of self-improvement (p.85–86).

When the Revolutionary War began, colleges could not escape involvement either voluntarily or involuntarily due to their locations. Aside from Dartmouth, college buildings were “commandeered” and turned into shelters and hospitals. Harvard college, Yale Queens and Rhode Island colleges were all occupied at one point or another by either British, French, or American troops. King’s College unfortunately burnt to the ground after undergoing occupation by the Americans first in 1776, then the British. The College of Philadelphia had closed before the war began and its buildings provided refuge for the British troops. The battle of Princeton took place at Nassau Hall, leaving the college to share the remaining structure until the war ended. William and Mary also suffered a fire, as well as brief closure when the French took over its buildings. The quality of education took a hit during the war as lessons only taught selected passages instead of full texts. Structural losses of buildings, libraries and apparatus coupled with financial losses set college education back (p.89-90). Nevertheless, colleges played an essential role in the creation of “an independent republic, the United States of America”. These patriots had triumphed over the traitors to rebuild a republic with a defined government, rooted in the virtue of their citizens – virtues that would be instilled through education. “Colleges offered hope of reproducing the natural aristocracy of learning and talent that the founders themselves exemplified. From the outset, then, the colleges were seen as key institutions of the new republic” (p.91). Education in the post-war republic aimed to unify the nation under new ideas, abandoning past objectives of promoting republican virtue and expanding education opportunities to the greater population (p.101).

Benjamin Rush took lead in this area when in 1786 he published “Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools”, envisioning a unified state under one system of education, with tax-supported, free elementary education, supporting his idea by outlining the benefits of an educated population for the republic. Rush advocated for free schools for rural populations, and equality in education for both boys and girls. Females were instructed in English language skills, bookkeeping, and general world knowledge for the purposes of managing households. Rush also proposed a federal

university that would instruct graduates in agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce and to sweeten the proposal, he added that being a graduate would be a prerequisite for employment in government offices. With the end goal of surpassing Europeans, he struck classic languages and literature from the curriculum; an action supported by Noah Webster who viewed these subjects as distractions and “unnecessary for a liberal education” (p.107). Since the aim was to expand access to education, Rush and Webster argued that requiring knowledge of classical languages to attend and graduate colleges would defeat the purpose since few common people had an adequate grasp of these skills. The advocates were unsuccessful in these pursuits; however, their efforts created recurring debates between federalists and republicans who sought to unite the states. Generally, Federalists cared about upholding high standards of learning in colleges, while Republicans were against practices that perpetuated aristocratic ways of life. The republican University of Carolina opened in 1795 with procedures that mirrored those of federal governance, finance and organization. South Carolina was more politically polarized so the governor hoped a college would help foster friendships between youngsters. “South Carolina College was in many ways the embodiment of a republican university. The founders explicitly intended it to educate the leaders of South Carolina society and government— “a nursery for virtue and science, the two brightest pillars of republican government” (p.118). Geiger quotes a Reverend Samuel Miller, while comparing the quality of education between Europe and America, who wrote that “what is called a liberal education in the United States, is, in common, less accurate and complete” because “the great majority of [American] Colleges have very inadequate funds, and this resulted in too few professors having to cover too large a field of instruction. Thus, they can convey but very superficial knowledge to their students, even if well qualified themselves, which is far from being always the case” (p.120–121). During the first quarter of the 19th century, colleges and universities were highly disorganized and struggled to secure consistent funding. The continuing troubles led to a lowering of admission standards as institutions failed to attract a respectable number of students that could afford even the lowest tuition cost of around 100

dollars annually. The effect was the opening of admissions to younger aged students who were not mature enough for studies, but whose parents could afford to send them away for school (p.127). As the perceived quality of academic rigour at colleges declined, professional schools sprouted as alternatives or complementary institutions to cater to learners who sought a different professional path than the traditional college offered. Records of graduate careers, albeit misleading, indicated that after the revolution, the proportion of graduates entering the ministry fell from a third to a fifth, while those practising law increased from 13 percent to 30 percent. These shifts are evidence of the effects of the Awakening between 1815–1840. The growth of professional schools helped steer colleges into policies that would secure their relevance, survival and thriving in American society. The economic transformation brought about by the Western expansion, and improvements in transportation up until the Civil War produced positive results for colleges. Geiger writes of the effects of population growth:

> "In Western Europe and, particularly, Britain, economic modernization did not affect higher education for some time. There, well-developed national systems of secondary education provided rigorous classical education but also served as stringent gatekeepers to universities. In the United States, common schools were locally organized and open only part of the year, and the secondary space was filled by a hodgepodge of private schools and academies" (p.174).

During the colonial era, advocates for female education sold the idea by suggesting that girls be taught in matters of home management and domesticities. Women eventually joined the realms of higher education in the 1830s. Female seminaries like Mount Holyoke Female Seminary and Troy Female Seminary were established by women to train women in academics for teaching professions. The aim of the education at these seminaries was to train "women to assist the evangelical mission of spreading Christianity and achieving conversions" (p.208). During the 19th century, higher education mostly succeeded in creating "cultural capital" and little else. The American HE scene had not progressed at the same pace as European universities that were well into secularisation (p.267). In the early 1900s, American colleges and

universities were no match for the prestigious European institutions, especially in England and Germany, that they competed with. Undergraduates from American colleges were no more prepared for graduate schools, than they were interested in further studies. For colleges to earn the title of “real university”, much transformation was needed (p.317). A youthful Charles W. Elliot propelled academic rigour at Harvard University as the new president in 1869, serving in the position for 40 years. A financial injection of 7 million dollars from Hopkin’s will enabled John’s Hopkins University to recruit a fresh batch of talented aspiring medical professionals (p.323). At MIT, engineering and technology studies funded experiments that led to the invention of electricity by Thomas Edison and the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell (p.312). By the turn of the century, university and college education had transformed to meet the challenges of the time and lead the republic into the Industrial Revolution.

Higher Education after the WWII

The American economy boomed during WWI, uniting the country thereafter during the roaring twenties. Geiger (2015) recalls the role of universities in training, research, and morale building; however, temporarily abandoning academic pursuits. Institutions had to adapt to training “new kinds of students in new types of institutions for careers in the new economy while also seeking to preserve the traditional social and cultural order” (p.423). American society remained sympathetic yet largely uninvolved with Europe’s war until 1918 when 140,000 college and university males from 516 institutions “were inducted into active duty in the Army”. The Students’ Army Training Corps lasted for three months before being disbanded due to the strain that the training camps placed on students’ academics. Tertiary education in Europe developed slowly before WWII as universities, colleges, technical colleges, and academies innovated new technologies and forms of research that were reluctantly accepted in society, but also brought prestige to discovering nations (Ruegg, 2004, p.638). Although financial support for growing institutions differed amongst countries, the importance of knowledge and scientific education that

universities offered was not lost on European and American societies. International mobility funneled a wave of scientific exchange amongst researchers, many of whom travelled to Germany to complete their HE. German institutions had the appeal of increasing employment prospects for graduates, as well as solidifying networks and personal relationships for those enrolled. Back in America, the era of mass education began after WWI. Geiger (2015) writes, “In 1915, 5.5 percent of 18- to 21-year-olds attended some form of college, and 1.7 percent of 21-year-olds received first degrees. In 1940,15.5 percent of the age group attended, and 7.7 percent were awarded first degrees. Although participation in 1940 does not appear massive by twenty-first-century standards, it was far greater than any other country” (p.428). The influx of students resulted in new careers and cultural and knowledge exchange; however, not all had access. The spaces were accessed by those privileged enough to afford to attend these elite institutions or those talented enough to secure scholarships. After 1915, enrollments saw an uptick, growing more slowly during the Great Depression, before surging again. The increased enrollment rates were due to the higher number of high school graduates pursuing HE. Rural towns contributed a lot to the demand for HE as many of the high school graduates continued to post secondary institutions to reap the benefits of the high returns on investment in HE.

In a parallel reality, Europe was already enthralled in the political and social turmoil of the First World War. Ruegg (2004) writes that in Germany, the distinction between German militarism and German culture was struck down by university scholars themselves, declaiming that “the spirit of the German army is no different from the spirit of the German people since they are one and the same” (p.641). Universities led the way in scientific development in medical, technological, and military fields. One notable discovery, but perhaps not ideal, was the work of Nobel Prize Winner, Fritz Haber, whose scientific contributions in chemistry helped Germany bypass weapons embargoes during WWI. Germany inevitably lost the war, suffering economic and reputational consequences as part of the Treaty of Versailles. These consequences trickled down to formerly prestigious German HE institutions. In 1918, all Germans were excluded from participating in the conference

of the International Academy of Science held in London. For many years afterwards, educational cooperation with German institutions was rejected by the international community, and German institutions lost dominance as key destinations for student training in HE (Ruegg, 2004, p.641–644). In America, lobbying for junior colleges led to the establishment of 408 schools by 1928. The new legislation allowed publicly and privately funded junior colleges to offer the first two years of bachelors' courses. Geiger (2015) writes that a survey of over 3000 students conducted in the late 1920s revealed the following reasoning behind the appeal of junior colleges: "to save money (57 percent); to prepare for the university (55 percent); unable to meet university admissions requirements (36 percent); and to prepare for a vocation (30 percent). Students were happy with their instruction (93 percent) and pleased to live at home (74 percent) but were disappointed with "the spirit, traditions, and the general college atmosphere" (26 percent approving)" (p.432). Mass education enabled a great portion of American society, who may have otherwise not been able, to attend HE, thus improving access to education. The devastation of WWII did not spare universities in Europe. The hardest hit were Eastern European institutions, but Central and Western Europe also saw some destruction. During the time between the world wars, American institutions developed to a level at which they were considered a model themselves.

Some of the structures of the early university have persisted throughout the centuries. Since the Middle Ages, the attention of the designations of bachelor and master have been awarded to graduate who demonstrate progressive mastery of the arts. American and European universities developed in similar ways because of the migration of people between both continents aiding in cultural and knowledge exchange. It was a consequence of the two world wars that German institutions declined in reputation and stature, being surpassed by American and British universities that invested in scientific research and diligent mass education. Most of the progression in HE has been purposeful, driven by advocates like Humboldt and Locke, but also purposefully working to adapt to the changing social, economic and political tides. It was a shameful reality that it took a global catastrophe such as the

Second World War to declare that all life was worthy of respect and protection; including the child's right to education.

1.2 The right to quality education

In these goals and targets, we envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive. – A/RES/70/1, UN General Assembly

Article 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

"Everyone has the right to education," reads paragraph 1 of Article 26 of the UDHR. "Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit", it continues. Paragraph 2 then hints at the purpose of this right to education. It reads, "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace". Finally, paragraph 3 states that "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." The preamble of document emphasizes the important role of education in societies in the following statement, "every individual and every organ of society … shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms …"

On 10th December 1948, this along with twenty-nine other articles were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in what we uphold as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – as a common, global standard of achievement. Countries were emerging from the six-year devastation of WWII, and world leaders were determined to avoid a repeat of the catastrophic events that occurred during

that period[2]. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was the elected chair of the Commission on Human Rights that, along with 18 other members from diverse political, cultural, and religious backgrounds, drafted the first version of the UDHR in 1946. The final drafting of the international document took place in September 1948 with over 50 member states participating in the process. With the addition of article 26, children began to be seen as protected persons belonging to a vulnerable group in need of specific protections. Thus, as part of the rights of the child, the right to education has since been guaranteed in several international treaties and documents[3], including UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and the ICESCR (1996). Contained in the ICESCR (art. 13) and the 1960 UNESCO convention (art. 4a) is a reiteration of and expansion upon article 26.

In these documents, states parties undertake to ensure equal accessibility to higher education for all, based on individual capacity. Education, according to the UNESCO convention, refers to all types and levels of education including access to, standards and quality of, and the conditions within which the education is delivered. Article 4b hints at an expectation of some sort of standard and quality, specifically for equivalency in standards across all public education institutions of the same level, "and that the conditions relating to the quality of the education provided are also equivalent". Given the sheer volume of states representatives involved in drafting these documents, not to mention the signatory thresholds required for a treaty to come into effect, it is understandable that definitive terms for quality in education are excluded from the texts. Richard Pierre Claude (2005) wrote of the right to education and human rights education, stating that "education is intrinsically valuable as humankind's most effective tool for personal empowerment … and is the very prerequisite for the individual to function fully as a human being in modern society". Education is guaranteed under the ICESCR as a social, economic and cultural right because it promotes the full development of the human personality in society,

[2] Read the *History of the Declaration* from the UN webpage: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/udhr/history-of-the-declaration

[3] See a detailed list of interntional documents that guarantee the right to education from: https://www.right-to-education.org/page/united-nations-instruments

facilitates economic independence through training employment, and aids in the dissemination of a universal culture of human rights (Claude, 2005). Claude summarizes some states' comments during the formulation of the right to education. USSR state representative, Mr. Alexandr Pavlov recognized that education was not "value neutral" and "argued that one of the fundamental factors in the development of Fascism and Nazism was the education of young people in a spirit of hatred and tolerance". Pavlov's contributions were taken into account, resulting in the following formulation:

> "the right to education should be linked to three specific educational goals: (1) the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; (2) the promotion of understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups; and, (3) the furthering of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace".

Claude (2005) quotes Katerina Tomaševski, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education's 2002 report to reiterate the breadth of manpower involved in the institution of education. In the report, Claude writes, "she lamented a … disequilibrium between the formal institutional structure and contents of schooling on the one hand and the value-oriented substance of teaching and learning on the other". This disequilibrium presents itself through ongoing disagreements about the "orientation and content of schooling". At the end of the Cold War, the UN "intervened in the fierce disputes of the formal institutional structure and contents of schooling on the one hand and the value-oriented substance of teaching and learning on the other" (Claude, 2005). In Vienna in 1993, the UN General Assembly made education rights as a priority with the proclamation that 1995-2004 would be the Decade for Human Rights Education. The GA emphasized that human rights education be adopted at all formal and non-formal[4] levels of education.

[4] Council of Europe defines **formal education** as the structured education system that runs from primary (and in some countries from nursery) school to university, and includes specialized programmes for vocational, technical and professional training. Formal education usually leads to recognition and certification following an assessment of the learner's acquired learning or competences, and is based on a programme or curriculum which can be more or less closed to adaptation to individual needs and preferences. **Non-formal education** refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum and happens

The Millennium Development Goals

The most pressing issue in September 2000, at the largest gathering of heads of states at the time, was the threat of extreme poverty. At the time, the wealthiest 1000 people on the planet were estimated to possess a combined wealth greater than the poorest 500 million people in the world, 120 million children were denied to the right to primary education, and almost 3 million people had died from AIDS the previous year (Shetty, 2005). The state of inequality between the rich and poor countries was shameful, prompting heads of states to adopt the Millennium Declaration, in which they vowed to lift all citizens out of the indignity and suffering that accompanies abject poverty (Shetty, 2005). They summarized the outcomes of the summits leading up to the adoption of the declaration in eight Millennium Development Goals to be achieved in fifteen years. The 8 goals were: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability and (8) Develop a Global Partnership for Development. Goal number two had the specific target of ensuring "that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, [would] be able to complete a full course of primary schooling".

