2. Navigating the terrain: global knowledge brokering and use in education policy

Chanwoong Baek

Despite the considerable attention given to knowledge brokers and their roles and influences in the policy process, there has been a noticeable gap in exploring the current global landscape of knowledge brokering for national education policy, planning, and implementation. While the concept of knowledge brokerage has been broadly understood, further dissection is needed to critically investigate how knowledge brokerage affects national education policy, planning, and implementation. This chapter seeks to respond to this imperative by disaggregating knowledge brokerage and evidence use by institution and region. The chapter first explores previous literature on knowledge brokering in education and then examines the knowledge-brokering strategies employed by the two major global actors in education policy: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. It then investigates the use of research evidence by looking into existing global, regional, and national knowledge sources in education, along with their respective relationships. The chapter concludes by discussing the implications of these findings for global knowledge brokering in the context of national education policy, planning, and implementation. Overall, the emphasis on disaggregation contributes to a more nuanced understanding of knowledge brokerage and the varied ways in which research evidence is applied in policy and planning, particularly considering the diverse institutional and regional contexts.

This chapter draws insights from two empirical studies. The first study entails a comparative analysis of the diverse lesson-drawing approaches taken by the OECD and the World Bank (Seitzer et al., 2023). The second study involves a strategic review commissioned by the SDG 4-Education

2030 High-Level Steering Committee, examining the use of research evidence in policy (Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2024). Both studies attempt to shed light on the idiosyncrasies of knowledge brokerage in terms of institutional and policymaking contexts.

UNDERSTANDING KNOWLEDGE BROKERING IN EDUCATION

Knowledge brokering has been explored by many scholars; however, its definition remains unclear and is open to multiple interpretations. Nevertheless, the shared understanding is that knowledge brokering involves activities related to facilitating and building relationships, removing barriers, crossing and spanning boundaries, and introducing and interpreting knowledge (Rycroft-Smith, 2022). Knowledge brokering has also been discussed alongside, sometimes interchangeably with, knowledge translation, knowledge transfer, knowledge mobilization, and research utilization (Levin, 2011; Malin & Brown, 2020; Sharples & Sheard, 2015; Weber & Yanovitzky, 2021). Most importantly, scholars have emphasized that knowledge brokering is not merely a transformation of knowledge into action; it should not be understood as a linear process in which research is produced by researchers and then communicated to users. It "involve[s] a more complex process involving interaction, co-creation and implementation of evidence throughout all levels of a system" (Campbell et al., 2017, p. 212).

Numerous studies have explored the complex concept of knowledge brokering. By analyzing 47 knowledge mobilization models in various fields, including healthcare, business and management, social care, public policymaking, and evaluation research, Ward (2017) found that existing scholarship has mainly focused on four overarching knowledge brokering questions: (1) *Why* is knowledge being mobilized/brokered? (2) *Whose knowledge* is being mobilized/brokered? (3) *What type of knowledge* is being mobilized/brokered? and (4) *How* is knowledge being mobilized/brokered?

The four questions allow us to describe, understand, and evaluate knowledge brokering. The first question addresses the functions and expected outcomes of knowledge brokering. Knowledge brokering is mobilized "to develop local solutions to practice-based problems, develop new policies, programs, and/or recommendations, adopt/implement clearly defined practices and policies, change practices and behaviors, and produce useful research/scientific knowledge" (Ward, 2017, p.

481). Previous research in comparative education policy has also found that knowledge brokers can help identify or repackage policy problems and solutions and increase the accessibility and relevance of knowledge (e.g., Baek, 2019, 2020; Cooper, 2014; Malin & Brown, 2020).

The second question looks at the sources and producers of knowledge that are mobilized by knowledge brokers. These include professional knowledge producers, such as university researchers, as well as frontline practitioners and service providers, members of the public and service users, decision-makers, and product and program developers (Ward, 2017, pp. 481–482). Traditionally, academic institutions have been one of the major sources of knowledge; however, in recent years, more diverse actors and organizations have been actively participating in knowledge production, contributing to a surplus of knowledge. Knowledge-brokering entities also often participate in knowledge production and management themselves.

