



Report

Third Consultation Meeting of the West and Central Africa Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030

Location: Hotel Ngor Diarama, Dakar

Date: 15 September 2016

Time: 15:00 – 17:00

Background

The West and Central Africa Regional Coordination Group on SDG-4 Education 2030 (WCA-RCG4) was established on the 19 May 2016, bringing together the regional representations of the World Education Forum 2015 co-convening agencies and other multilateral and civil society organizations active in educational development in West and Central African countries. The group was established as a regional platform for dialogue, exchange of good practices, communication and advocacy, and may also design and implement joint regional projects for technical backstopping, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization for support to national education development.

Meeting objectives

This third meeting, following the regional launch of the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report, was intended to include discussions and decisions on the composition of the Steering Team, suggested topics for task teams as well as the work plan for 2016-2017.

Participants

In attendance at this meeting were representatives from a number of the regional representations of the UN as well as multilateral organizations and civil society such as Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur (CAMES), Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et gouvernements de la francophonie (CONFEMEN), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Handicap International, IIEP-Pôle de Dakar, Réseau pour l'excellence de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique de l'Ouest (REESAO), Save the Children, UNESCO-Dakar, UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and World Bank.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) attended the meeting via Skype.

Introduction

The third meeting of the coordination group began with brief presentations of the participants in attendance, followed by a presentation of the agenda.

Group members' activities in line with the WCA-RCG4 key functions

Attendees were then invited to present, for less than two minutes, their organization's activities in line with the key functions of the group since the last meeting of the WCA-RCG4 on 16 June 2016.

Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

- GPE have a monthly 'southern partners' update: an advocacy and communication newsletter sent to their partners in developing countries (Ministries of Education and CSO national and regional coalitions). This includes 20 countries in West and Central Africa. These partners have been informed of the establishment of WCA-RCG4, and updates on RCG4's activities and discussions will be included in forthcoming GPE newsletters.
- GPE hosted a webinar on SDG4, involving UIS and IIEP-Pôle de Dakar, with more than 120 participants around the world. It included presentations from representatives in Uganda, Dakar, Nepal, Paris and Montreal, and was found to be very useful. The Methodology of National Education Accounts was also published in September.
- Representatives from GPE also attended a regional consultation meeting with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), held in Nairobi and concerning the East African context. A GPE paper on early childhood education was submitted and later approved for submission to the ADEA Triennial in March 2017.
- In June 2016, the GPE Board of Directors approved their gender equality policy and strategy through to 2020, containing activities they consider critical for achieving SDG4. This includes an action plan for the 2017 financial year, with a range of activities which will be elaborated in due course. As an action point, GPE will share this strategy with UNESCO-Dakar, to be disseminated to the group.
- GPE has formally joined the Asian coordination group on Education 2030, which they believe offers a significant opportunity for coordination between UNESCO-Bangkok and the Dakar office, and one which they are keen to explore.

UNICEF

- UNICEF's programming is aligned with the 2014-2017 strategic plan; a regional strategy that is currently being revised focuses 5 themes in view of strengthening systems: Out-of-school children, Quality, Girls' primary and secondary education, early learnings and education in emergency situations
- UNICEF Regional Office is supporting national offices in West and Central Africa in revising their multiyear programmes. These strategic reflections/reviews are key to ensure full consideration of SDG4 targets.

UNHCR

- The Regional Representation of UNHCR in West Africa supports nine countries (Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal, Sierra Leone). The Regional Representative is also the Refugee Coordinator for the Nigeria crisis, affecting Chad, Cameroun

and Niger. The Regional Representation supports countries to ensure education provision for refugee learners in a sustainable manner, the preferred approach is the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems of the host countries.

- With regard to sustainability, UNHCR acknowledges the power and importance of partnership. The Regional Representation has been encouraging its country offices to engage more with the country-level education coordination mechanisms. Partnership for planning is particularly important and UNHCR will rely on partnerships with educational organizations to ensure refugee learners are accounted for in national education plans in line with the SDG4 agenda. Ensuring refugee children and youth have access to national education systems and certification is particularly important to help increase their self-reliance over time and to be able to have the same or similar access to lifelong learning and employment opportunities. UNHCR responses to forced displacements, from emergency to protracted crisis, particularly for education provision it requires the collaboration with government and development educational experts.

ADEA

- ADEA's focus since the previous meeting has been on supporting, motivating and developing the expertise of teachers through training and other activities.
- In line with this, ADEA has helped established the Inter-Country Quality Node (ICQN) on Teaching and LO and is coordinating the Network of African Learning Assessment (NALA). The ICQN will focus on addressing issues of teacher recruitment, training, deployment, evaluation and continuous professional development while NALA will experiment with new approaches to learning assessment in the 15 member countries (e.g. by testing common indicators for assessment).
- ADEA is conducting a pilot experiment on learning assessment in four countries (Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Zambia). It was suggested that this topic could be suitable for the task teams.

Handicap International

- Handicap International's focus is on disabled children and their access to quality education, in particular at the level of primary education. This involves advocating for their inclusion in educational policies, training and monitoring of teachers, coaching of children and their families and raising awareness of questions related to disability and educational access issues in the wider community.
- In line with these objectives, since 2015, Handicap International have implemented a regional project in 9 countries in West Africa to monitor the progress of inclusive education for disabled children. In the framework of this project, data collection on school performance, the school environment and appropriate pedagogical practices took place. The regional results of this data collection will be available by the end of 2016.