In the journal article titled, *Millennium Declaration and Development Goals: Opportunities for Human Rights*, Salil Shetty posited that the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs presented an opportunity to turn human rights aspirations into reality as they were rooted in human rights values and principles. Fateh Azzam viewed the state of the goals in a different way stating that the "perceived disconnect between human rights language and the MDG languages [was] symptomatic of a larger gap between rights-based approaches and needs-based development approaches" (2005). From a human rights perspective, these goals had the potential to increase

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in places such as youth organizations, sports clubs and drama and community groups. **Informal education** refers to a lifelong learning process, whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience.

state accountability by linking reports to national reporting cycles for existing covenants. The goals could also help states create benchmarks at the local level and pass laws for international cooperation. One hindrance to the achievement of the MDGs, wrote Shetty, was that political will to act was lacking because governments were primarily accountable to their constituents (2005). Azzam also noted that only a few states had "articulated concrete strategies in the defense and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights" at the time.

Around the mid-way mark in 2008 and during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, the Global Education Week Network and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe published the Global Education Guidelines aimed at "strengthening the overall work for global education[5] … and supporting practitioners in formal and non-formal education settings …" The basis of the Centre's work in global education is on the belief that global education "is a holistic education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all" (2008). The publication reiterates the benefits of global education, although these benefits are unevenly distributed around the world. It emphasized the need for better cooperation amongst EU states, promotion of the Africa-Europe youth cooperation, and increased financial pledges for development towards achieving the MDGs; hailing education as the "key agent for change" requiring an integration of sustainable development into all systems and levels of education (p.69).

At the conclusion of the 15-year period, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat released the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2015,* detailing the results of achievement. There were a number of successes and shortcomings related to the achievement of universal primary education. Amongst

[5] According to the Global Education Guidelines, global education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalized world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all. Global education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimension of Education for Citizenship.

the successes were: (1) Primary school net enrolment rates in developing regions rose from 83% in 2000 to 91% in 2015; (2) the global number of out-of-school, children of primary school age fell by almost half to 57 million; (3) the number of children enrolled in primary school in Sub-Saharan Africa rose from 62 million in 1990 to 149 million in 2012; (4) global youth aged between 15-24 had an increase in literacy rates from 83% to 91% between 1990 and 2015. Despite the progress, there still remained gender disparities, inequalities between rich and poor countries and disparities between rich and poor families within the same country. In order to increase education attainment, the report concluded, the next fifteen years following the MDGs had to be adjusted to cater to the needs of specific groups of children, especially "girls, children belonging to minorities and nomadic communities, children engaged in child labour and children living with disabilities, in conflict situations or in urban slums". It affirmed the needs for investment into quality education to avoid the retrogression of progress in education attainment.

The Sustainable Development Goals

On September 15th, 2015, in New York, at the seventeenth session of the General Assembly, member states of the United Nations adopted Resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. States representatives committed to collaborate on the achievement of 17 sustainable development goals with 169 targets, "build[ing] upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seek[ing] to address their unfinished business". On the road to 2030, countries and stakeholders resolved to work in partnership along the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The interconnected and indivisible goals reflect the values of people, peace, prosperity, and partnership; according to the capabilities, realities, and development levels of all countries to ensure that "no one is left behind". The agenda is built upon the shared principles and commitments present in the Charter of the United Nations, the UDHR, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit outcome, and the Declaration on the Right to

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

Figure 1: Goal 4. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development. A/RES/70/1. p.17.

Development (A/RES/70/1). Paragraph 25 affirms a commitment to providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training, honouring the principles of non-discrimination, and ensuring "access to lifelong learning opportunities that help

[people] to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society". The education goal is contained in SDG 4: Quality Education, quoted in Figure 1.

UNICEF presented the working paper titled, *Defining Quality in Education* at the June 2000 meeting of The International Working Group on Education in Florence, Italy. The paper reflected upon the existing literature on quality education and illustrated through an analysis that a broader definition of quality education programmes should involve "learners, content, processes, environments and outcomes". One of the shortfalls observed when assessing the *2021 SDG 4 Data Digest* published by UNESCO documents the actions countries have taken to concur on benchmarks for seven select SDG 4 indicators (p.12). These are: "early childhood education attendance; out-of-school rates; completion rates; gender gaps in completion rates; minimum proficiency rates in reading and mathematics; trained teachers; and public education expenditure." These benchmarks are measurable and definitive, but they refer solely to pre-tertiary levels of education, and similar benchmarks need to be available for HE.

For countries to achieve the goals, the UN Secretary General emphasized the importance of embracing "a culture of shared responsibility" – which involves setting appropriate intermediate benchmarks … for addressing the accountability deficit associated with longer-term targets," based on the capabilities of each country. The report defines benchmarking as "a technique of governance designed to improve the quality and efficiency of public services … [This] involves comparing specific aspects of a public problem with an ideal form of public action and then acting to make the two converge … [thus] improving through processes of learning and emulation". This definition and indicators of quality education are elaborated further in Chapter III.

Summary

The early formulations of education were deeply rooted in Christian theology with the purpose of educating people to read and preach the religious doctrines. Universities in Europe and America both followed similar patterns of change from

the 17th to the 19th centuries, except that as European universities grew to be more secular between the 18th and 19th centuries, American colleges struggled to separate church, state, and university since most of the institutional presidents and faculty had ties to ministries and government. European institutions were pioneers of literary and oratory intellect, with the most popular methodologies coming from Paris, Berlin, and London. Major events that changed the structure, governance, and academic objectives of HEIs included the Napoleonic Wars, the Revolutionary Wars, the Reformation, the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the First and Second World Wars. WWI and II drained Europe's resources as almost all the nation states steered economic and social efforts towards winning the wars. For Germany, the consequences were dire, negatively affecting the reputations of German universities in the international community. The quality of education at both European and American HE institutions declined during the years of military conflict for some time. The surviving schools remerged from each war with more vigour for academic reform and transformation. For instance, in America, it was from the debris of the Revolutionary War that captured and demolished college campuses were used to congregate during the formation of the republic – United States of America. Education reform advocates like Benjamin Rush lobbied federal and state governments for the provision of free public elementary schools and education for both girls and boys with the aim of making education accessible for rural populations and females. Another significant effect of reforms was the establishment of elementary school, high schools, and junior colleges to educate more students for university admissions, in addition to training the population in the technical skills needed for industry occupations. The formulation of the Right to Education was a result of a drafting process involving states representatives and experts from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It is the foundation of documents like the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, the ICESCR, the MDGs and the SDGs. The combined effectiveness of these documents is that they guarantee the right to access quality education for all human beings, in a safe environment and for the full development of the human personality. In 2015, nation states reaffirmed their

commitment to collaborate for the achievement of the SDGs, leaving no one behind. It is under SDG target 4.3, that quality university education in HE is addressed on a global scale.

CHAPTER II – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Defining "purpose"

"The cause for the sake of which" ***– Aristotle***

"Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear almost any 'how'" ***– Viktor E. Frankl***

Definition	Synonyms	Related words	Antonyms
Merriam/Webster Dictionary			
(noun) something that one hopes or intends to accomplish / something set up as an object or end to be attained: intention, resolution, determination / a subject under discussion or an action in course of execution	aim, ambition, aspiration, bourne, design, dream, end, goal, idea, intent, intention, mark, meaning, object, objective, plan, point, pretension, target, thing	grail, holy grail, plot, scheme, project, desire, hope, mind, wish, nirvana, destination, terminus	means, method, way
(noun) the action for which a person or thing is specially fitted or used or for which a thing exists	business, capacity, function, job, part, place, position, role, task, work	affair, concern, hand, involvement, participation, niche, office, post, situation, calling, occupation, pursuit, vocation, activity, assignment, charge, commission, duty, employ, mission, responsibility, service, use	
(verb) to have in mind as a purpose or goal / to propose as an aim to oneself	aim, allow, aspire, calculate, contemplate, design, go, intend, look, mean, meditate, plan, propose, purport	dream, hope, wish, consider, debate, mull (over), ponder, attempt, endeavour, strive, struggle, try, plot, scheme, accomplish, achieve, effect, execute, perform	
Cambridge Dictionary			
(noun) why you do something or why something exists; determination or feeing of having a reason for what you do	reason, cause, root, motive, ground(s)		
(noun) reason; an intention or aim; a reason for doing something or for allowing something to happen:		on purpose	
(noun) result; an intended result or use			
(noun) the reason for doing something or the reason that something exists; determination or a feeling of having a reason for what you do; a need of a particular person or organization		sense of purpose, serve a purpose	

Purpose is the central theme of our argument and therefore deserves an in-depth definition to bypass potential misconceptions and misunderstandings of what we are discussing. We begin with a plain listing of definitions, synonyms, related words, and antonyms from The American Merriam-Webster[6] and the British Cambridge[7] dictionaries. The purpose (reason, aim, determination, meaning, etc.) behind displaying the table of definitions above is to demonstrate the sheer multitude of iterations associated with the word "purpose". The purpose of education is studied under synonymous words. For instance, functional theorists like Emile Durkheim (although Durkheim made a point of distinguishing between purpose and function, stating that function was not concerned with the end goal, rather the interactions amongst institutions) and Max Weber believed that institutions exist in society because of the functions that they serve (Ballantine et. al., 2017). The Merriam-Webster definition of purpose as "the action for which a person or thing is specially fitted or used or for which a thing exists," is almost analogous to function as used by Durkheim and Weber. The formulation of a definition (or at the very least, a conceptual framework) of the term is essential in the ensuing analysis as any misconceptions could render the entire preposition for including it as an indicator null and void.

Therefore, purpose (in education) should be understood as a concept, not exhaustible by a mere dictionary definition, but via a list of characteristics derived from scientific and philosophical study. The study of purpose has been closely tied to teleology, but scientific researchers have largely rejected teleological definitions of purpose (Rosenblueth et. al, 1943; Moore & Lewis, 1953). Teleology, which tracks its origins back to Aristotle, is interpreted in the natural sciences as the relationship between means-ends (Moore & Lewis, 1953) or the existence of a final cause and is often erroneously viewed as synonymous with purpose (Rosenblueth et. al, 1943).

[6] Merriam-Webster has been America's leading provider of language information since 1828 and all products and services are backed by the largest team of professional dictionary editors and writers in America. Retrieved from: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/purpose#synonyms

[7] Cambridge University Press has been publishing dictionaries for learners since 1995 in print, and online since 1999. Retrieved from: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/purpose

Rosenblueth and his colleagues identify purposeful behaviour in cellular organisms, machines, and through machine learning. They further distinguish between purposeful versus non-purposeful behaviour stating that “the basis of the concept of purpose is the awareness of voluntary activity.” For instance, if a person decides to lift up a glass of water to the mouth, that person does not consciously (in most cases) instruct the muscles to move, rather there is a purposeful thought behind the movement which triggers the voluntary movement or action; meaning that “when we perform a voluntary action what we select voluntarily is a specific purpose, not a specific movement” (Rosenblueth et. al, 1943).

In the observation of animal behaviour, Tolman (1925) quotes five descriptive features of purpose that are inferred; “(1) a certain spontaneity of movement; (2) the persistence of activity independent of the continuance of the impression which may have initiated it; (3) variation of direction of persistent movements: (4) the coming to an end of the animal’s movements as soon as they have brought a particular kind of change in its situation; (5) preparation for the new situation toward the production of which the action contributes.” As Tolman states, these observed inferences whereas insightful, cannot provide an accurate conceptualisation of purpose, and from a behaviourist perspective, an element of external stimuli that arouses the behaviour is a necessary addition. Therefore, for purpose to be identified there must be a conscious being or collective of conscious beings, a persistent behaviour, and an end goal towards which or from which, the behaviour is performed until achievement of said goal.

The Psychology of Purpose, published by the John Templeton Foundation (2018) traces psychological research on purpose back to Viktor E. Frankl who “proposed that all people are motivated to discover a purpose for their lives; doing so is a natural human inclination,” and that void of purpose, a person may fail to keep feelings of “meaninglessness and emptiness” at bay (p.3). Seeking to apply this conceptual understanding of purpose to the education sphere, let us use the fictional character, Cain, based on the real-life experience of a young Canadian student who

was attending the University of Waterloo thanks to gaining access to a combination of debt and scholarship financing.

> Cain spent sixty hours a week studying at the Davis Centre Library. He had chosen to focus all his attention on his studies instead of splitting his time between a part-time job and schooling. He was convinced that this formula would ensure that he attained the necessary grades to have his scholarship renewed, thus bringing him closer to his end goal. Cain was born in 1989 in the rough, low-income Toronto neighbourhood of Jane and Finch. Jane and Finch had been the subject of evening news stories for its perpetual violent gang activity. The housing in the area was affordable, but it tended to attract unsavoury characters. Many of Cain's childhood friends did not even graduate high school, while others ended up in jail or having children at a very young age. Cain was determined to leave his neighbourhood, so he only applied to universities located outside of Toronto. He is a second-generation immigrant[8] from Somalia, and the oldest male child in his family of seven. He is also the first member of his family to attend university. He is artistically inclined, but he chose to pursue a degree in actuarial science after attending a career day presentation organized by the guidance counselor at his high school. It was at that precise moment that Cain decided to abandon his ambitions to become a musician in pursuit of a high paying job as an actuary. He had his sights set on Deloitte, one of the big four management consulting firms in the world. The typical time frame for becoming a fully qualified actuary in Canada is 7-10 years and requires a bachelor's degree in addition to passing ten professional exams. His friends nicknamed him "book worm lyricist" because when he wasn't in the library working out math equations, he was in his dorm room writing hip hop rhymes and recording songs using amateur equipment. He hardly ever went to parties and didn't have a girlfriend throughout university. Cain graduated in 2012 with a 4-year honours degree in actuarial science with a minor in economics. By this time, he had completed three semesters of co-op (work experience) at Sun Life Financial and had received an offer to join to the company as a junior actuarial analyst earning over 56,000 Canadian dollars a year.