The third question focuses on the types and contents of knowledge shared across boundaries. Knowledge discussed in the context of knowledge mobilization and translation in policy is often limited to scientific and factual knowledge, which includes research findings, measurable data, and statistics. However, technical and normative knowledge that includes practical skills and experiences, as well as values, norms, and professional judgments, is also mobilized in the actual policy process (Ward, 2017). In particular, in the field of education, it has been argued that technical knowledge should be given more consideration in the policy process because teaching and learning should be adapted to specific and different contexts that cannot be fully captured in scientific and factual knowledge.

Finally, the fourth question explores the mechanisms and strategies for knowledge brokering. While lacking details on specific methods for knowledge brokering, the mechanisms and strategies can be categorized into three broad approaches: "making connections between knowledge stakeholders and actors by establishing and brokering relationships," "disseminating and synthesizing knowledge via online databases, communication strategies and evidence synthesis services," and "facilitating interactive learning and co-production via participatory research projects and action learning sets" (Ward, 2017, p. 485).

This chapter particularly focuses on the third and fourth questions to investigate the current state of global knowledge brokering in education policy. In education, knowledge brokerage has also gained much attention, similar to other domains. However, its role in policymaking differs

from that in other domains. Weber and Yanovitzky (2021) pointed out that "[u]nlike health, where there is a recognized need for knowledge brokers as professionals, knowledge brokerage in education is primarily seen as a mechanism for closing the research–practice gap" (p. 9). Reflecting this understanding, much literature in education has focused on examining how research is used in education policy in meaningful and engaging ways at the district or school level. Research has shown that knowledge brokers can bridge the disconnect between district offices and school principals, establish alliances and partnerships between educators and researchers, and contribute to the capacity-strengthening of research users (e.g., Daly et al., 2014; Huguet et al., 2014; Weber & Yanovitzky, 2021). Furthermore, educators in the field tend to find knowledge using informal networks that are outside traditional channels within schools and districts, and knowledge brokers can help them connect and engage with researchers (Neal et al., 2019). However, these studies have focused on knowledge brokers and their roles at the national, district, or school level.

A more recent body of literature has paid closer attention to knowledge brokering occurring at the global level, which aims to shape national education policy, planning, and implementation. Among many entities, intergovernmental organizations have risen as major global knowledge brokers in education policy, planning, and implementation. Intergovernmental organizations, such as the OECD and the World Bank, have become some of the main knowledge producers and brokers in education policy. Employing various policy instruments, such as international large-scale assessments (e.g., Programme for International Student Assessment), policy reviews, and progress reports, intergovernmental organizations have shaped the global education agenda and influenced the infrastructure, epistemology, and discourse concerning national education policy and practice. Scholars in comparative education policy have demonstrated the role of intergovernmental organizations in controlling and managing the flow of information between countries (Ydesen, 2019; Zapp, 2017) and why and how the policy ideas, knowledge, and practices of one country are borrowed from, exported to, and translated to other countries (see Steiner-Khamsi, 2004 for further discussion).

EMULATIONIST AND UNIVERSALIST APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE BROKERING

To explore the knowledge-brokering strategies adopted by the OECD and the World Bank that shape national education policy, planning, and implementation, we conducted a comparative study focusing on these two global actors. Both organizations broker knowledge in education policy using a spectrum of instruments, with policy reports and studies standing out as crucial tools that facilitate the evaluation of existing policies and the proposition of reforms. Considering their own organizational mandates, culture, and knowledge production paradigms, however, we hypothesized that the OECD and the World Bank would have different approaches to brokering knowledge through their publications.

