

Side event

Side-event on 'Regional partnership in support of ED2030 and CESA 2016-2025'
March 14, 2017

Report

Panellists

- Ms Victoria ABIOSEH EGBETAYO, Partnership & Advocacy Specialist, Southern Partnerships and External Relations, Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
- Mr Gwang-Chol CHANG, Chair, Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 for West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA)
- Dr Ida JALLOW-SALLAH, Executive Secretary, The Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA)
- Mr Makha NDAO, Coordinator for the ADEA Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
- Ms Beatrice NJENGA, Head of Human Resources, Science and Technology Department, African Union Commission (AUC)

Moderator

Mr Etienne PORGO, Lead Education Officer/AHHD, African Development Bank Group (AfDB)

Background

Taking advantage of the presence in Dakar of influential regional organizations on the occasion of the ADEA 2017 Triennale, the RCG4-WCA organized a joint side event on "Regional partnership in support of ED2030 and CESA 2016-2025". The goal of the meeting was to provide a platform to exchange on building/creating effective partnership and regional collaboration for support to countries in the contextualization and implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 and the CESA16-25. High-level representatives of the African Development Bank, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the African Union, the Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA) and the RCG4-WCA were seating on the panel to exchange views on the challenges related to the establishment of such mechanisms.

While national governments have the primary responsibility for implementation, follow-up and review of the global and regional/continental education agendas, regional and sub-regional collective efforts are also important. They contribute to addressing common challenges and promoting sharing of knowledge, effective policies and practices within and across regions. In recognition of these issues, the Education 2030 Framework for Action emphasizes the need to build on existing partnerships, frameworks and effective and efficient mechanisms. It also encourages to forge new partnerships to ensure strong regional collaboration, cooperation, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the education agenda. The African Union, in its Agenda 2063 and its Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025, calls upon for the international community to uphold Africa's vision and aspirations and to align their partnerships appropriately.

Results

The panel discussion allowed highlighting the convergence and strong links existing between the Strategic Objectives of the CESA and the SDG4 targets, as well as reaching a common understanding of the education coordination mechanisms put in place in Sub-Saharan Africa. Based on these reflections, the panelists identified opportunities provided by the two agendas to improve coordination and collaboration between various regional and international organizations in support of the development of education in the countries.

The African Union and the United Nations shall take advantage of the complementarity and common vision of the CESA and SDG4-Education 2030 to work together towards their implementation. All the more so since both agendas explicitly underline the need to strengthen partnerships:

- The 12th Strategic Objective of the CESA is to “Set up a coalition of all education stakeholders to facilitate and support initiatives arising from the implementation of CESA 16-25”
- The Education 2030 Framework for Action states that “To achieve SDG4 on education and the education targets included under other SDGs, it will be necessary to mobilize national, regional and global efforts that are aimed at achieving effective and inclusive partnerships”

It was pointed out in this regard that the contextualisation of SDG4-Education 2030 should focus on the elements highlighted in the CESA, in particular innovation and culture, in order to successfully support the development of education in Africa.

Recommendations

It came out of the exchanges that regional coordination is essential in strengthening the support to the development of national education systems and ensuring coherence with the dialogue taking place at global level. Moreover, working in synergies allows for a more efficient use of resources. To do so, the panellists issued a number of recommendations based on the different challenges identified:

1. National, regional and continental coordination based on existing structures

- Strengthening **coordination at country level** as well as South-South partnerships, in particular by calling upon for the AU member States to coordinate (through the Chair of the AU at the next AU Summit)
- Promoting the **participation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs)**, which should continue to exercise an oversight function
- Using the **structures of the African Union Commission as well as other existing African structures and organizations** (AUC, NEPAD, AfDB, ADEA) as entry points and coordination frameworks and developing a **mapping of existing coordination mechanisms and partnerships** at the continental level
- Improving the **communication and experience sharing** in order to avoid duplication and dispersion of efforts and to foster complementarity. Strengthening the knowledge on ongoing interventions in the countries helps the partners to carry out integrated and concerted actions instead of competing and independent programmes

2. Ownership of the agendas

- Improving ownership of the education agendas by Member States and other stakeholders, which has proved relatively limited so far. For this to happen, it will be important to further publicize and promote these agendas and to strengthen in particular the domestication efforts of the CESA which is, in some countries, much less known than SDG4.

3. Inclusive participation and transparency at all levels

- Foster an inclusive dialogue and active involvement of the private sector, civil society, as well as teachers and teacher unions from the national to the regional level
- Increasing consultation with regional organizations to inform decision making at the international level
- Making information on high level commitments and decisions filter down to the lowest levels of organisations, and even to communities, in order to create a critical mass of individuals working towards a common goal

4. Availability of reliable and harmonized data

- Ensuring the development of systems, standards and tools to be used by all actors on the continent (e.g. Information and management systems)
- Harmonizing the methods and approaches of the actors in terms of data collection in order to ensure the availability of reliable and comparable data
- Prioritizing and funding research based on reliable data in order to allow for evidence based decision-making

Finally, the panellists call upon all education actors to act as one single community putting their efforts together in favour of people and countries regardless of their institutional affiliation.

Conclusion and next steps

This activity was an occasion to initiate dialogue on efficient coordination for the implementation of the two agendas in Africa and to pave the way to new synergies. It is planned to pursue and deepen the exchanges among the stakeholders, in particular to strengthen the links between Education 2030 and the CESA, through the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4 and beyond.

The RCG4-WCA plenary meeting of 6 April 2017 will allow sharing and discussing the conclusions of this event and defining future joint activities.