Cain must have had several short-term goals that helped him meet his purpose. From the story, we can identify at least two of those. One is that he aimed to secure high grades to retain his scholarship. Another is that he wanted to leave his rough neighbourhood. These intermediate goals are not considered to be the purpose behind his efforts because they were "a means to an end other than an end in itself" (*The Psychology of Purpose*, p.4). The high paying job as an actuary could indeed have been Cain's end goal and purpose as it enabled him to extract himself from the

[8] First generation refers to an immigrant (foreign born citizen or resident). Second generation refers to the children of immigrants. Third generation refers to the grandchildren of immigrants. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from: https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=117200&CVD=117200&CLV=0&MLV=1&D=1

uncomfortable living situation of his family, and perhaps to earn enough money to fund his musical interests. The emerging consensus on a definition, according to *The Psychology of Purpose*, is that "a purpose in life represents a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once personally meaningful and at the same time leads to productive engagement with some aspect of the world beyond the self" (p.2). The important characteristics are "goal orientation, meaning, and a beyond-the-self motivation." With these present, purpose can be identified.

Defining purpose from an individual's perspective differs slightly from the collective perspective that studies functions in societies and institutions. The theoretical framework applied examines how sociology and economic theories, and human rights perspectives infer the purpose of education both at the micro level analyzing the individual's interactions with others and with institutions; and at the macro level where institutions interact with one another and the legal systems ensuring the right to education. Key insights into the purpose of education can be drawn from article 26 of the UDHR. Claude (2005) describes and exemplifies the three purposes of education contained in the right to education. The first is towards "the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". He says that while the goal is abstract, it sets the theme as it frames "a holistic concept of human nature as essentially free, social, potentially educated and entitled to participation in crucial decision-making …" Latin American countries led the charge by embracing the message of education aiding in the development of the full human personality thus incorporating passages directly into public statements and important policy documents (p. 40). The second is to "promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups …" The debate surrounding the phrasing of this goal was to favour the use of "positive terms" as the statement reads today, instead of negative terms as was originally proposed by Professor René Cassin, Vice President of the Human Rights Commission (p.41). The third and final goal identified by Claude is that education should "further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace". Its phrasing came up in debates when the Australian delegation proposed a

broader reference to all the UN's aims and principles. Ultimately, the Mexican proposition won with overwhelming support, resulting in the statement as it reads currently.

The objective of the discussion in this section is to demonstrate the complexity that can arise from trying to define one term, such as purpose, with intended extraction from international to regional, national, and local government contexts. The very nature of the formulation of international documents like the UDHR and ICESCR complicates implementation and evaluation. The meaning of purpose may very well differ from region to region, school to school, and person to person. However, this paper provides evidence that including purpose as an indicator could have a positive effect on self-reflection and reinforcement of both individual and collective responsibility for the achievement of SDG4, thus addressing some of the underlying issues of monitoring and evaluation.

Purpose is not the explicit term used in most of the theories of education (except for Halvorsen's paper). Sociology, for instance, refers to function and role, while economic theories speak in terms of employment, job, work. In human rights, purpose can be derived from responsibility, duty and objective. Common terminology includes intent, goal, aim, meaning, target. With all these related words and synonyms, there is a need to find some alignment to minimize misconceptions of the intended outcomes. Cain in the story above, developed his purpose of education around economic reasoning – increasing future earnings (Checchi, 2006, Aksoy, 2013, Becker, 1962), and sociological reasoning – social mobility (Robson, 2012; Ballantine et.al, 2012). The human rights perspective presented by Kate Halvorsen in *Notes on the Realization of the Human Right to Education* is one of several theoretical analyses of the purpose of education. In the article, the author seeks to clarify some of the gaps in interpretation of the right to education that surround its elaboration and implementation. Some important questions that the article addresses and that are relevant to our discussion are "What is meant by education; what are the types of education included here, what are the possibilities and the limitations of this right; and what are the problems connected with the

implementation process." Additionally, how are the abstract concepts interpreted when it comes to real world application; what are the interpretations for curriculums, length of schooling, and expenditure; and what are the implications "when one seeks to implement or fulfill this right (Halvorsen, 1990). These questions resemble the inquiries about quality in education presented in this thesis. The underlying thought is that the conceptualisation of these terms is only the tip of the iceberg. Underneath these abstract concepts about the "right to education" and "quality education" are social, economic, political, and personal responsibilities to ensure that the right is fulfilled appropriately within a given societal context. This requires that each actor (i.e. government, local authority, parent, child, etc.) is well-informed of their role, identifies the purpose behind their decision-making, and openly communicates with the other stakeholders to find alignment in the different end goals. Sociology theories of education analyze the functions of the institution of education in society. Functionalist, critical and interactionist theories, although differing in their proposals, all elucidate the structures within the education system that reinforce "status cultures", reproduce inequalities, and aid in the preservation of existing power dynamics (Halvorsen, 1990). Economic theories quantify the value of education in relation to its role in increasing human capital. It is important to keep in mind the different iterations of purpose applied to the theories discussed below.

2.2 Theories of education

"Education . . . is above all the means by which society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence" – Emile Durkheim, 1956

Purpose, along with quality, are the central themes in the thesis. This chapter provides a conceptual framework for defining purpose, and a lens through which these two concepts can be instrumentalized. Because purpose can be understood through definitions, but also through behavioural science. The theories presented come from human rights, sociology, and economics. These theories demonstrate that achieving quality in education requires more than just government responsibility

and should involve all societal institutions and incorporate interdisciplinary knowledge.

Human Rights approach to education

Even before fundamental human rights were written in the Declaration, European and North American societies were already enthralled in struggles for individual freedoms and liberties (Halvorsen, 1990). These values of freedom, social justice and equality are emphasized in two UN conventions: the ICESCR with economic, social, and cultural rights, and the ICCPR with civil and political rights. The OSCE/OHCHR, CoE and UNESCO published in 2009, a practical tool guide for "all those involved in human rights education in the school system". In the tool guide, human rights education is defined as "education, training and information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights", imparted not only through knowledge about human rights, but also by equipping learners with the necessary skills to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life. These international organizations believe that this type of education "promotes equality, empowerment, and participation as well as conflict prevention and resolution … [and] is a means to develop societies where the human rights of all are respected, protected, and fulfilled. The detailed tool lists laws, guidelines and standards; approaches and practices to improve the learning environment; teaching and learning tools for the classroom; professional development for educators and other adults and; evaluation and assessment approaches, compiled through joint research efforts for use in the school systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America.

Although complete resources like this tool guide exist to promote and improve the implementation of quality education practices, actions still lag behind in many countries. While working as the first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education of the Commission on Human Rights (1998-2004), Katarina Tomasevski published a series of Primers on the Right to Education. The 2001 publication, *Primer No. 3: Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable*, aimed at clarifying some of the misconceptions of the right to education

as a civil and political right protected under the ICCPR on one end, and an economic, social and cultural right protected under the ICESCR on the other. The author constructed a 4-A scheme that summarizes governmental human rights obligations. Tomasevski's 4-A scheme and conceptual framework shown in Tables 2 and 3 respectively, "demonstrate the inter-relatedness of individual components of the right to education, relates them to the type of governmental human rights obligations which are their counterparts, and adds examples of issues that figure prominently in translating the right to education from requirement into reality." The four components are described as follows:

> **Availability** embodies…the right to education as a civil and political right [that] requires the government to permit the establishment of educational institutions by non-state actors, while the

Table 2: 4A SCHEME

AVAILABLITY	SCHOOLS	- Establishment/closure of schools - Freedom to establish schools - Funding for public schools - Public funding for private schools
	TEACHERS	- Criteria for recruitment - Fitness for teaching - Labour rights - Trade union freedoms - Professional responsibilities - Academic freedom
ACCESSIBILITY	COMPULSORY	- All encompassing - Free of change - Assured attendance - Parental freedom of choice
	POST-COMPULSORY	- Discriminatory denials of access - Preferential access - Criteria for admission - Recognition of foreign diplomas
ACCEPTABILITY	REGULATION AND SUPERVISION	- Minimum standards - Respect of diversity - Language of instruction - Orientation and contents - School discipline - Rights of learners
ADAPTABILITY	SPECIAL NEEDS OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION	- Children with disabilities - Working children - Refugee children - Children deprived of their liberty

right to education as a social and economic right requires the government to establish them, or fund them, or use a combination of these and other means so as to ensure that education is available.

Access… [obliges] the government to secure access to education for all children in the compulsory education age-range, but not for secondary and higher education. Moreover, compulsory education ought to be free of charge while post-compulsory education may entail the payment of tuition and other charges and could thus be subsumed under 'affordability.'

Acceptability has, since 1990, been expanded to include 'quality' before education in policy documents, thus urging governments to ensure that education which is available and accessible is of good quality. The minimal standards of health and safety, or professional requirements for teachers, thus have to be set and enforced by the government.

Adaptability has been best conceptualized through the many court cases… [which] have uniformly held that schools ought to adapt to children, following the thrust of the idea of the best interests of each child in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This reconceptualization has implicitly faulted the heritage of forcing children to adapt to whatever schools may have been made available to them as in the cases of children with disabilities; and imprisoned or working children who can seldom be taken to school and thus education has to be taken to wherever they are.

Table 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

RIGHT TO EDUCATION	AVAILABILITY	- Fiscal allocations matching human rights obligations - School matching school-aged children (number, diversity) - Teachers (education & training, recruitment, labour rights, trade union freedoms)
	ACCESSIBILITY	- Elimination of legal and administrative barriers - Elimination of financial obstacles - Identification and elimination of discriminatory denials of access - Elimination of obstacles to compulsory schooling (fees, distance, schedule)
RIGHTS IN EDUCATION	ACCEPTABILITY	- Parental choice of education for their children (with human rights correctives) - Enforcement of minimal standards (quality, safety, environmental health) - Language of instruction - Freedom from censorship - Recognition of children as subjects of rights
	ADAPTABILITY	- Minority children - Indigenous children - Working children - Children with disabilities - Child migrants, travelers
RIGHTS THROUGH EDUCATION		- Concordance of age-determined rights - Elimination of child marriage - Elimination of child labour - Prevention of child soldiering

The human rights perspective helps us understand through international human rights law, who holds what rights, who is responsible for what obligations, and what occurs when the responsibilities are not fulfilled, or violations transpire. The purpose of education inferred from the publication is that of educating the child "to become economically self-sustaining, to enable them to understand the country's language, past and future, [and] to create an understanding of the chosen domestic ideology, religion or political doctrine." Furthermore, based on paragraph 2 of article 26 of the UDHR, education should involve some form of instruction on "human rights and fundamental freedoms," but as Tomasevski notes, "this is seldom translated into practice. The acceptability dimension, the author writes, requires that the state regulates the quality of education provided in schools to ensure they meet minimal state-developed criteria. Court cases concerning "parental freedom to have their children educated in conformity with their religious, moral or philosophical convictions" (Supreme Court of Canada – R. v. Jones 1986); and "religious convictions in education… with regard to Jehovah's Witnesses" (European Court of Human Rights – Efstratiou v. Greece and Valsamis v. Greece, Judgments of 18 December 1996; and Supreme Court of the Philippines – Ebralinag v. The Division Superintendent of School of Cebu, G.R. Nos. 95770 & 95887, 1 March 1993 and 29 December 1995) are examples of jurisdictional differences in how acceptability is determined. Similar disputes surround languages of instruction in public schools, "the teaching of as well as teaching in minority and indigenous languages (as well as the recognition thereof), and the teaching of (as well as in) foreign languages." The right of minorities to establish their own schools has been in effect since the days of the League of Nation; however, states continue to contest court cases brought forth on the grounds of entitlement to public funding for minority group schools.

Human rights perspectives explain much of the legal realities that either obstruct or promote the achievement of quality education. For one, the phrasing of many international human rights documents protecting the right to education and establishing state obligations is confusing, resulting in complications when trying to

hold states accountable for violations or shortcomings in ensuring acceptable standards are met by schools. For many states, the financial costs associated with ensuring accessibility, adaptability, acceptability and availability of education are points of contingency. This is an aspect that the economic theories of education can better address, whereas sociology theories of education provide insight into the interactions between different social groups, and the power dynamics that influence the institution of education.

Sociology theories of education

The application of sociological approaches to education was first proposed by Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) at Sorbonne in Paris during a period when individualism was superseding the Catholic Church's authority in France (Robson 2019). Pope's (1975) article states that Durkheim examined the interdependent relationship between society's institutions as the necessary condition for social cohesion, much like the organs in the body must work together to maintain life. His theoretical approach reasoned that institutions existed to fulfill their necessary functions albeit prioritizing the functionality of the entire system over that of each individual institution. The sociology of education is concerned with education as one of the six major institutions functioning within the structures of society[9]. These structures are "recurring patterns of behavior and ordered interrelationships to achieve the needs of people" (Ballantine, Hammack & Stuber; 2017). Sociology in general is defined as "the science of institutions, of their genesis and of their functioning" (Pope, 1975) based on three theories of reasoning – functionalist theory, conflict theory and interactionist theory.

Functionalism[10] views society as a composition of the functioning institutions within the system, i.e., family, education, religion, politics, economics and health – which all play interdependent roles and work together to assure mutual survival (Ballantine et. al; 2017, Pope; 1975). Functionalists observe macro level interactions

[9] The six institutions are: family, religion, education, politics, economics and health.
[10] See also structural functionalism, consensus, or equilibrium theory

to “emphasize how social structures determine social life” (Robson, 2013). According to this theory, Robson adds, individual choices such as the decision to follow a specific career path are constrained by society and structures in manner that renders that choice the only viable option. For Durkheim, social institutions serve a function based on their positive contributions within the system (Pope; 1975). These contributions are their capabilities to produce social benefits such as universal health care and quality education.

Different institutions under varying social conditions may fulfill similar needs. For instance, the education and family institutions in Uganda, Honduras, Indonesia, Canada, U.S. and Australia meet similar societal needs (i.e. socialization; rearing and protection of young people; knowledge transfer, cultural and moral development, etc.). Now in reality, these varying functions, performed by the same institution, differ between the societies - with greater resemblance appearing between similar societal structures. The education institution functions differently in each of the countries mentioned above; although greater similarity can be found between Canada, U.S., and Australia, compared to Uganda, Honduras, and Indonesia which share similarities based on their economic power. Durkheim authored prominent pieces that elaborated on his theory of moral regulation. One such piece that lends to functionalism in education is *Moral Education* published in 1925. In it, he argued that

> “it is only through education that a given society can forge a commitment to an underlying set of common beliefs and values, as well as create a strong sense of community or nationhood. This moral education prepares us to be productive members of society by socializing and integrating us, whereby we not only understand but also value common morals… Schools are integral to this process because they instill the correct moral codes into children so that they can develop into productive adults that contribute to society,” (Robson, 2013).