The study examined the publication series of both organizations, including the OECD's Education Policy Outlook (EPO) from 2015–2019 and Reviews of National Policies for Education (RNPE) from 1998–2020, and the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education (SABER) reports from 2009–2021. The sample comprised 131 reports from the OECD (60 RNPE reports and 71 EPO reports) and 145 reports from the World Bank. The study first investigated the intensity with which specific countries were monitored by these organizations by examining the coverage and the number of reports dedicated to specific countries.

The analysis showed that the World Bank has more expansive report coverage, with a stronger focus on developing countries compared with the OECD. The World Bank issued reports covering 86 countries, whereas the OECD's coverage extended to 56 countries, with an overlap of 19 countries addressed by both organizations. Out of the 195 countries acknowledged by the United Nations (193 member states and 2 permanent observer states), 119 featured in reports by either or both intergovernmental bodies, leaving the educational systems of 70 countries unreviewed. The reports were more likely to address high- or low-income countries compared with middle-income countries. When comparing the coverage between the two intergovernmental organizations, the OECD covered more European countries (67.57 percent), while the World Bank covered more Asian (72.73 percent) and African (93.75 percent) countries. Although these findings align with expectations based on the OECD's membership composition and the World Bank's focus on development, they have significant implications for researchers and policymakers aiming to discern "global" and "international" trends

within the reports of these entities. The report coverage not only signals which countries attract attention but also highlights those neglected. This underscores the critical need for contextual translation and adaptation to local settings when utilizing knowledge disseminated by different intergovernmental organizations.

A closer examination of the countries referenced in the reports revealed a substantial number of references across both organizations. In total, 28,925 references to 167 countries were made, with some countries recurrently mentioned in multiple reports and many referenced only once or only in a few reports (Table 2.1). Interestingly, the OECD, in contrast to the World Bank, exhibited a higher utilization of references, manifesting in a greater average number of references per report and countries referenced per report. These dynamics, in which OECD reports cite more countries, contradict the prior observation that the World Bank covered more countries in its reports than the OECD. These nuances suggest a divergence in the knowledge-brokering strategies of the two organizations, with the World Bank producing reports on a larger number of countries, while the OECD, despite narrower coverage, draws lessons from a more extensive array of exemplars.

While both the OECD and the World Bank appear to engage in and employ lesson-drawing within their country reports, a notable distinction between the two organizations can be observed. The OECD, despite producing reports on a limited number of countries, frequently employs them as exemplars for policy learning in other countries' reports. This observation aligns with our earlier findings, suggesting a tendency for the OECD to utilize other countries as illustrative case studies for policy

Table 2.1   Report coverage and references in the OECD and World Bank reports

IO	No. of countries covered by reports	No. of the countries referenced	Average no. of references per report	Average no. of countries referenced per report
OECD	56	167	292	52.9
World Bank	86	143	37.5	16

Note: Adapted from Seitzer et al. (2023)

recommendations in broader contexts. In contrast, the World Bank, which produces reports on a significantly higher number of countries, exhibits a lower frequency of referencing these countries. This suggests that instead of extracting knowledge for lesson-drawing from other countries, the World Bank relies on its own standards and portfolios. For example, the World Bank's "Learning for All" Report (2011) revealed the use of "systems tools" for ensuring cross-country comparability. These tools, collaboratively developed with global experts and policymakers, allow countries to assess their education systems against SABER benchmarks. The referencing approach employed by the World Bank indicates that it utilizes information about the education systems of various countries to establish benchmarks. However, instead of directly comparing these systems to those of other countries, the assessment is based on their alignment with the characteristics outlined in the SABER tool.

Our analysis also identified "policy darlings," those reports repeatedly referred to in other country reports for lesson-drawing. The United States held the top spot in OECD reports with 2,057 references, followed by England with 906 references and then the United Kingdom with 804 references. Following these, Australia (786), Germany (723), and Finland (713) were most frequently referenced. Similarly, in the World Bank reports, the United States was the most cited (1,217), with Singapore (336), Japan (247), England (238), Korea (235), and China (197) following.[1] The divergence in "policy darlings" between the two intergovernmental organizations echoes their regional affiliations previously presented. Additionally, the difference in the overall number of references may reflect their unique approaches to lesson-drawing. The OECD tends to reference various countries more frequently to illustrate policy recommendations, taking a more emulationist approach, while the World Bank, instead of citing different countries, leans toward referencing its own education portfolio and standards, pursuing a more universalist approach.

THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF KNOWLEDGE USE IN EDUCATION POLICY

A strategic review of global and regional evidence and knowledge initiatives, networks, and platforms in education (Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2024) was conducted to investigate the current landscape of knowledge use in education policy, planning, and implementation. The review was based on a survey completed by 898 policy actors from 103 countries.

Additionally, we conducted group interviews with 33 stakeholders from intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, think tanks, foundations, regional organizations, and others. Among these entities were UNESCO, OECD, World Bank, UNICEF, USAID, Research Triangle Institute, FHI 360, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), education.org, Aga Khan Foundation, Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research, Jacobs Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE), Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA), and The Laboratory for Research and Innovation in Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (SUMMA) Chile. The analysis of the survey responses and group interviews demonstrates the topics and themes that existing knowledge sources have focused on and how knowledge sources are connected to each other. The findings illustrate why and how knowledge brokering is required in education policy, planning, and implementation.

Unequal Focus Given to Educational Topics

The review highlights a notable perception among nearly half of the respondents that the current landscape of policy research and evidence falls short in adequately addressing the various educational targets, themes, and topics encapsulated within Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Conversely, less than a third of the survey participants expressed their satisfaction with existing research and evidence in addressing pertinent educational topics. Upon closer examination, the analysis pointed to an uneven distribution of emphasis across the SDG 4 targets, themes, and topics (Table 2.2). The survey responses suggest that foundational and holistic learning (related to targets 1, 2, and 6) and gender and social inclusion (target 5) receive much more support from existing research and evidence. In contrast, there is a perceived lack of research and evidence in addressing technical, vocational, and higher education (targets 3 and 4), sustainable development and global citizenship (target 7), and means of implementation (targets a, b, and c). These findings are further corroborated by insights from group interviews, which underscore the tendency of intergovernmental organizations, notably the World Bank, to prioritize foundational learning over other targets, themes, and topics. The interviewees explained this prioritization with the common recognition of the significance of foundational learning across diverse regional and national contexts.

Table 2.2   *Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets perceived as well served by research evidence (in order)*

No.	Target
4.1	Universal primary and secondary education
4.5	Gender equality and inclusion
4.2	Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education
4.6	Universal youth literacy
4.c	Teachers
4.7	Education for sustainable development and global citizenship
4.3	Equal access to technical/vocational and higher education
4.a	Learning environments
4.b	Scholarships
4.4	Relevant skills for decent work

However, the educational issues and topics are indeed closely intertwined, and addressing each issue or topic in isolation would result in an unsuccessful policy solution. In this context, the role of knowledge brokers has become more crucial than ever. They can adeptly process and transfer knowledge from one topic to another and establish connections between them, thereby contributing to the formulation of holistic and comprehensive education policy decisions. Furthermore, the uneven focus given to different educational targets, themes, and topics points to the gap in current research evidence in education. Research evidence that addresses intertwined educational issues and topics does exist; however, it may not have been brought to people's attention. Knowledge brokers could bring meaningful change by synthesizing knowledge from diverse sources and building new links or uncovering hidden connections between educational issues and topics that may appear unrelated at first sight.

Extensive, yet Disconnected, Knowledge Sources

The survey participants not only shared their insights but also provided a comprehensive list of knowledge sources that they were familiar with and frequently utilized. A staggering total of 654 distinct knowledge sources were identified by the respondents, demonstrating remarkable

breadth and diversity. In particular, over half of the identified sources were classified as national (constituting 58.87 percent), exceeding the representation of international and regional sources. This prevalence of national sources challenges the common assumption that the majority of research and evidence is generated and used primarily at the global level.

