



No matter our differences, we all want better opportunities for our students.

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CALL TO ACTION

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INSPIRATION COMES FROM ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE

I recently participated in a gathering of the Global Education Leaders Partnership in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This international network of education system leaders, institutions, and capacity-building organizations is focused on transforming education to prepare every learner to thrive in the 21st century. During the meeting, we looked beyond schools and districts as the centers of learning to consider what it would mean to create educational ecosystems that situate learning responsibilities across communities, regions, and countries.

Participants shared examples from Catalonia, England, Finland, Colombia, Peru, and the United States. The ideas ranged widely, but they all had big goals. The leaders who shared these innovations made clear that it will take more time and work to achieve their full vision, but it was impressive to hear what they have already accomplished.

As I listened and reflected, it didn't take long for my mind to focus on the professional learning implications of expanding educational ecosystems. For example, with the DigiOne platform in Finland, learning providers from across the country are contributing curricula, instructional materials, and other learning resources that can be used by traditional educators as well as others interested in creating innovative learning environments for students.

As Learning Forward has articulated in the Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction standard of the Standards for Professional Learning, access to vetted, high-quality instructional materials and resources is critical, and so is job-embedded professional learning to use those materials. A platform like DigiOne can create that kind of access at a broad scale so educators throughout the country can create learning environments that benefit students.

In Columbia, the TAAP Workshop for Art and Peacebuilding is an ecosystem approach targeting the problem of local and regional violence, which impacts young people's educational and life outcomes. Young people served by this ecosystem had a history of being recruited into armed groups, organized crime, and other serious illegal activities. Educators and community members often lacked the tools and resources to support their students' learning and well-being amidst this chaos. TAAP is a multifaceted initiative to change the situation by supporting both children and adults — for example, by developing skills and strategies to address conflict.

TAAP facilitates professional learning for teachers and other members of the ecosystem to empower them to be change makers and peace builders. Leaders described learning how to talk with both gang and community leaders to work toward a better future. I thought about their courage in the context of the Equity Drivers standard. That standard pushes us to move beyond our own lived experiences, assumptions, and biases to engage meaningfully with diverse stakeholders who have different perspectives. TAAP leaders are doing just that, and it takes enormous commitment to learning and for all the adults involved to put aside their differences to achieve their vision.

As I listened to individuals from across the globe reflect on these and other examples, I was struck by how similar educational challenges and dreams are around the world. No matter our differences, we all want better opportunities for our students.

As you read this issue of *The Learning Professional*, I encourage you to look beyond the ways the initiatives' contexts are different from your own. A village in Colombia or the nation of Finland may seem very different from your setting, but their work offers lessons for us all. I invite you to use the Standards for Professional Learning to organize your thoughts about the connections. I know that many of the authors in this issue are eager to hear from you and learn together. I encourage you to reach out, ask questions, and deepen your understanding. ■