Contemporary functionalism discusses institutions in terms of their functions or purposes within society (Ballantine et. al, 2017). The institution of education functions to sustain society by transmitting values and aiding in socialization. Ballantine et. al. (2017) and Robson (2013) cite another prominent scholar named Talcott Parsons who in the late 1950s reignited academic interest in the sociology of

education. Parsons argued that formal education functions to socialize school age children in preparation for adulthood, and "pass on knowledge and behaviours necessary to maintain order in society," (Ballantine, et. al.; 2017, Robson; 2019). Functionalism is mainly criticized for its inadequacy in dealing with conflicting goals between different groups; and its neglect of the micro-level interactions between teachers and students or peer-to-peer relations in the classroom. "The approach fails to account for how many ascribed traits, like socioeconomic background, gender, and race," (Robson; 2019) which as the human capital theory of economics shows affect inequality and income outcomes.

German philosopher, Karl Marx (1818 - 1883), is credited as the originator of conflict theory with two of his most well-known works; The *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital*. Writing during the industrial revolution, Marx believed that economic relations between the ruling class and the labour class were rooted in social relations and that social tensions are consequences of the competing interests of the haves and the have-nots (Ballantine; 2017, Robson 2019). As Ballantine puts it, the haves (Borgeoisie) "control power, wealth, material goods, privilege (including access to the best education), and influence" while the have-nots (Proletariat) "present a constant challenge, as they seek a larger share of society's wealth." This tension between individuals and social groups aids in the formation of hierarchical and functional dynamics within organizations. Based on Marx's theory, education's role in capitalist society is to conserve and replicate the existing economic systems (Robson, 2019). In 1970, French philosopher Louis Althusser, produced the theory of ideology which purports that ideology serves "to socialize children into their subordinate structures in society," which the education system reinforced (Robson; 2019). Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis book, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* examines the United States education system and concludes that it is designed "to replicate the class system and benefit elites" (Robson, 2013). Through their research, they developed the correspondence principle and the hidden curriculum. The correspondence principle suggests that the education system is organized in a manner that it

corresponds to the class-based system to replicate classes and keep the elites in their positions. In this sense, class origins not intelligence are the main propeller of future income and job outcomes. Robson (2013) describes the hidden curriculum as "the subtle ways that students are taught to be co-operative members of the class system," and therefore through the *hidden curriculum* schools can reproduce the class system. Robson says that Marxist and Neo-Marxist theories are criticized for largely ignoring other social influences like race, gender and ethnicity, and have fallen behind the postmodern theories discussed next. Ballantine (2017) points out another criticism that unlike functionalism which assumes changes in the system occur slowly and deliberately thus having minimal disruptive effects, conflict theorists view social change as inevitable and sometimes fast given the volatility of existing power structures. Both camps, however, try to explain the role of education in perpetuating the status quo.

Max Weber (1868–1920) is another prominent German sociologist whose *brand* of conflict theory purports "that power relationships between groups form the basic structure of societies, and that a person's status identifies his or her position in the group," (Ballantine et.al, 2017). His work on status group relationships describes the foremost activity of schools as instructing students on "status cultures" as power dynamics and conflicting interests influence educational systems. For instance, the most dominant groups and individuals drive legislation and shape the education system. These "insiders" have their "status culture reinforced through the school experience" while the "outsiders" "face barriers to success in school". According to Weber's (1973) writings, education churns out a labour force "for military, political, or other areas of control and exploitation by the elite," and is a means of perpetuating social inequalities. Weber also analyzed rationalization and bureaucracy in his research. Robson (2013) writes that based on Weberian theory, for rationalization to occur, society had to become increasingly secular, tolerant and reliant on scientific knowledge and technology and; bureaucracy is a means of structural organization that requires specific protocols for decision making – like at universities where bureaucracy can be frustrating, sluggish and inflexible. Weber

also contributed to the Marx's concepts of social stratification[11] adding that class and status groups are the main "distributors of power within society." In Weber's arguments, status groups "are moral communities, concerned with upholding the privilege of their members in society" and are seen as independent for class and could hinder class unification. They gatekeep membership through credentialism which requires members to possess specific credentials for acceptance into the status group (Robson 2013). "Many entry-level office jobs or jobs in the civil service" for example, writes Robson, "require new recruits to have a university degree, although the skills required in these jobs may have nothing to do with the degree that individuals have." Robson (2013) cites a study that tracks foreign-trained medical professionals in Canada because of the requirement for a certain entry level of credentials makes this profession a status group. The study aims to understand why there is a doctor shortage in Canada when many foreign-trained medical professors are excluded from the profession because they do not hold a medical degree from Canada or a recognised foreign institution. This is an example of credentialism and status group ideology at play. Neo-Weberian, Randall Collins wrote in *The Credential Society* (1979) of the "decreased value of the expected advantage associated with educational qualifications overtime" (Robson, 2013), known as credential inflation. A final note on critics of functionalism comes from sociologist, John Meyer who argues through institutional theory that, the global expansion of education systems may not be entirely due to labour market demands, but rather a result of the spread of democracy and a belief in the positive value of expanding education (Robson, 2013).

Functionalism and critical theories look at macro-level interactions whereas the third approach looks at micro-level interactions between teachers and students in schools. Interaction theories came about as a reaction to the macro-level

[11] Social stratification is the allocation of individuals and groups according to various social hierarchies of differing power, status, or prestige. Divisions are often based on gender, religion, or race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic inequalities. "Social Stratification". In *obo* in Sociology, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756384/obo-9780199756384-0053.xml (accessed 18 May. 2022).

functionalist and conflict theories and had been gaining traction since WWII. Symbolic interaction theory is closely related to social psychology derived from the work of George Herbert Mead (1863 - 1931). It “asserts that the world is constructed through meanings that individuals attach to social interactions,” (Robson, 2013). Furthermore, Mead proposes the generalized other as a connection between the micro (individual) and the macro (society). Erving Goffman (1967) speaks of interaction rituals which exist between individuals sharing a culture, and because of the resemblance in socialization, these group members are likely to interpret social situations in similar ways.

Of particular importance to our current discussion are rational choice (exchange) theory and labelling theory. Labelling theory proposes, for example, that if a student is constantly told that he/she is unintelligent and naughty, that child may begin to act in a manner that fits this label, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy (Ballantine and Spade, 2011). Rational theory “is based on the assumption that we orchestrate our interactions based on an assessment of costs and rewards. If benefits outweigh costs, the individual will likely make the decision to act in order to continue receiving benefits. If the costs outweigh the benefits, the individual will choose to move in a different direction” (Ballantine et. al, 2017). This can be observed in the reward based behavioural interactions between administration, teachers and students. For instance, Dworkin (2008) suggests that if teachers are rewarded for teaching well thus having high performing students, then this behaviour is likely to continue. However, in the case where the stress levels of managing a rowdy class outweigh the benefits of the rewards, self-preservation becomes the priority over teaching well.

There is another theoretical approach that Ballantine et al. (2017) refer to as the “A ‘New’ Sociology of Education" which was developed during the same period as the critical pedagogy movement between the late 1960s to the early 1970s. These sociologists propose that education curricula are not free from the influence of social reality and that “common sense views of reality” are needed to understand micro-level elements such as classroom interactions, curriculum content, management and

use of knowledge, and what it means to be educated on different societies (Ballantine et. al, 2017). Some theorists like Basil Bernstein (1975) and Pierre Bourdieu (1973) prefer a more holistic approach that combines the micro-level analysis of interactions with the macro-level look into institutions. Bernstein's purpose of work is summarized by Ballantine et. al. (2017) as a goal to "prevent the wastage of working-class (children's) educational potential. This means that the relations "among society, schools and the individual" can reproduce inequalities for instance through speech patterns that "perpetuate one's social class." Bernstein's research analysis, according to Ballantine et. al. (2017) provides evidence that a child's class related-speech patterns which are adopted from their family based on the family's class position, have an effect on one's position in the school and social hierarchy, "as exemplified by the poorer academic performance of working-class children." Bernstein also researched "curriculum and the pedagogy used to transmit knowledge" stating that how curriculums are designed and "transmitted to students has consequences for different groups… based on social class and power relations." Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) was a French post structuralist whose work focuses on "cultural capital" which comprises "high status cultural knowledge possessed by individuals. High status cultural knowledge is acquired by experience and familiarity with high culture activities, such as going to the opera, ballet, or theatre as well as the appreciation of art, literature, and classical musical, and theatre attendance [and] allows individuals to give off signals that give them advantage in high status circles," (Robson, 2013). Considered a commodity, cultural capital "allows students to reproduce their social class through family status and schooling, sometimes at elite schools or excellent public schools found in higher-income communities" (Ballantine et. al.; 2017). Bourdieu also identified economic (human) capital which is discussed broadly in the next section, and social capital which is built through personal relationships and may afford one access to resources (Robson, 2013). In his work, he develops the concept of fields which are social settings where an individual's socially ingrained habits and skills, and social, cultural and economic capitals interact with the rules of the field such as in school settings.

The last three theories of the sociology of education presented in Ballantine's book are modernism of the industrial era, its derivative, post modernism, and feminist theories which are part of postmodern theories. These three mostly Western ideologies aim to shift away from past societal structures of authoritarianism and divinity, and centre rational thought, progress, scientific advancement, human rights, democracy, and individualism (Ballantine et. al., 2017); valuing diverse perspectives of interpreting the world.

Economic theories of education

Our analysis is concerned with the economic theories of education related to human capital. Human capital, defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "a labour force, or the skills it possesses, regarded as a resource or asset," was a term coined by Irving Fisher in 1897 (Goldin, 2016). Gary Becker's 1962 journal article "*Investment in Human Capital*" is part of an in depth look at the correlation between education and human capital. It is among many pieces of economics literature examining investment in human capital which involves "activities that influence future real income through the imbedding of resources in people," such as on-the-job training, health expenditure, and schooling (Becker; 1962, Aksoy et. al.; 2013; Checchi, 2005). The theory asserts that income inequalities between individuals, families and countries are influenced by factors aside from tangible assets such as funding, infrastructure and, that "intangible resources" like knowledge can explain the economic differences. (Becker; 1962, Checchi; 2005). It is for this stylized fact that economics of human capital is interested in studying the relationship between education and investment – a relationship that also influences sociological and human rights related aspects of the right to education (Tomasevski, 2001), quality education (Aksoy et. al.; 2013) and the purpose of education. According to Aksoy et. al. (2013), "Human Capital Theory is an important basis for discussions on quality in education as it sets the frame of reference for many prominent educational indicators as the basis of employment which is based on competition and profitability." Similarly, Daniele Checchi writes about these observed "stylised facts" in his 2005

book, "*The Economics of Education.*" The relationship between education, human capital, inequality, and family background is presented by way of empirical analysis supported by multiple examples that can demonstrate individual purpose of education. Education (or schooling), according to Becker (1962), falls under a consumption expense in that households pay for education through private or public spending; and under earnings revenue since acquiring additional years of schooling is positively correlated with labour market participation, employment, and earnings. Checchi (2005) observed that between 1960 and 1995, school attendance, measured by enrolment rates (the ratio between the numbers enrolled at a given stage of education over the whole population in the same age cohort), increased exponentially in all countries (Figure 1). This general increase in education access, Checchi noted, reduced differences in education attainment between and within countries. However, the question of the influence of increased access on the quality of education still lingers. Checchi does posit some insightful questions for our discussion. The initial inquiry asks why people demand education. For one, labour market participation increases when people

Table 1.1 *School enrolment rates by world regions, 1960–1995*

	Primary education				
	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
OECD countries	98.3%	97.4%	98.9%	99.1%	99.3%
North Africa and Middle East	62.6%	72.1%	87.9%	91.1%	94.3%
Sub-Saharan Africa	41.3%	53.8%	71.8%	72.6%	77.6%
South Asia	44.1%	57.1%	76.3%	80.6%	89.5%
Far East and the Pacific	85.4%	90.8%	96.0%	95.7%	95.4%
Latin America and the Caribbean	85.5%	91.5%	95.4%	95.2%	95.7%
Centrally planned economies	100.0%	96.5%	98.8%	91.3%	96.1%
Worldwide	**69.2%**	**76.0%**	**87.1%**	**87.5%**	**87.8%**
Cross-country dispersion (coefficient of variation)	0.46	0.37	0.24	0.22	0.21
Worldwide (women)	**69.2%**	**75.5%**	**84.2%**	**83.8%**	**84.6%**
Cross-country dispersion (coefficient of variation)	0.48	0.38	0.28	0.27	0.26
	Secondary education				
	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
OECD countries	49.0%	69.5%	81.0%	90.9%	96.7%
North Africa and Middle East	20.7%	31.8%	48.6%	62.0%	62.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.5%	7.8%	16.5%	21.2%	24.5%
South Asia	11.9%	20.3%	26.2%	32.4%	37.8%
Far East and the Pacific	25.8%	42.1%	58.4%	56.7%	59.7%
Latin America and the Caribbean	18.9%	31.3%	46.1%	50.8%	55.4%
Centrally planned economies	36.5%	53.0%	69.3%	68.0%	76.2%
Worldwide	**21.0%**	**31.9%**	**44.9%**	**51.4%**	**54.4%**
Cross-country dispersion (coefficient of variation)	0.99	0.82	0.65	0.60	0.59
Worldwide (women)	**19.2%**	**31.5%**	**45.2%**	**48.0%**	**52.8%**
Cross-country dispersion (coefficient of variation)	1.09	0.86	0.68	0.69	0.64

Figure 1: Checchi, p.2. 2009.

have a secondary school education or higher, and gender differences in attainment decrease as education levels advance. Moreover, almost 90% of men and 80 % of women in OECD countries with a university degree work. “Thus, education seems to promote labour market participation and employability, irrespective of gender,” (Figure 2). For governments, these are persuasive statistics for increasing investment in education institutions. Aksoy et. al. (2013) states that the European Union members prioritize quality in education and development as high levels of knowledge are important for ‘active citizenship’, ‘employment’ and ‘social cohesion’; and adds that “quality education is necessary for labour markets and for workers to have required mobility.” Second is a pondering of why more educated people are more likely to enter the formal labour market. Checchi (2006) explains that “the amount of education received is positively

Table 1.1 (*cont.*)

	Tertiary education				
	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
OECD countries	8.9%	16.2%	24.7%	38.1%	49.4%
North Africa and Middle East	1.7%	3.9%	9.1%	13.2%	16.7%
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.2%	0.6%	1.5%	2.5%	3.1%
South Asia	0.9%	2.6%	3.6%	4.2%	4.8%
Far East and the Pacific	4.3%	7.7%	12.4%	20.5%	24.1%
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.8%	6.2%	13.3%	18.6%	19.1%
Centrally planned economies	7.8%	13.3%	17.4%	14.2%	22.0%
Worldwide	**3.1%**	**6.1%**	**10.9%**	**16.4%**	**18.9%**
Cross-country dispersion (coefficient of variation)	1.48	1.24	1.02	0.99	1.00
Worldwide (women)	**2.2%**	**4.9%**	**10.2%**	—	**19.0%**
Cross-country dispersion (coefficient of variation)	1.59	1.33	1.08	—	1.10

Source: Barro and Lee (1997) and updates from World Bank (1998); unweighted mean averages.