Overall, the interview participants agreed on the abundance of available research and evidence sources. They emphasized that a shortage of knowledge sources is not the main obstacle to the utilization of knowledge in education policy, planning, and implementation. This understanding is particularly interesting in light of the respondents' perception, discussed in the preceding section, that certain educational targets, themes, and topics have received insufficient attention in existing research and evidence.

Furthermore, the network of knowledge sources offers helpful insights into which sources have greater influence and which connections could be further brokered. Figure 2.1 visualizes the two-mode network of knowledge sources identified by the respondents as frequently used. Black nodes represent international knowledge sources, light gray indicates regional ones, and dark gray designates national ones. The node size indicates the extent to which each node is identified as a frequently used knowledge source. One of the most notable observations that can be
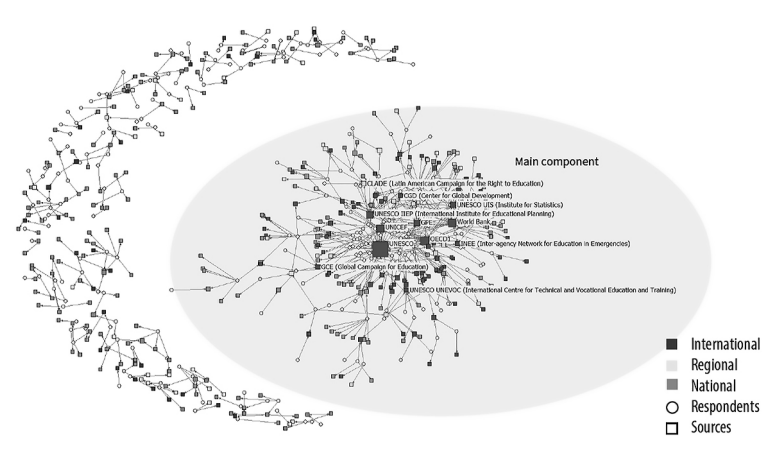
Source: Steiner-Khamsi et al. (2024, p. 23). Available under CC BY SA 3.0 IGO.

Figure 2.1   Network of knowledge sources in education policy

made instantly from the figure is that the knowledge sources are rather loosely connected. This characteristic of a loosely connected network is further substantiated by a network density of 0.006 as well as the component analysis, which identifies a distinct group of nodes existing in isolation from other clusters. The network comprises 121 components, and apart from the primary component positioned in the center, the peripheral area encompasses an impressive count of 120 distinct components, emphasizing the loosely connected nature of the nodes in this network.

Because international knowledge sources, such as UNESCO, the OECD, the World Bank, and UNICEF, serve as shared sources for respondents globally, it is understandable that they appear as the most central nodes in the network. Consequently, these international sources naturally garner repeated mentions. UNESCO stands out as the most central source, underscoring its visibility and widespread recognition in education. The presence of three out of the seven UNESCO institutes and centers (International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Institute for Statistics (UIS), and International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC)) individually listed as the most central sources further solidifies UNESCO's profound influence within the network of knowledge sources for education policy, planning, and implementation. Essentially, the analysis unveils a well-established interconnection between international and regional sources, firmly positioning them at the core of the network's main component. However, local and national sources are detached from this central nexus and relegated to the periphery of the network. This distinctive configuration highlights a notable discrepancy in the connectivity of global education policy knowledge sources.

In addressing the prevailing presence of international sources and the evident disconnect between global and local sources within the knowledge source network, nearly all respondents highlighted the increasing importance and imperative need for knowledge brokers. These intermediaries could play a pivotal role in facilitating contextual translation between the global and local spheres, as well as fostering a closer connection between research and policy. An effective strategy for such knowledge brokers could involve capturing the disconnected national sources in the peripheral area and connecting them with the international and regional nodes positioned in the main component. This integrative approach can significantly augment knowledge exchange across global, regional, and local levels.

