

Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice: Report Advocates Privatizing Schools Overseas, but Without Convincing Evidence

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Key Takeaway: Little support is provided for claims in ideologically biased report.

EAST LANSING, MI (October 31, 2019) – A new report, *Beyond the Mirage: How Pragmatic Stewardship Could Transform Learning Outcomes in International Education Systems*, prescribes a shift in the leadership role of education ministers – from providers and guarantors of education to pragmatic stewards of education systems.

Frank Adamson, of California State University, Sacramento, [reviewed](#) the report and found that its use of questionable evidence and possible conflicts of interest were enough to “render the report’s recommendations unsubstantiated.” While the report appears to have strong funding behind it, no information is available about the publisher or organization producing the publication.

Focusing on the organization of education sectors in the Global South, the report contends that this shift from “provider” to “steward” will address the need for higher *quality* education, rather than simply providing *access* to education. The

“pragmatic stewardship” advocated in the report involves strategies that increasingly incorporate private actors. Accordingly, the report draws on four case studies of different types of private-sector involvement in education as examples of a recommended broader shift by education ministers.

Professor Adamson argues that all four cases contain limitations – some discussed, others not – that undermine their suitability as successful examples of divesting public education systems of their primary role as guarantors and providers of education.

Moreover, while the report claims to be “non-ideological” and “beyond the mirage” of the education privatization debate, the funders of the report have a material stake in a main program cited as evidence, raising concerns about conflicts of interest. For these reasons, Professor Adamson concludes that education ministers should “take the suggestions in this report with a grain of salt.”

Find the review, by Frank Adamson, at:

<https://www.greatlakescenter.org/>

Find *Beyond the Mirage: How Pragmatic Stewardship Could Transform Learning Outcomes in International Education Systems*, written by Katelyn Donnelly, Arvind Nagarajan, and Ross Lescano Lipstein, at:

<https://www.seeingbeyondthemirage.com>

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