Figure 1 (cont.): Checchi, p.3. 2009.

Table 1.2 ***Educational attainment and labour market outcomes, 1999***

	France	Germany	Italy	United Kingdom	United States	OECD average
Population share (aged 25–64) with completed						
primary and/or lower secondary school (ISCED 1-2)	38	19	57	18	13	36
upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	41	53	30	57	51	40
post-secondary and/or tertiary education (ISCED 4-5-6)	21	28	13	25	36	24
Labour force participation (men/women aged 25–64) with completed						
primary and/or lower secondary school (ISCED 1-2)	77/58	76/47	75/33	67/52	74/50	76/49
upper secondary school and post-secondary (ISCED 3-4)	89/76	84/70	86/66	88/76	87/72	86/67
tertiary education (ISCED 5)	92/84	88/82	92/81	92/86	90/82	89/78
Unemployment rate (men/women aged 25–64) with completed						
primary and/or lower secondary school (ISCED 1-2)	14.1/16.7	17.7/14.1	7.8/16.6	12.7/7.3	7.0/8.8	8.2/9.1
upper secondary school and post-secondary (ISCED 3-4)	7.2/12.0	8.4/9.4	5.7/11.1	5.3/4.1	3.9/3.6	4.7/6.7
tertiary education (ISCED 5)	5.7/6.6	4.9/7.0	4.9/9.3	3.8/1.8	2.6/2.9	3.6/4.4
Employment rate (men/women aged 25–64) with completed						
primary and/or lower secondary school (ISCED 1-2)	64/48	62/40	69/27	58/48	69/45	73/44
upper secondary school and post-secondary (ISCED 3-4)	82/67	77/63	81/58	83/73	84/69	82/62
tertiary education (ISCED 5)	87/78	84/77	87/73	88/84	88/80	86/75
Earnings from employment of men (aged 25–64) with completed						
primary and/or lower secondary school (ISCED 1-2)	88	77	54[a]	73	65	78
upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	100	100	100[a]	100	100	100
tertiary education (ISCED 5-6)	178	149	138[a]	159	183	163
Earnings from employment of women (aged 25–64) with completed						
primary and/or lower secondary school (ISCED 1-2)	79	85	61[a]	68	63	75
upper secondary school (ISCED 3)	100	100	100[a]	100	100	100
post-secondary and/or tertiary education (ISCED 4-5-6)	158	160	115[a]	193	170	162

[a] data refer to 1998.Source: OECD (2001, tables A2.1a, E1.1, E1.2 and E5.1).

Figure 2: Checchi, p.8. 2009.

correlated with earnings," and that a university graduate earns at least double what a non-secondary school educated person earns (Figure 2). However, this is only true, as Becker's theory of the distribution of earnings demonstrates, if the number of people with the desired level of education competing for the same labour market positions are few, and if demand for these people's skills is high (1966).

On the opposite end are individuals and families that do not invest in schooling past a certain point. To understand their economic rationale, Checchi asks, "If it is worth going to school, why is it that not all families make such an investment in their children?" He suggests that "families are often unaware of the economic benefit of education, or they are prevented from sending their children to further education by their financial needs." Becker's (1966) empirical evidence also suggests that each individual wants to maximize "economic welfare by investing an appropriate amount of human capital." Each person's optimal level of investment and rate of return determines their distribution of earnings. Interestingly, "these determinants are…related to various' institutional' factors…: inheritance of property income, equality of opportunity, distribution of abilities, subsidies to education, and other human capital, etc." These determinants are part of the factors that play a role in who controls education and the purpose of that education in the sociology of education. Goldin (2016) illustrates this rationale using a simple human capital investment model[12]. The model aims to illustrate why an investment in education is

$$\frac{\left(E_2/w_2\right) - 1}{1 + r} > \frac{C + w_1}{w_2}$$

[12] Assume a two-period model of human capital investment in which an individual can work or can invest in human capital during the first period. If work is chosen then w1 is the first period non-investment wage and w2 is the second period non-investment wage. But if investment is chosen that costs C, then E2 is the second period investment wage (> w2). The individual can borrow at rate r. The individual should invest if and only if the following relationship holds, which is equivalent to saying that the individual should invest if the discounted returns, expressed as a fraction of the second period non-investment wage, exceed the costs (direct costs of C plus the opportunity cost of the first period non-investment wage, w1), also expressed as a fraction of the second period non-investment wage.

even made at all. It “says that investments are more likely when the returns are higher, the costs are lower (possibly lower with economies of scale provided by schools), and the discount rate (possibly a function of parental income and greater certainty) is lower.”

Other supplementary economic theories of education described by Aksoy et. al., that have derived from human capital theory include: screening hypothesis theory which purports that employers search for more than academic credentials when hiring candidates to consider personality features such as punctuality and leadership for which the education type and level act as signals of whether or not a candidate possesses the desired hidden curriculum skills; tail hypothesis theory which believes that a relationship between education and income exists therefore employers consider more educated workers to be low cost since they are more trainable than less educated workers and; the theory of labour market segmentation according to which “labour markets are divided into primary and secondary” where more educated labour exists in the primary markets whereas less educated labour participates in the secondary markets that use less advanced technology.

Summary

The purpose of education is not often discussed in the manner presented here. The meaning of purpose and how it plays a role in decision making is understood through dictionary definitions and behavioural science. Purpose is the reason for doing something and it is synonymous with works like function, aim, job, work, meaning, end goal, and duty. The story of Cain exemplifies purpose as an end goal and not the smaller accomplishments along the way. The human rights perspective presents the 4A-scheme of the right to education: availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability which former UN Special Rapporteur in the right to education, Katerina Tomasevski created to clarify some of the misconceptions around the legal implementation of the right under the ICCPR and the ICESCR. From sociology, we apply the approaches of functionalism, critical theory, and interactionalist theories. Education is one of the six institutions whose

functions exist to befit society. Critical theorists believe that education serves to perpetuate unequal social structures between the haves and have nots. Interactionalist theories are more prominent today because they combine aspects of macro and micro level analyses of societal interactions, viewing education as being influenced by existing societal hierarchies in and out of the classroom. Finally, the economics of human capital provides a capitalist perspective on the purpose of education. This theory purports that investment in education improves human capital, which are the skills possessed by the labour force. As an individual increases their education level, their future earnings increase. Human rights, sociology and economic theories of education underline the purpose of education through legal, institutional, and capitalist lenses.

CHAPTER III – ANALYSIS OF QUALITY INDICATIORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The final chapter contains an analysis of a select quality indicators used by different international and national organisations. Quality assurance in HE has been around for many years but has garnered more interest recently. Researchers have criticized the lack of uniform definitions in the quality assurance and ranking systems of HE. UNESCO and OECD both publish education benchmarks and indicators to support assurance agencies and universities in identifying appropriate criteria for assessment, but incongruencies still remain. The conclusions are drawn by way of comparative analysis using the UNESCO-OECD indicators as benchmarks against which the EUA aggregate indicators are assessed for congruency with international criteria for determining quality in education.

3.1 Review of quality indicators in HE

In 1995, UNESCO projected that the global demand for mass quality higher education would increase to 100 million by 2025; however, inequalities in opportunities would persist. This would be partly due to the increasing demand for graduates who are “able to constantly update their knowledge, learn new skills and with the qualities to be not only successful job seekers but also job creators in

continuously shifting labour markets" (p.8). Most recently, UNESCO's GEM report (2020) estimated that global participation in tertiary education rose up to 224 million in 2018. Before the focus shifted to measuring and improving quality in education, there was a drive to increase literacy levels, known as quantitative expansion (UNESCO, 1995) or quantitative extension (Aksoy et. al, 2013). Quantitative expansion refers to the observed increase in global school enrolment rates[13]. According to UNESCO's *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education* (1995), the rate of increase differed from region to region, however; the reasons fueling the overall trend were similar. Increases at the higher education level were driven by growth in the demographic, improvements in the provision of primary and secondary school education, increases in the number of eligible students for higher education, increased investment in education as a result of acknowledging the economic benefits of education and the rise in independent and democratic countries which regard higher education as a vessel for social cultural and political progress.

The Bologna Declaration[14], signed in 1999, initiated the application of educational standards in European HE. The Bologna Process sought to bring more coherence to higher education systems across Europe. Signatories commit to maintaining independence and autonomy of HE systems to allow them to adapt to changing societal demands and scientific knowledge advances. One immediate objective is of increasing "international competitiveness of the European system" to appeal to students from other cultures. In more detail, the objectives include the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, adoption of the two-cycle degree system (first and second cycle degrees), promoting teacher and student mobility, establishment of a system of comparable credits, promoting European co-operation in quality assurance aimed at developing comparable criteria and methodologies, and promotion of the necessary European dimension in HE as pertains to the listed

[13] Enrollment rates are an indicator of access to education. Gender, race and income differences are some of the studied factors that influence access to education.
[14] Preceded by the Sorbonne Declaration signed by the four Ministers in charge for France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom in Paris, the Sorbonne on May 25th 1988.

objectives. To further the quality assurance aims, the European Ministers of Education adopted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in 2005, drafted by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in cooperation and consultation with the European University Association (EUA), the European Association for Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students' Union (ESU). Quality assurance agencies (QAA) that comply are listed on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). According to the ESG website, the guidelines are a support for external QAA – responsibility for internal QA lies with the institution. ESG states that the purpose of external QA is to provide information for public accountability and to for institutional improvement of processes and practices.

Today, the Sustainable Development Goals are at the top of national and international policy agendas as the world approaches the 2030 deadline. There is mounting pressure on leaders, governments, and multinational corporations to change the course of economic and political activity towards more human-centred and environmentally conscious practices. The lack of political will and accountability that slowed down progress with the MDGs (Shetty, 2005) threatens to succumb the SDGs to a similar fate. The *UNECE 2022 SDG Progress Report* released on 25th March reveals that only 26 of the 169 targets are on track for achievement, while the remainder either require accelerated action or trend reversal. UNECE Executive Secretary Olga Algayerova commented that the data was concerning for the 56 countries in Europe, North America and Central Asia that comprise the region. The data shows declines in progress from last year, even before adjusting for the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The progress data for goal 4 displays mixed results. There is a lack of sufficient data to assess targets 4.6, 4.7 and 4.b, but targets 4.2, 4.a and 4.c are on track to meet the 2030 deadline, while targets 4.1, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 require accelerated progress. The report states that disparities within and across countries are to blame for the lag. For instance, although targets to reduce poverty and income inequality are on track for

achievement by 2030, income inequality is still on the rise in the region, which in turn is increasing achievement gaps between wealthy and disadvantaged students. From the economics perspective, the concept of quality in education is currently considered to be related to “standardization, test success, performance, effectuality, choice, and perfection, rather than equality, value and social justice” (Aksoy, 2013). This is due to the influence of social and economic forces that have transformed education over time to include quantifiable values such as “features ensuring success or advantage in the exams that lead to positions which will be rewarded by the market in the long term.” These notions of quality in education, the author continues, are accompanied by the following indicators: “expenses per student, repeating a grade level, graduation levels, education level of teachers, cognitive skills; books, residence fees, computers, laboratory and laboratory tools in schools, length of time that students are schooled, absenteeism and attendance, teacher-pupil ratio, and student success in class.” Another accepted indicator of quality in education in economics is “graduates’ participation in production in the current market conditions and the individual incomes.”

Concerns surrounding the quality of HE and quality assurance in HE have also intensified during the last fifteen years as the recession put a strain on the labour market affecting graduate prospects (Hrnciar & Madzik, 2013), and private and public investment in the sector increased (Brown et. al, 2017). Until recently, benchmarking and performance indicators have been applied for assessment of administrative functions and rarely to assess teaching and learning (Nordvall & Braxton, 1996; Meek & van der Lee, 2005; Brown et.al., 2017). The difference between benchmarking and “performance” indicators in HE is described in V. Meek and J. van der Lee’s 2005 UNESCO Bangkok Occasional Paper. Benchmarking is defined as a structured learning process that enables practitioners to comparatively identify their strengths and weaknesses for reasons of “self-improvement and/or regulation”. The aim is to connect external and internal stakeholders in collaborative, inclusive, reflexive organizational leadership and learning practices to discuss “why, what, where and how improvement might occur”. A performance indicator is a

quantitative (but sometimes qualitative) measure of system performance along a scale of favorable or less favorable outcomes. Qualitative indicators need to be "clearly related to the defined functions of the institution", they solely indicate "the extent to which institutional goals are achieved", and "they should be a valid operationalization of what they intend to indicate and that they can be measured and interpreted in a reliable and correct way". The authors mention that even though there are attempts to define "performance" indicators, the challenge of finding a consensual definition is one that the OECD has taken upon itself. The definition provided by the OECD's Institutional Management in Higher Education's Performance Indicators Workgroup is that performance indicators are "signals derived from data bases or from opinion data that indicate the need to explore deviation from either normative or other preselected levels of activity or performance. [They] monitor developments or performance, signal the need for further examination of issues or conditions, or assist in assessing quality" (Meek & van der Lee, 2005). They identified the three different types of indicators as "indicators to monitor institutional response to government goals or policies; indicators of teaching/learning, research and service; and indicators needed in university management". Another tool used to determine the quality of an HEI is the university and college ranking system. The European Commission published an externally authored study report critically analyzing university quality assessments tools, including national and international university and college ranking systems (Wachter et al., 2015). It states that although national rankings have been in use for decades, global rankings have increased due to the "massification" and "globalisation of HE. The purpose of rankings (according to the responses received from the study sample) is "to identify excellence in terms of the best HEIs". External quality assurance agencies (QAA) differ in that they aim to "guarantee compliance with (minimum) standards and to support quality enhancement". Additionally, "global rankings are typically run by private companies and have no legal consequence on HEIs" while "QA agencies are independent non-profit organisations and their work does have legal consequences" (p.11–12). The two also differ in terms of criteria

used for assessing quality. Rankings assign a higher weight to available data of research-related criteria and routinely rely on one data broker, while QA leans heavily on teaching and learning criteria derived on collected data. The data used in QA is gathered through a self-assessment report compiled by the HEI itself. The report s then “verified and enhanced by an external peer review and published in external assessment report”. Rankings have several methodological pitfalls that restrict their usefulness in measuring the quality of HE, including the relying n a single data source, using non-representative student surveys, giving weighting priority to publications and citations, non-diversification of publishing languages and “exclusion of certain academic fields” (p.12).