Moreover, it is crucial to underscore the importance of the bidirectional nature of this knowledge-exchange process. While greater attention has been paid to the translation of knowledge from the global to the local level, the interviewees stressed the equal importance of translating research and evidence originating at the local level into the global arena. The survey responses highlighted the importance of national relevance and participation in promoting the use of knowledge sources in education policy. The participants particularly stressed the need to bridge the gap between demand and supply, as well as policy design and implementation. This emphasis calls for a more balanced and reciprocal approach to knowledge brokering, ensuring a dynamic and mutually enriching exchange of knowledge across different clusters of the knowledge network.

FUTURE OF KNOWLEDGE BROKERING IN EDUCATION

Since the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, governments in the Global South have been under international pressure to use research and data for their educational development. It has been argued that research and data help national actors in education systems diagnose the most pressing problems and issues, develop effective and inclusive solutions, assess the effects of educational policies and programs, and facilitate evidence-based decision-making. Accordingly, continuous efforts have been made at the global level to improve educational data systems. For example, SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action emphasize the need for reliable and disaggregated data and monitoring progress to enhance education systems, and the UNESCO UIS has been assigned the role of establishing and monitoring global standards for reporting on cross-country education data. In addition, the donor working group of Building Evidence in Education (BE2) and the promotion of the use of research evidence as part of the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism are the most visible signposts of evidence-based education policy and planning. Finally, in the past few decades, many international organizations, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the World Bank, have continuously supported initiatives to develop and improve education management information systems (GPE, 2019; World Bank, 2013).

Nevertheless, the use of education data systems at the national level remains comparably limited. The challenge is the surplus of data that

fail to consider unique local contexts and needs. At the global level, most existing education data are generated and standardized for cross-country comparison and global organizations' accountability, reporting, and monitoring purposes (Center for Global Development, 2021; Delprato & Shephard, 2024). In contrast, little data are available for national educational planning and implementation. Furthermore, the standardized data do not correspond to the specific challenges of each national education system. International organizations continue to produce many indicators, expecting local experts to contextualize them for application, which is difficult when the data do not reflect education priorities or engage with diverse education stakeholders (e.g., government officers, civil society, school leaders, teachers, students, and parents). Although steadfast efforts have been made to develop innovative "public goods" to address data challenges at the local level, they often respond to the needs and strategic priorities of the international community and have to satisfy the quality standards of funders, not users. In addition, innovative methodologies, interventions, and toolkits tend to be too complicated and unsustainable. Highly sophisticated interventions and technologies are developed and tested for the duration of an external project. Before they are contextualized and implemented on a larger scale, the project often ends, and education stakeholders are left with complicated innovations that are difficult to use at their maximum potential. Karen Mundy, former Director of UNESCO IIEP and Chief Technical Officer at GPE, contended that the use of evidence and data promoted at the global level often neglects the voices of local communities (Mundy, 2021). Furthermore, the international community forms alliances mainly with each other instead of pursuing "the slower, harder work of supporting authentic national and regional coalitions for change" (Mundy, 2021).

The findings from the strategic review (Steiner-Khamsi et al., 2024) reaffirm these patterns in knowledge brokering. The sheer number and diversity of knowledge sources identified by the respondents confirm that the quantity of knowledge is not the primary issue when it comes to the lack of evidence used in national education policy, planning, and implementation. The larger concern is whether this knowledge addresses relevant and important topics in education at the national level and whether it is accessible to local stakeholders. The review reveals that many global knowledge brokers unevenly allocate their attention to SDG 4 targets, themes, and topics. Furthermore, many of them are not well connected to local actors and organizations. Most international and a few regional organizations, platforms, networks, and initiatives are clustered in the

center, while many national ones remain dispersed in the peripheral area. The review, therefore, highlights the urgent need for increased efforts to generate knowledge on a broader range of targets, themes, and topics. Many actors and organizations have already been producing knowledge in these areas, albeit with limited utilization at the national level. This underscores the need to generate locally relevant and produced knowledge and to build relationships between knowledge producers and users. Knowledge brokers can play a pivotal role in designing, promoting, and facilitating the exchange of information between knowledge sources.

