Report
Meeting of the RCG4-WCA Steering Team
Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa

Reported by the Secretariat (UNESCO Dakar)

Date: 21 March 2019
Time: 15h00-16h30
Location: UNESCO Dakar
Modality: In-person and remote via Skype

Participants

Houraye Mamadou Anne (FAWE), Charlotte Berquin (UNHCR), Catherine Collin (Secretariat), Kodjovi Edeh (Educo, on Skype), Chelsea Lavallee (Secretariat), Ludovic Levasseur (CONFEMEN), Olivier Pieume (UNESCO Dakar, representing the RCG4- WCA Chair), Nicolas Reuge (UNICEF), Mamadou Sarr (CAMES), Rosa Silva (ANCEFA) and Akouvi Vossah (Secretariat).

Meeting Objectives

The meeting aimed to welcome new Steering team members, exchange experience between new and old members, define Steering team objectives and prepare for the Plenary meeting on April 2, 2019.

Presentation on the Steering Team Proposition

The Secretariat presented the Steering Team Proposition, which was validated during the plenary retreat in December 2018. The finalized document will be reported to the plenary group and integrated into the RCG4-WCA terms of reference (TOR).

Steering Team members

There are seven seats for each constituency within the RCG4-WCA. Members were consulted and have now decided on their representative for the next 2 year mandate. Regarding the UN seat, UNICEF's representative needs approval from management but is in principle OK to co-lead with the UNHCR, who agreed.[1]

The African Union (AU) and ADEA were designated to share one seat in order to have a political representative of the AU, ideally the AU would become co-chair of the Steering team. The AU has agreed in principal to be a permanent member but cannot commit to co-chairing due to its limited capacity. Therefore the group asked ADEA, which implements education activities for the AU, to become a representative on the Steering team. ADEA has a new Executive Secretary and both organizations are in transition phases and have not established an agreement between themselves. ADEA and the AU should formalize an agreement regarding the Steering team and their involvement in the task teams. In relation to the studies on education in Africa, it appears that discussions have taken place between

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[1] UNICEF confirmed on March 26, 2019 that they will remain on the Steering team in partnership with the UNHCR.

UIS, the AU and UNESCO regarding the continental report, but ADEA is not involved. GC will provide more information during the Plenary.

Principle responsibilities of the Steering Team
The Secretariat presented the principle responsibilities of the Steering team based on an analysis of each Steering team meeting report. Members decided to make the following additions: (1) add "technical advising" and (2) add the "continental" level to the list of coordination processes.

Working modalities
The list of modalities was accepted with the following changes:
- Specify that there is only one vote in the case that a seat is filled by co-leads;
- Specify the acceptable work code: an acceptable timeline for providing feedback is one week for administrative documents and longer for technical documents.
- The team should not only react to, but also "produce," documents.

Regarding the geographic scope of the group, it is currently limited to West and Central Africa. A continental coordination mechanism was meant to be established at the Pan-African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE) though this was not sufficiently addressed there. The group decided in 2017 to wait for the establishment of a formal coordination mechanism to develop in East and Southern Africa before working on a continental mechanism. Currently, high level discussions are ongoing between UNESCO and the AU on this subject. FAWE encouraged UNESCO to formalize an agreement with the AU before the Director's retirement, as the interim could last a long time.

Exchange between New and Old Steering Team Members
UNICEF would like to establish a clear link between the task teams and the Steering team. In addition, the modalities of intervention at the country level should be determined and coordinated with national offices. If the group's role is to ensure that the countries of the region commit themselves to the SDG4 path, this should be done in the review processes and not be imposed outside these periods. FAWE mentioned the National education system planning table developed by SYSTeam, which can help the group to carry out interventions in national planning and review processes. UNICEF is in favour of sharing missions and seeing how to conduct joint missions to countries.

UNICEF questioned the group's reaction and next steps after PACE. The group should follow up on the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration by the AU Special Technical Committee (STC): if it has not already been adopted it should be on the next STC agenda.

FAWE would have liked to focus more on strategy and to create strong proposals as a team, which takes time. The platform should be used as a tool for exchange and to gather opinions and suggestions from other members to develop a RCG4 identity. UNICEF added that to do so, we must engage our own colleagues and institutions behind the group.

Presentation and Review of the Plenary Group Agenda
The Chair announced the agenda items. Not all task teams are active, including TVET and Early Childhood. UNICEF will put the Secretariat in touch with the new Early Childhood

Development Officer who arrived in January. For TVET, FAWE could follow up with the AfDB to see if it can confirm its willingness to lead the team.

2018 Activities Report Recommendations
The Report was prepared using questionnaires submitted by the task teams, as well as meeting reports. The Secretariat gave a brief presentation on the 2018 Activities Report, focusing on the recommendations that will be shared with members for comments.

Coordination with CESA -
Regarding the link with CESA, the functional CESA clusters should be identified so the group can see how to support those who are not functioning. SYSTeam, LTLT and GENIE had initial exchanges with their corresponding clusters, but until now there has been no follow-up. The Early Childhood cluster will have a meeting on 25 and 26 March in Mauritius, so it is active.

Collaboration with LEGs -
Regarding the group's involvement at the national level, the current strategy is to outreach to Local Education Groups (LEGs). A brochure was already shared for comments from members and a letter will be presented to members on April 2 for final comments. Together, they will be sent to the 24 countries on April 16. The idea is to see what the LEGs' responses are and to then discuss the next steps. The GPE could be consulted to help relay the RCG4 materials to the LEGs, and other RCG4 voices in LEGs should be identified and leveraged, including the lead partners/coordinating agencies that provide communications.

In addition to a list of the group's benefits and accomplishments, the group and the task teams' advantages should be conveyed in the letter to LEGs, for example, the brochure should highlight that technical gender expertise could be provided by GENIE. UNICEF added that the desired link with coordination at the national level should be made explicit.

UNICEF's 2019-2030 Education Strategy
At the global level, UNICEF is developing its education strategy and is conducting as much consultation with partners as possible. UNICEF would like to involve members in a consultation process at the regional level. UNICEF will send the relevant documents by email and present the strategy at the plenary meeting. Consultations will follow until April 10th.

Conclusion and Next Steps
- The Secretariat will write the report and send to the Steering team for review.
- The Secretariat will update the objectives, modalities and responsibilities within the Steering team proposition.
- The Secretariat will update the plenary agenda and share the relevant documents with members, including the 2018 Activities Report.
- The Secretariat will share the letter to the AfDB with FAWE.
- UNICEF will introduce the ECD Officer to the group
- The Secretariat and UNICEF will organize the presentation at the Plenary meeting on UNICEF's Education Strategy 2019-30 and will share the relevant documents in advance.