Norvall and Braxton (1996) examined alternative definitions used in the assessment of the quality of undergraduate college education in the American system. They compared traditional approaches to alternative approaches of ranking colleges in various categories applied by US News and World Report, Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges and Lovejoy’s College Guide, in addition to unconventional college guides that offer insider perspectives on institutions. The traditional approaches defined by the authors are the reputational approach, the resources approach, and the value-added approach. The US News and World Report, according to the authors, exemplified the reputational approach. This approach equates a higher institutional ranking to higher quality of the institution; however, it is unclear whether those doing the ranking use the same criteria or if the person doing the ranking has access to evidence that supports the ranking awarded. “The resource approach delineates quality by applying criteria such as SAT or ACT scores of entering first-year students, the number of books in the institution's library, or the scholarly productivity of its faculty” (p.484). With this approach, higher average scores for first-year student admissions, or larger library collections signal a higher quality institution. These two approaches are interdependent as a higher reputation can attract more resources; and more resources can improve reputation. The perception of the usefulness of these two approaches for institutional policy is misleading. Norval and Braxton rationalize that there is fierce competition amongst

institutions for finite financial resources, talented students, and professors with non-guarantee of successfully attracting funds. There is also no verifiable correlation between financial resources and student outcomes. “The third approach is to define quality in terms of the effects of college upon students' cognitive and affective development”. This approach is “rooted in a concern for the education of students” by measuring value addition from the time of undergraduate enrollment until graduation. This allows institutions that attract students with low SAT and ACT scores to rank higher if they improve students’ skills over the course of study. These three approaches share common disadvantages of ranking criteria incongruence, measurement unreliability, and relevance for useful policy formulation. The alternative approach to defining academic quality proposed by the authors “focuses on fundamental course-level academic processes and describes the quality of such processes in terms of the level of academic demands or rigor expected of students”. Some examples of these processes are “The types of questions faculty ask students during class, the nature of term papers or other written exercises, and the type of examination questions written by faculty”. They list more criteria as follows:

> Academic demands or rigor is defined through the level of understanding of course content to be demonstrated by students while engaging in course-level processes. Levels of understanding range from a student's ability to recall or recognize course content (knowledge-level) to the use of external or internal criteria to assess the value of course content (evaluation). The level of understanding of course content can be both established and appraised by applying a scheme such as Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain[15] to classify course-level academic processes” (p.477).

This approach bypasses the use of external evaluators who may use different assessment criteria and lack reliable evidence for their rankings; as well the issues that limit the resource and value-added approaches mentioned previously. The advantage of this approach is that it can provide information about the effectiveness of teaching on level of understanding. For instance, the authors explain that if a

[15] Bloom’s Taxonomy defines academic quality based on 6 main categories: knowledge, comprehension, application analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. See the appendix for the definitions of the levels of understanding (Novall & Braxton, 1999). See also the original Taxonomy developed by Bloom in the references.

professor applies course processes seeking a higher level of understanding, but instead provide a knowledge level of understanding of the materials, then the professor can adjust the questions and assignments to meet the end goal of higher-level understanding. Thus, “the quality of these processes would be improved by adjusting the required level of understanding”. The approach used will depend on the purpose of the ranking. Reputational and resources approaches will be used by those aim for numerical rankings, while the value-added and alternative approaches are best for those who are interested in basing quality improvements on the education of the students. The underlying question for the latter two approaches is a curiosity for the best practices for instructing students, versus the former approaches that aim to make changes that will impress external institutional evaluators (p.495).

In examining the quality gaps in higher education, Piotr Grudowski and Katarzyna Szczepanska published an article aimed at presenting the determinants of the quality of education in the context of international standards (2021). The first two issues identified by the researchers are the lack of clear definitions of *quality* and *education* in European standards for quality assurance in HE which makes the term vague and “not widely understood”. Grudowski and Szczepanska first define education as “the process of learning facilitating or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits or the act, the process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life”; then define quality as meaning “the degree of meeting the requirements and expectations of university stakeholders in the area of education” (p.36). They opt for a narrow scope of defining quality to allow for broader application. The definition is based on the assumptions that: education at university institutions, and theories and concepts in management share some commonalities; each group of stakeholders at the university can impact the quality and its results; and lastly, “education at universities is a social service, so it is directly related to the management of service quality”. The authors base their analysis on the SERVQUAL model originally developed for assessing the quality of

services in marketing management, and later applied to educational services (Gallifa & Battale, 2010; Hrnciar & Madzik, 2013), “in which the quality gaps are characterized and the education process at the university is presented” (Grudowski & Szczepanska, 2021). They describe the following determinants of the quality of educational services for the model as presented by Galifa and Batalle.

tangibility - attractive location of the university, cleanliness, aesthetics, spaciousness of rooms, re-liability, the safety of laboratory equipment, and staff neatness,

reliability – completeness, timeliness of classes, availability of lesson plans, schedules, didactic materials, size of student groups conducive to the quality of education, library services, living services, the structure of the curriculum in line with the substantive and methodological standards, and number of subjects to choose from appropriate to expectations, responsiveness - speed and correctness of responses to the changing needs and expectations of students,

assurance - professionalism, teaching skills, practical experience of academic teachers, the fairness of the assessment system, and professionalism of the administrative staff,

empathy - understanding and kindness of employees toward students, using an individualized approach to students, readiness to respond positively to social expectations (volunteering), and creating opportunities for students to participate in various additional forms of activities (e.g., scientific clubs,

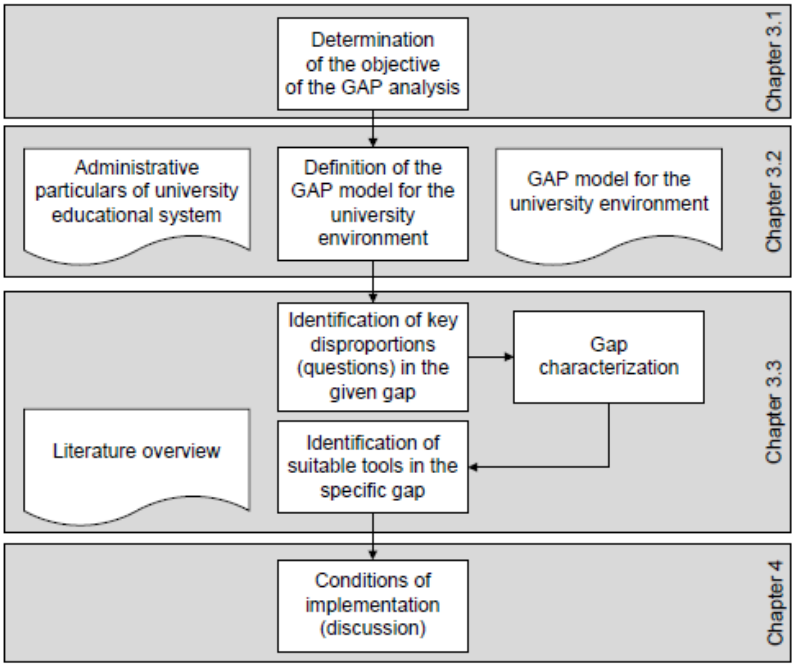

Figure 3: Process of GAP Analysis, Grudowski & Szczepanska, 2021

The absence of a generalized approach to standardization of quality measures in HE is cited as a reason driving the review of existing quality indicators in education (Hrnciar & Madzik, 2013). The SERVQUAL model for educational services developed by Hrnciar and Madzik identifies seven areas of potential failure through a GAP analysis method (Figure ??) of the approaches to improving education processes and resources. They disclaim that despite the frequent use of the GAP analysis in quality assurance, it is rarely used in HE contexts because of its “problematic interpretation”. The summarized characteristics of all the gaps are as follows (Grudowski & Szczepanska, 2021):

- Gap 1 results from the comparison of stakeholder expectations (students, employers) and the perception of educational requirements by the university management.
- Gap 2 is the result of the management's perception of the requirements for the education process and the effects of their translation into the specified study programs and education process.
- Gap 3 concerns the comparison of the specification of study programs and the conducted education process.
- Gap 4 is determined based on the assessment of communication with students before, during, and after education, concerning the planned and implemented program.
- Gap 5 relates to the comparison of the conducted education process and its results as perceived by stakeholders.
- Gap 6 is derived from a comparison of stakeholder perceptions of learning and the institution's internal measurements of learning outcomes; answers the question of whether the results of internal measurements are properly interpreted.
- Gap 7 determines whether stakeholder satisfaction measurement results lead to effective improvement actions focused on the quality of education.

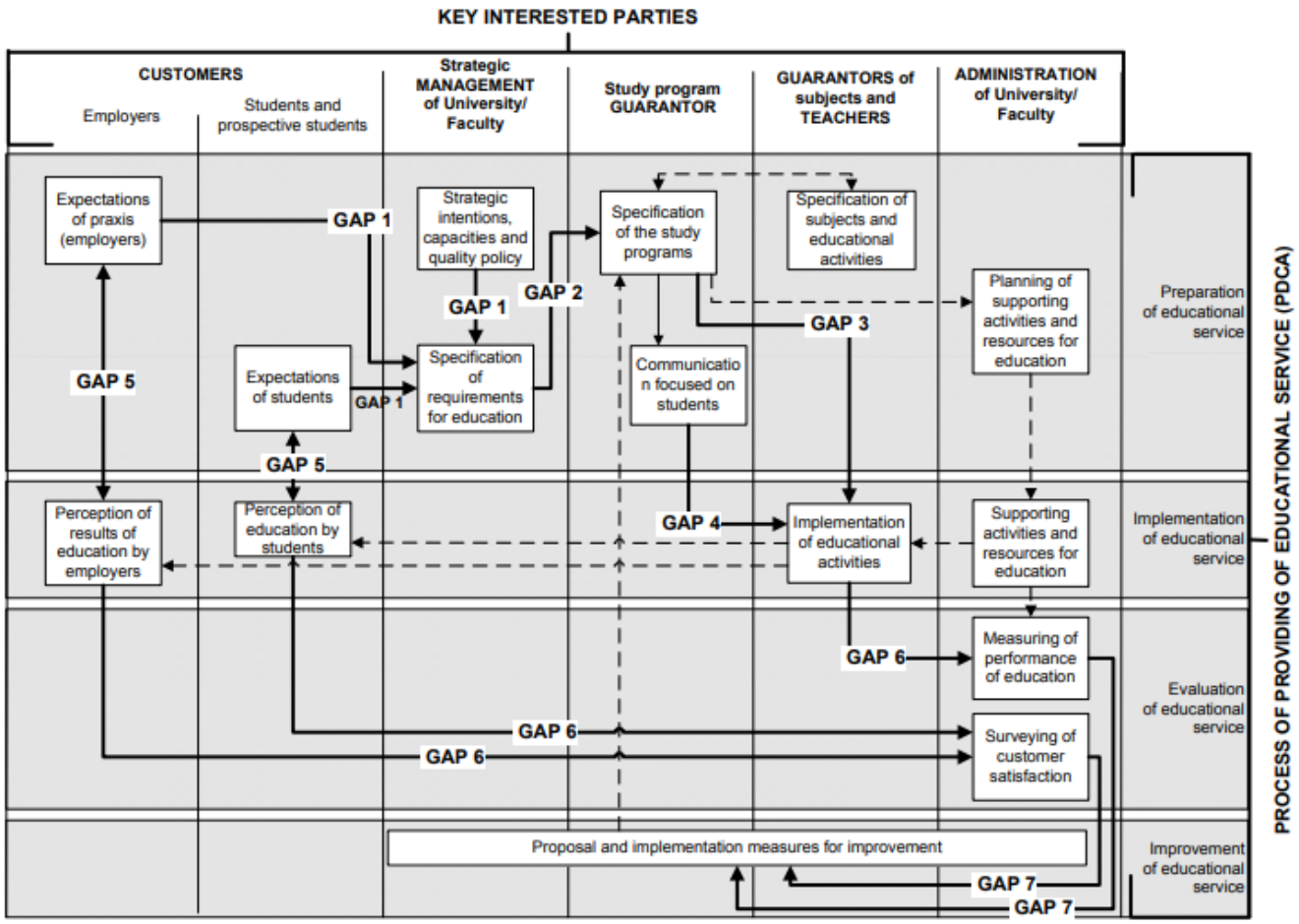

Figure 4: Gaps in process of providing educational service, Hrnciar & Madzik, 2013

Grudowski & Szczepanska (2021) highlight three dimensions of this GAP model (Figure ??). The subjective dimension concerns internal and external stakeholders. External stakeholders are the employers and students, while the internal stakeholders are university managers, lecturers, and employees. These include the people responsible management, curriculum design and teaching, administration, and technical support staff. The functional dimension concerns the learning process with elements such as “understanding the expectations of employers and students; developing strategy, goals, policies and requirements for education, study programs, and subjects; planning activities and resources; communicating with students; delivering education; and measuring learning outcomes”. The third-dimension description involves

subject-functional systems known as the PDCA cycle. The “Plan” phase is where preparation of the learning process occurs. The “Do” phase “represents the completion of the planning process”. The “Check” phase is for evaluation of the learning process and associated effects. Finally, the “Act” phase is where the education process is improved. They compared different standards of QA in HE and found that each of them related to international quality standards. Although promising, the use of the SERVQUAL model in HE QA still requires more testing as evidenced by this statement from the authors, “measurement of the quality of educational services using the SERVQUAL method in the context of the applied standards of quality assurance of education re-quires the development of separate characteristics of quality determinants for each of them so that quality gaps can be identified” (p.47).

A more recent perspective on *Quality Assurance in U.S. Higher Education*, written by J. Brown, M. Kurzweil and W. Pritchett (2017) reports that compared to other countries, the U.S. spends the largest percentage of GDP on higher education. Despite the high public investment in HE, the report references statistics showing that student debt had risen to one trillion dollars, while graduation rates from bachelor’s degree programs were a mere 60%. The mounting public and private expenditure on HE, coupled with “increasing concern about the success of the sector in promoting positive outcomes for students” is fuelling fierce debates over the policies and sector regulation to increase productivity (p.3). As a solution to improve quality assurance, the authors advocate a “management-based approach” in which “institutions document their own outcome goals and plans for achieving them, subject to ongoing third-party monitoring of progress toward goals and the quality and implementation of plans and processes, as well as achievement of standard, minimum performance thresholds”. Benchmarks are based on similar organizations, and the result is that weak performers are sorted out, while the remaining institutions are supported in evaluating and improving their processes (p.4). The authors believe that the existing system of HE accreditation in the U.S. resembles a management-based approach, so it only requires some contextual changes to adapt. The system

is legislated by the Higher Education Act of 1965 that requires institutions to be accredited for students to be eligible federal grant recipient, however; it does not regulate teaching and research practices. The U.S. accreditation system is non-governmental and allows free collaboration between regional or national private entities and HEIs where the accreditor uses the institutions' self-assessments are frameworks for determining success and shortcomings. The requirement for HEIs to have accreditation for federal financial aid eligibility widens the role of the federal government in the regulatory system. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education directly certifies accreditation agencies to ensure that they are qualified to conduct proper assessments of institutions. Even with these checks in place, the authors state that one criticism highlights the lack of effectiveness of the process in helping HEIs improve process or student outcomes.