The study on the two international organizations' knowledge-brokering strategies offers concrete examples of how the OECD and the World Bank not only engage in knowledge production but also function as knowledge brokers with the intent to bridge the gap between research and policy. In alignment with the findings from the strategic review that showed disparities in and the disconnection between knowledge sources, the study demonstrates that global knowledge brokers have preferences for a particular group of countries or regions. For example, the OECD predominantly reports on educational reforms in high-GDP European countries, whereas the World Bank almost exclusively focuses on reforms in low-GDP African countries. Furthermore, there are significant differences in the OECD's and the World Bank's technical approaches to producing evidence and brokering knowledge. These differences are rooted in their unique characteristics and orientations. The World Bank sees itself as a transnational actor, resulting in highly decontextualized knowledge production and brokering that transcends national contexts. In contrast, the OECD functions as an "inter-national" organization that facilitates policy learning and peer exchange across national policy experts. Put simply, while the OECD promotes an emulationist approach, the World Bank employs a universalist approach to lesson-drawing.

Furthermore, the different knowledge-brokering approaches could be explained by each organization's different policy instrument constituencies, which refer to "networks of heterogenous actors" involved in the design, promotion, and implementation of a policy instrument (Béland & Howlett, 2016; Voß & Simons, 2014). The concept of instrument constituencies was introduced by Voß (2007) and further developed by Voß and Simons (2014). Simons and Voß (2018) wrote that "the concept of instrument constituencies accounts for the fact that any knowledge about specific modes of governing is made and actualized by specific actors in concrete practices" (p. 14). The OECD tends to rely on national experts

to collect and analyze information on local education systems, while the World Bank works closely with development economists within the bank to find a generalizable solution across educational contexts. Their knowledge-brokering approaches—the OECD's emulationist approach and the World Bank's universalist approach—are thus shaped by these different constituencies and vice versa.

Based on the current landscape of knowledge brokering in education illustrated by the two studies, a few implications regarding the future of global knowledge brokering emerge. To promote meaningful, effective, and equitable knowledge (more specifically, evidence) use for national education policy, planning, and implementation, it is important for knowledge brokers to address the gap between educational topics and between knowledge producers and users, as well as that between the global and the local. This requires a paradigm shift in knowledge brokering; beyond simply disseminating information, knowledge brokering could orchestrate the co-production of knowledge and foster dynamic partnerships between knowledge producers, users, and brokers. This calls for the establishment of collaborative spaces where diverse stakeholders can gather, exchange ideas, and co-create solutions that are contextually relevant and locally meaningful. Knowledge brokering is not a unidirectional transfer of information from research to practice or from the Global North to the Global South; instead, it is a multidimensional and participatory process.

Furthermore, the current landscape highlights the importance of paying attention to how and by whom knowledge is created and facilitated. Considering how the content of knowledge is influenced by who the producers are, the original sources of knowledge deserve careful and critical scrutiny. In addition, because which bodies of knowledge are amplified by knowledge brokers is shaped by organizational attributes, as demonstrated in the first study (Seitzer et al., 2023), the attributes of the brokers, such as their missions, structures, and constituencies, have become critical and decisive factors to be considered for engagement. On the side of knowledge brokers, being transparent about their objectives, affiliations, and interests is crucial to enable knowledge users to critically assess the information they receive. Future studies that examine what kinds of accountability mechanisms knowledge brokers have implemented to adhere to their brokering purposes and ethical standards would be beneficial for promoting informed and critical knowledge use.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

NOTE

1. Although not evident in the analysis of "policy darlings," a more detailed examination of referenced countries also indicates a distinct preference within the OECD for citing higher-income nations and within the World Bank for citing lower-middle- and low-income countries (see Seitzer et al., 2023, for further details).

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