UNESCO stance on achieving SDG 4

Over the last century, HE has undergone several changes – in what UNESCO refers to as *diversification* – triggered by internal and external factors. The external factors include increased social demand for HE, the need to cater to diverse demographics, a reduction in spending on public HEIs forcing universities to deliver more cost-effective programs and the changing labour market demands that require institutions to provide specialized training in a more globalized HE system. Among the internal factors are massive advances in science and communication technologies that are changing the programs of study and methods of administration, and the increased awareness of the value of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching and research practices (1995). The SDG indicators were adopted in July 2017, during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Resolution A/RES/71/313 was the follow up to the 2030 Agenda and it outlined a list of indicators for the SDGs developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Before the SDGs were even a discussion, UNESCO attempted to define quality in HE as "a multidimensional concept which depends to a large extent on the contextual setting of a given system, institutional mission, or conditions

and standards within a given discipline" with the main goal of improving institutions and education systems through "quality assessment" (1995). UNESCO's policy paper asserts that quality includes "quality of teaching, training and research, which means the quality of its staff and programmes, and quality of learning as a corollary of teaching and research." Quality goes beyond the "academic role of different programmes" to include inquiries about "the quality of students and of the infrastructure and academic environment." In fact, these quality-related issues go hand in hand with HEI governance and management policies and provide signals about the reputation of any given HEI. The Incheon Declaration and Education 2030 Framework for Action (2015) called upon governments to translate global SDG 4 targets into achievable national targets by "establishing appropriate intermediate benchmarks" to "serve as quantitative goalposts for review" of long-term goals (p.35). The regional and international differences in determining the quality of HE pose an obstacle for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of SDG target 4.3; and require at least some convergence in terminology to protect the right to education in an increasingly internationalized HE free market.

The rise in demand for distance learning which began even before the Covid 19 pandemic in late 2020 (Allen & Seaman, 2009), and has since accelerated (Donnelly et. al., 2021), exhibiting some of the challenges faced in the quality assurance landscape in HE. International, regional and national collaborative efforts are pertinent to overcoming these challenges and ensuring that HEIs continue developing quality processes and practices. In the next section, we compare indicators, benchmarks and criteria put forward from studies conducted by UNESCO, OECD and the EUA to search for overlap.

3.2 Methodology

The data is divided into three categories of quality education indicators: UNESCO–OECD education indicators (benchmarks), education indicators used by QAA and Education indicators used in international university rankings. All the original lists of indicators can be viewed in the appendix. The indicators were

retrieved from two online sources and treated as one category. The first set of indicators are the official list of SDG 4 indicators published by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics. The second set of indicators are the Education Indicators in Focus (EDIF) published by the OECD. Only EDIFs that mention tertiary or higher education are included in the analysis. The education indicators used by QAA are retrieved from the EUA publication titled *Exploring higher education indicators*. The indicators used in the EUA analysis were gathered through a survey done in 2019 "among full and affiliate member agencies" of the ENQA of which 24 full responses were received, but 16 included in the analysis. The sample is small and does not completely represent the ESG; however, it fulfills its demonstrative purpose (p.8). The education indicators used in international university rankings are retrieved from the EUA publication titled *Exploring higher education indicators*. The indicators used in the EUA analysis were gathered from "publicly available information from the ranking producers' website". The global rankings included were those that used at least one indicator deemed to be related to education by either the ranking producer or the authors of the EUA report (p.9).

Each of the EUA indicators for QAAs and Rankings is compared against the UNESCO indicators (Benchmark 1) and the OECD indicators (Benchmark 2) to determine congruence. Congruence refers to the overlap or similarity between the benchmark and the EUA indicators. The labelling in the column titled "congruence with benchmark" is on a Yes/No dichotomy. "Yes" suggests congruency between the variables. "No" suggests incongruency between the variables. If the comparative analysis is inconclusive, a label of "NA", meaning Not Applicable, is assigned. The column titled "portion of congruence" is expressed by a fraction, which suggests an overlap or similarity between one EUA indicator and some or all of the benchmark indicators via a comparative analysis of the vocabulary or concepts. The fraction is obtained by dividing the number of benchmark indicators corresponding with one EUA indicator by the total number of benchmark indicators in the comparative matrix. For example, in Matrix A, student progression overlaps with benchmark indicators 4.3.2 and 4.3.3. The portion of congruence is 2/3 (no. of benchmark indicators of

congruence/total number of benchmark indicators in the matrix). A portion equivalent to 0 suggests complete incongruency; a portion between 0 >< N suggests some congruency; a portion equivalent to N suggests full congruency. Inconclusive comparisons are labelled NA.

3.3 Analysis

Matrix A: Comparative analysis between Benchmark 1 and Rankings indicators

Benchmark 1: UNESCO Indicators (N=3)	
Global indicator 4.3.1	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills by type of skill
Thematic indicator 4.3.2	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital skills
Thematic indicator 4.3.3	Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group and level of education

EUA Rankings indicators	Congruence with benchmark	% Rate of congruence	Benchmark indicator of congruence
Student surveys	NA	NA	
Reputation surveys	NA	NA	
Employer surveys	NA	NA	
Graduate employment	NA	NA	
Student progression	Yes	2/3	4.3.2 4.3.3
Student staff numbers	NA	NA	
Internationalisation statistics	NA	NA	
International elements in programmes	NA	NA	
Gender balance concerning staff and students	NA	NA	
Contact with work environment	NA	NA	
Others	NA	NA	

Matrix B: Comparative analysis between Benchmark 1 and QAA indicators

Benchmark 1: UNESCO Indicators (N=3)	
Global indicator 4.3.1	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills by type of skill
Thematic indicator 4.3.2	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital skills
Thematic indicator 4.3.3	Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group and level of education

EUA QAA indicators	Congruence with benchmark	Portion of congruence	Benchmark indicator of congruence
Staff numbers	NA	NA	
Drop out rates	Yes	1/3	4.3.3
Student numbers	Yes	1/3	4.3.3
Student-staff ratio	NA	NA	
Student satisfaction	NA	NA	4.3.2 4.3.3
Admission and enrolment data	Yes	1/3	4.3.3
Graduation rate	Yes	1/3	4.3.3
ECTS data/efficiency	No	0	
Time to graduation	NA	NA	
Graduate employment rate	NA	NA	
Student mobility	NA	NA	
Staff mobility	No	0	
Staff publications	No	0	
Funding data	No	NA	
Teaching hours	No	0	
Student support	Yes	1/3	4.3.3
Size, facilities, and resources	Yes	1/3	4.3.1
Academic achievement/grades	Yes	3/3	4.3.1 4.3.2 4.3.3

Matrix C: Comparative analysis between Benchmark 2 and Rankings indicators

Benchmark 2: OECD Indicators (N=17)			EUA Rankings indicators	Congruence with benchmark	Portion of congruence	Benchmark indicator of congruence
Chapter A	The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning	**Education attainment**	Student surveys	Yes	6/17	A – economic and…, labour…, equity B – tuition… C – adult…, transition
		Graduates (students who just graduate)	Reputation surveys	NA	NA	
		Economic and social outcomes (incentives to invest in education, performance)	Employer surveys	Yes	1/17	C – Transition to work
		Labour market perspective (employment/unemployment, earnings, qualified labour force)	Graduate employment	Yes	3/17	A – Labour market…, graduates, equity…
		Equity issues (gender balance, income inequality)	Student progression	Yes	2/17	A – education attainment, graduates
		Other (innovation)	Student staff numbers	Yes	2/17	D – teachers' working conditions, student's instruction time,
Chapter B	Financial and human resources invested in education	**Public/private funding** (share of private/public funding; trend in funding)	Internationalisation statistics	Yes	2/17	B - …financial support to students C – International mobility
		Current/capital expenditure (expenditure on teaching staff, on building...)	International elements in programmes	Yes	1/17	C – International mobility
		Tuition fees and financial support to students	Gender balance concerning staff and students	Yes	1/17	D – teacher's characteristics

(Cont.) Matrix C: Comparative analysis between Benchmark 2 and Rankings indicators

Benchmark 2: OECD Indicators			EUA Rankings indicators	Congruence with benchmark	Portion of congruence	Benchmark indicator of congruence
Chapter C	Access to education, participation, and progression	**Initial education** (children in pre-primary to tertiary education)	Contact with work environment	Yes	4/17	A – labour market…, equity C – Transition…, adult education
		Adult education (continuing education, lifelong learning)	Others	NA	NA	
		International mobility (student studying abroad)				
		Transition from school to work (employment and education status)				
Chapter D	The learning environment and organisation of schools	**Methodology**				
		Teachers' working conditions (teaching/working time, salaries, class size)				
		Teachers' characteristics				
		Students' instruction time				

Matrix D: Comparative analysis between Benchmark 2 and QAA indicators

Benchmark 2: OECD Indicators (N=17)			EUA QAA indicators	Congruence with benchmark	Portion of congruence	Benchmark indicator of congruence
Chapter A	The output of educational institutions and the impact of learning	**Education attainment**	Staff numbers	Yes	1/17	D – Teachers' working conditions
		Graduates (students who just graduate)	Drop out rates	Yes	3/17	A – education…, graduates C – transition from…
		Economic and social outcomes (incentives to invest in education, performance)	Student numbers	Yes	3/17	D – teachers' working conditions, student's instruction time,
		Labour market perspective (employment/unemployment, earnings, qualified labour force)	Student-staff ratio	Yes	3/17	B – current/capital expenditure D – teachers' working conditions, student's instruction time,
		Equity issues (gender balance, income inequality)	Student satisfaction	NA	NA	
		Other (innovation)	Admission and enrolment data	Yes	3/17	C – initial…, adult… D – teachers' working….
Chapter B	Financial and human resources invested in education	**Public/private funding** (share of private/public funding; trend in funding)	Graduation rate	Yes	1/17	A - graduates
		Current/capital expenditure (expenditure on teaching staff, on building...)	ECTS data/efficiency	NA	NA	
		Tuition fees and financial support to students	Time to graduation	NA	NA	

(Cont.) Matrix D: Comparative analysis between Benchmark 2 and QAA indicators

Benchmark 2: OECD Indicators			EUA QAA indicators	Congruence with benchmark	Portion of congruence	Benchmark indicator of congruence
Chapter C	Access to education, participation, and progression	**Initial education** (children in pre-primary to tertiary education)	Graduate employment rate	Yes	3/17	A – economic and social…, labour market…, equity issues
		Adult education (continuing education, lifelong learning)	Student mobility	Yes	2/17	B – …financial support, international mobility
		International mobility (student studying abroad)	Staff mobility	NA	NA	
		Transition from school to work (employment and education status)	Staff publications	NA	NA	
Chapter D	The learning environment and organisation of schools	**Methodology**	Funding data	Yes	2/17	B – public/private funding
		Teachers' working conditions (teaching/working time, salaries, class size)	Teaching hours	Yes	2/17	D – teachers' working conditions, students' instruction time
		Teachers' characteristics	Student support	Yes	1/17	B – …financial support
		Students' instruction time	Size, facilities, and resources	Yes	1/17	B – current/capital expenditure
			Academic achievement/grades	Yes	1/17	A – education attainment

3.4 Discussion and conclusions

The results of the comparative analysis are consistent with what the literature on quality assurance says. The comparative analysis in Matrix A suggests that it is difficult to determine congruency between UNESCO's SDG target 4.3 indicators (benchmark 1) and rankings indicators. Matrix B suggests similar difficulties, with partial congruence between UNESCO's SDG target 4.3 indicators (benchmark 1) and QAA indicators, but not enough to be conclusive. Matrix C and D reveal a more promising pattern of alignment between both rankings and QAA indicators, and the OECD indicators (benchmark 2). Nine of the 11 rankings indicators share some overlap in wording or concept with the OECD indicators, while 13 out of the 18 QAA indicators share some overlap in wording or concept with the OECD indicators. What could be some possible explanations for this?

First, we tried to understand why quality was the term used in describing the education goals of the SDGs. The history of HE and HEIs based on the summarized accounts written by Geiger (2015) and Ruegg (2004, 2011) are evidence that the quality of education at HEIs has been discussed since the late 19th – early 20th centuries. The drive towards mass education, and a century later, global education created a demand for higher quality education. Quality assurance and ranking systems developed to meet these needs. They help clarify doubts for students, help regulators protect consumers, and inform institutions about how their practices measure up to other institutions (Norvall & Braxton, 1996; Meek & van der Lee, 2007; Brown et. al., 2017). The right to education and more specifically, to quality education, has also been emphasized in many of UNESCO's documents (e.g. CADE, 1960; policy paper, 1995; SDGs, 2015; GEM Report, 2020). Subsequently, the practice of quality assurance was adapted to higher education and is regulated by regional and national bodies in OECD countries (EUA, 2020). Therefore, it is safe to assume that the term "quality" was chosen in the context of SDG 4 because its use is already widely accepted in the education system.

The second and third questions aim to understand how education is assessed as meeting or falling short of quality standards, and whether the various assessment tools available are congruent with the internationally recognized UNESCO–OECD indicators. The answer lies within our comparative analysis of the indicators used by different assessors of quality in OECD countries. The first set of criteria are published by the international organizations, UNESCO and OECD. These indicators were used as benchmarks for quality because of their endorsement at the UN level. The results of assessment suggest that UNESCO's SDG target 4.3. indicators share very little, or an inconclusive amount of overlap with rankings and QAA indicators. On the other hand, the more detailed OECD Education Indicators in Focus share some overlapping vocabulary and/or concepts with rankings and QAA indicators. One possible explanation for the incongruence observed with UNESCO's indicators is that they are broadly defined and focus on capturing data pertaining to access and not quality. Casting such a wide net can raise issues for countries that seek to development appropriate measures for quality education, especially if quality is not properly defined. The 2030 Agenda Towards Sustainable Development (2015) seeks to unite all countries in a commitment to "leave no one behind". Assuming that the purpose of the Agenda was to gain support for the SDGs, then phrasing parameters and concepts more generally may have been the most effective way to adopt the resolution.

The final contemplation pertains to adding purpose as an additional indicator of quality for SDG target 4.3. Purpose in this thesis is understood simply "as something that one hopes/intends to accomplish or the action for which a person/thing is specifically suited" (Merriam/Webster dictionary); "why you do something or why something exists" (Cambridge dictionary). These simple definitions are reflected in the sociology and economic theories of education discussed in Chapter II. Synonyms of purpose used in the sociology of education include function and role; while economics of human capital refers to job, work, and employment. For instance, according to functionalist theory, education as a societal institution exists to fulfill its necessary functions alongside the other institutions, i.e.,

family, religion, politics, economics, and health, with their value being based on their capabilities to produce positive social benefits. Education through formal schooling serves the purpose of socializing children and transferring common values and morals. Critical theorists like Karl Marx and Max Weber examined the power dynamics and hierarchical structures between social groups, concluding that education plays a role in perpetuating inequality by aiding in the maintenance of status cultures. Along these lines, Neo-Weberian, Randall Collins used the term credentialism to refer to the placement of barriers to entry into certain professions or status groups by requiring the possession of specific credentials. An example of this is the requirement to have a degree for entry-level office jobs even though the tasks may not be related to the degree held. These two theories observe macro-level interactions whereas interaction theory is concerned with the meanings attached to social interactions. Purpose is particularly important here because it can inform teachers of the states of mind of their students. The economics of human capital relates to these sociological theories in that the individual, through schooling, can obtain the necessary skills to gain employment and increase social productivity. The central role of education is to increase the productivity and innovation of the labour force. To fulfill these purposes of education, responsibility must be assumed by both the teacher and the student to obtain the most desirable outcomes for both parties. This is evidenced through human rights perspectives that speak of duties and responsibilities – mainly of governments. According to Katarina Tomasevski, governments are responsible for ensuring that education meets the international standards of treaties to which they are signatories. The paper focuses on the legal obligations of governments; however, some aspects are applicable to the inference of purpose. In the 4A-sheme (Table 2), availability is the parameter in which qualified teachers are employed at funded schools. Under accessibility, compulsory and post-compulsory schooling needs to be non-discriminatory. Acceptability deals with minimum standards and the right of the learner, while adaptability allows for non-conventional schooling to meet the needs of marginalised learners. The corresponding conceptual framework (Table 3) draws connections between the 4As

and the right to/rights in/rights through education. If we examined Cain's story through the conceptual framework, we see that his purpose was enabled through an elimination of financial obstacles and discriminatory denials of access – accessibility, and availability through the existence of highly trained teachers. The HE that he received from the University of Waterloo met the acceptability parameters because it fit quality standards and recognized his right to determine his pathway to success.

Purpose can fill the gaps in assessment and fulfillment of legal obligations in that it captures the essence of Article 26, the blueprint of SDG 4. Paragraph 2 states the following:

> Education shall be directed to the **full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms**. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

This portion of the declaration is missing from the indicators of SDG target 4.3. It infers a purpose beyond just economic, social, and legal objectives. Purpose is a single term that can be conceptualised to capture the right to an education that promotes cognitive and affective development (Norvall & Braxton, 1996), incorporates human rights education into general curricula, and still fulfills labour force expectations. This type of purposeful education fosters collaborative curriculum development across disciplines, with administrators and with students. The teacher is encouraged to prioritize cognitive and affective reasoning and uses knowledge acquisition to complement high level thinking. Purposeful education situates learning in the context of global citizenship and adopts a global education approach, resolving each individual to be responsible for "doing no harm" and for "leaving no one behind".

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The Right to Education was adopted as part of the UDHR in 1948, under Article 26. This protected right was unanimously included because nation states viewed education a means to protect and promote the development of children into responsible citizens, capable of enjoying all other rights. The right to education has been reiterated in several documents thereafter, including the Sustainable Development Goals under SDG 4. Goal number four aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all. In fact, ensuring quality in HE has been on the radar of HEIs since the 17th century, and has been garnering more attention amongst stakeholders, especially considering the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Quality may sound self-explanatory at first glance, but agreement on a definition has been illusive at both national and international levels. Regulation of quality assurance agencies is the jurisdiction of government endorsed organisations; however, rankings are not subject to the same standards. Additionally, the principles contained in the right to education are difficult to identify in the criteria/indicators used in higher education QA. The comparative analysis reveals patterns of incongruency between UNESCO–OECD indicators, and both QA and rankings indicators used in HE. Purpose is proposed as an additional indicator for SDG target 4.3 to capture the dimension of quality inferred through Article 26. By defining purpose as a concept, we find that the term is synonymous with several words used in the education theories of sociology and economics to refer to roles, functions, employment, jobs, and end goals. Similarly, human rights perspectives use terms like duty and responsibility which infer the purpose of education as being directed towards the full development of the human personality. Purpose also does not only fall in the laps of authority figures. Each and every person has a responsibility to identify their purpose, just as the education system is partially responsible for socializing students and transmitting societal norms. In adding purpose as an indicator of quality in HE, more well-rounded curricula can be

developed to incorporate global education that centres the wellbeing of all people and the planet.

APPENDIX

UNESCO Institute for Statistics Technical Cooperation Group. March 2022.

FFA	Education 2030 Framework for Action
	Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP
Target1.a	**By 2030, ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequateand predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions**
1.a.2	Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)
Target4.1	**By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primaryand secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes**
4.1.0	Proportion of children/young people prepared for the future, by sex
4.1.1	Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c)at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex
4.1.2	Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)
4.1.3	Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary education, lower secondary education)
4.1.4	Out-of-school rate (1 year before primary, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)
4.1.5	Percentage of children over-age for grade (primary education, lower secondary education)
4.1.6	Administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (a) in Grade 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education
4.1.7	Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory primary and secondary educationguaranteed in legal frameworks
Target4.2	**By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education**
4.2.1	Proportion of children aged 24-59 months who are developmentally on track in health,learning and psychosocial well being, by sex
4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), bysex
4.2.3	Percentage of children under 5 years experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments
4.2.4	Gross early childhood education enrolment ratio in (a) pre-primary education and (b) earlychildhood educational development
4.2.5	Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory pre-primary education guaranteed in legal frameworks
Target 4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.3.1	Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
4.3.2	Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education by sex
4.3.3	Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds) by sex
Target 4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
4.4.1	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
4.4.2	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills
4.4.3	Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group and level of education
Target 4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
4.5.2	Percentage of students in a) early grades, b) at the end of primary, and c) at the end of lower secondary education who have their first or home language as language of instruction
4.5.3	Existence of funding mechanisms to reallocate education resources to disadvantage populations
4.5.4	Education expenditure per student by level of education and source of funding
4.5.5	Percentage of total aid to education allocated to least developed countries
Target 4.6	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
4.6.1	Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex
4.6.2	Youth/adult literacy rate
4.6.3	Participation rate of illiterate youth/adults in literacy programmes
Target 4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
4.7.1	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment
4.7.2	Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education
4.7.3	Extent to which the framework on the World Programme on Human Rights Education is implemented nationally (as per the UNGA Resolution 59/113)

4.7.4	Percentage of students in lower secondary education showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability
4.7.5	Percentage of students in lower secondary showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience
4.7.6	Extent to which national education policies and education sector plans recognize a breadth of skills that needs to be enhanced in national education systems
Target 4.a	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
4.a.1	Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service
4.a.2	Percentage of students experiencing bullying in the last 12 months in a) primary, and b) lower secondary education
4.a.3	Number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions
Target 4.b	By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
4.b.1	Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study
Target 4.c	By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States
4.c.1	Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level
4.c.2	Pupil-trained teacher ratio by education level
4.c.3	Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards by education level and type of institution
4.c.4	Pupil-qualified teacher ratio by education level
4.c.5	Average teacher salary relative to other professions requiring a comparable level of qualification
4.c.6	Teacher attrition rate by education level
4.c.7	Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months by type of training

OECD. Education Indicators in Focus (EFID), by theme. Retrieved June 2022.

CHAPTER A: THE OUTPUT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTIUTIONS AND THE IMPACT OF LEARNING		
Education attainment (level of education of the population)	EDIF 31	How is the global talent pool changing (2013, 2030)?
	EDIF 5	How is the global talent pool changing?
	EDIF 28	Are young people attaining higher levels of education than their parents?
	EDIF 43	Subnational variations in educational attainment and labour market outcomes
	EDIF 48	A snapshot of 50 years of trends in expanding education
	EDIF 50	Educational attainment and investment in education in Ibero-American countries
	EDIF 61	How is the tertiary-educated population evolving?
	EDIF 73	What are the choices facing first-time entrants to tertiary education?
Graduates (students who just graduate)	EDIF 37	Who are the bachelor's and master's graduates?
	EDIF 23	At what age do university students earn their first degree?
	EDIF 25	Who are the doctorate holders and where do their qualifications lead them?
Economic and social outcomes (incentives to invest in education, performance)	EDIF 6	What are the returns on higher education for individuals and countries?
	EDIF 10	What are the social benefits of education?
	EDIF 11	How do early childhood education and care (ECEC) policies, systems and quality vary across OECD countries?
	EDIF 46	What influences spending on Education?
	EDIF 47	How are health and life satisfaction related to education?
	EDIF 62	How does the earnings advantage of tertiary-educated workers evolve across generations?
	EDIF 69	How does socio-economic status influence entry into tertiary education?
	EDIF 75	What role might the social outcomes of education play during the COVID-19 lockdown?
Labour market perspective (employment/unemployment, earnings, qualified labour force)	EDIF 1	How has the global economic crisis affected people with different levels of education?
	EDIF 7	How well are countries educating young people to the level needed for a job and a living wage?
	EDIF 16	How can countries best produce a highly qualified young labour force?
	EDIF 17	Does upper secondary vocational education and training improve the prospects of young adults?
	EDIF17	What are the earnings advantages from education?

	EDIF 34	What are the advantages today of having an upper secondary qualification?
	EDIF 45	Attainment and labour market outcomes among young tertiary graduates
	EDIF 45	Fields of education, gender and the labour market
	EDIF 54	Transition from school to work: How hard is it across different age groups?
	EDIF 57	Is labour market demand keeping pace with the rising educational attainment of the population?
	EDIF 65	How do the educational attainment and labour market outcomes of foreign-born adults compare to their native-born peers?
	EDIF 68	What characterises upper secondary vocational education and training?
	EDIF 71	How do young people's educational attainment and labour-market outcomes differ across regions?
	EDIF 76	How are young graduates settling into the labour market?
	EDIF 77	How does earnings advantage from tertiary education vary by field of study?
Equity issues (Gender balance, income inequality)	EDIF 35	How do differences in social and cultural background influence access to higher education and the completion of studies?
	EDIF 32	Are education and skills being distributed more inclusively?
	EDIF 30	Education and employment - What are the gender differences?
	EDIF 3	How are girls doing in school – and women doing in employment – around the world?
	EDIF 4	How pronounced is income inequality around the world – and how can education help reduce it?
	EDIF 49	Gender imbalances in the teaching
	EDIF 55	What are the gender differences and the labour market outcomes across the different fields of study?
	EDIF 59	How does access to early childhood education services affect the participation of women in the labour market?
	EDIF 60	How is depression related to education?
	EDIF 70	How can the comparability of early childhood education and care statistics be improved?
	EDIF 74	How have women's participation and fields of study choice in higher education evolved over time?
	EDIF 79	Why do more young women than men go on to tertiary education?
	EDIF 81	Why is the gender ratio of teachers imbalanced?
Other (Innovation)	EDIF 24	How innovative is the education sector?

CHAPTER B: FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES INVESTED IN EDUCATION		
Public/private funding (share of private/public funding, trend in funding)	EDIF 18	What is the impact of the economic crisis on public education spending?
	EDIF 8	Is increasing private expenditure, especially in tertiary education, associated with less public funding and less equitable access?
	EDIF 41	How much do tertiary students pay and what public support do they receive?
	EDIF 46	What influences spending on Education?
	EDIF 52	Who bears the cost of early childhood education and how does it affect enrolment?
	EDIF 56	Who really bears the cost of education? How the burden of education expenditure shifts from the public to the private sector
	EDIF 72	How has private expenditure on tertiary education evolved over time and how does it affect participation in education?
Current/capital expenditure (expenditure on teaching staff, on building…)	EDIF 12	Which factors determine the level of expenditure on teaching staff?
Tuition fees and financial support to students	EDIF 2	How are countries around the world supporting students in higher education?
	EDIF 51	Tuition fee reforms and international mobility
CHAPTER C: ACCESS TO EDUCATION, PARTICIATION AND PROGRESSION		
Initial education (children in pre-primary to tertiary education)	EDIF 33	Focus on vocational education and training (VET) programmes
	EDIF 15	How are university students changing?
	EDIF 19	What are tertiary students choosing to study?
	EDIF 42	What are the benefits from early childhood education?
	EDIF 63	How do admission systems affect enrolment in public tertiary education?
Adult education (continuing education, lifelong learning)	EDIF 26	Learning Begets Learning: Adult Participation in Lifelong Education
International mobility (student studying abroad)	EDIF 14	How is international student mobility shaping up?
	EDIF 39	The internationalisation of doctoral and master's studies
Transition from school to work (employment and education status)	EDIF 13	How difficult is it to move from school to work?
CHAPTER D: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND ORGANISATION OF SCHOOLS		
Students' instruction time	EDIF 22	How much time do primary and lower secondary students spend in the classroom?
	EDIF 38	How is learning time organised in primary and secondary education?
	EDIF 21	How much are teachers paid and how much does it matter?

Teachers' working conditions (teaching/working time, salaries, class size)	EDIF 29	How much time do teachers spend on teaching and non-teaching activities?
	EDIF 9	How does class size vary around the world?
	EDIF 53	How have teachers' salaries evolved and how do they compare to those of tertiary-educated workers?
	EDIF 58	How do primary and secondary teachers compare?
	EDIF 64	How decentralised are education systems, and what does it mean for schools?
	EDIF 66	How much would it cost to reduce class size by one student?
	EDIF 78	What are the roles and salaries of school heads?
Methodology	EDIF 36	What are the benefits of ISCED 2011 classification for indicators on education?
	EDIF 67	Why does the Sustainable Development Goal on Education (SDG 4) matter for OECD countries?

EUA. 2020. Education indicators used by QAAs

TYPE OF INDICATOR	**NO. OF AGENCIES (out of 16 that provided information on indicators used)**
Staff numbers	11
Drop-out rates	10
Student numbers	8
Student-staff ratio	7
Student satisfaction	7
Admission and enrolment data	6
Graduation rate	6
ECTS data/efficiency	5
Time to graduation	5
Graduate employment rate	5
Student mobility	5
Staff mobility	4
Staff publications	4
Funding data	3
Teachers' hours	3
Student support	3
Size, facilities and resources	2
Academic achievement/grades	2

EUA. 2020. Education indicators used in international university rankings

TYPE OF INDICATOR	U-Multirank	ARWU	QS World University Rankings	THE World University Rankings	THE European Teaching Rankings	CWUR	Emerging/ Trendence Global	Round University Ranking
Student surveys	•				•	•		
Reputation surveys				•	•	•		•
Employer surveys	•		•			•		
Graduate employment	•	•				•	•	
Student progression	•				•	•		
Student and staff numbers	•		•	•	•	•		•
Internationalisation statistics	•		•	•	•	•		•
International elements in programmes	•					•		
Gender balance concerning staff and students	•				•	•		
Contact with work environment	•					•		
Others	•	•				•	•	

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