FAWE

- FAWE's focus since the previous meeting has on girls' access to and participation in education, as well as their performance.
- FAWE coordinates sub theme 1 of the ADEA Triennale. Related to this, they have organized a consultation on West Africa and are currently in the process of distributing the results. The importance of research for achieving SDG4 was reiterated.
- They also informed the group of their work with the campaign to end early marriage, Girls Not Brides, and their ongoing work on school-based violence, and the fact that they are in the process of creating an advocacy group against gender-based violence.

UNFPA

- UNFPA's focus is on universal access to sexual and reproductive health services for young people.
- They are also involved in – and have recently received a grant for – regional advocacy work relating to sexual education and gender parity in education, which aims at promoting acceptance in communities. The representative from UNFPA stressed the importance of working with schools on this issue, and particularly the need to include these topics in the curriculum.
- Another related activity also involves advocacy which targets governments, stressing the importance of focusing on counteracting school drop-out (including as a consequence of pregnancy).
- At the country level, UNFPA collaborate with governments to include sexual education in the education system, as well as contributing to the establishment of school health clinics.
- Outside the school, UNFPA also works on promoting intergenerational dialogue.

CONFEMEN

- CONFEMEN has decided to contribute to SDG4 implementation. An ad-hoc committee including national representatives within member Ministries was established to this end and initiated a reflection on the targets. CONFEMEN produced a reflection document on the consequences of the targets of SDG4.
- An observation body on the quality of education has been established. The first meeting of the 8 countries selected for the pilot phase will be organized in 2017.
- Their focus is on improving the quality of education and counteracting the causes of early school leaving and failure.

ANCEFA

- The information on the establishment of the WG04-WCA was shared with the members of the ANCEFA board and staff.
- The presentations and documents of the workshop organized by UNESCO on 27 and 28 July in Dakar have been shared with the program staff and national coalitions.
- ANCEFA collected information from coalitions on the status of planning and rolling out of SDG4 at the national level.
- ANCEFA participated in the meetings of the Collective Consultation of the NGO on EFA Coordination Group (CCNGO Coordination Group) and the steering committee held in May to discuss among other things the implementation of SDG4 and Education 2030, prepare the next meeting of the CCNGO and discuss the new role of the CCNGO in light of SDG4-Education 2030; the meeting was held in May, but the report was available in June and shared with national coalitions for information and consultation.
- ANCEFA nominated its Board chair to be part of regional facilitators of Action for Sustainable Development (Action4SD), a global platform of civil society that aims to raise public awareness, build a common understanding, hold governments accountable and share knowledge for the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- ANCEFA participated on 5 September in Nairobi in the Preview of the new report of the Global Campaign for Education on the privatization of education – 'Private profit, Public loss' – to draw public attention on the fact that the push for low-fee private schools is throwing quality education off-track. The event was held prior to a series of meetings in Nairobi, including the East Africa Regional Consultation on the Privatization of Education and Human Rights with the participation of the UN Rapporteur on the Right to Education Ms. Koumba Boly Barry (from 6 to 7 September 2016), and the Global Consultation on Privatisation in Education from 7 to 10 September.

- ANCEFA has positioned itself to be part of the Cluster on Girls and Women Education for the implementation of the Continental Education Strategy of Africa (CESA 16-25). It is convinced that SDG4 and SDG5 are interlinked and one cannot be achieved without the other.

UIS

- UIS informed the group that the next technical coordination group meeting is planned for the end of October.
- UIS are restarting their annual statistical publication, SDG Digest. The first will be on 'Laying the foundations for measurement'.
- The report on SSA countries' readiness for SDG4 will be published shortly.

Follow-up discussion

- The representative from UNESCO's Section for Partnerships, Cooperation and Research praised the varied composition of WCA-RCG4 and its dynamism, and the fact that it reflects both international and regional organizations. He announced that regional consultations will be organized in the Europe and North America Region in October 2016 and in Bangkok in November 2016. He remarked that it is similar to initiatives in the Asia-Pacific and Arab region. He informed that the Steering Committee at the global level will meet in December and that a new version of the Framework for Action was released.
- It was informed that the three representative of Africa at the global Steering Committee (ADEA, Benin and Zambia) were invited to be part of the WCA-RCG4. Only ADEA has joined the group.

Discussion on composition of the plenary group and Steering Team

New members

A list of proposed new members of WCA-RCG4 was distributed by UNESCO-Dakar, based on suggestions from current members following the second meeting. This included suggestions for private sector organizations and foundations, as well as regional organizations representing Ministries of Finance and Economic Development. It was agreed that the current members will provide their approval or comment on the inclusion of the proposed new members by means of the document distributed.

Steering Team composition

In addition to UNESCO, the following six members expressed their interest in being part of the Steering Team: UNICEF, ERNWACA, ANCEFA, FAWE, CAMES and CONFEMEN. According to the terms of reference, the Steering Team will consist of five members; i.e. the UNESCO coordinator and four representatives of member organizations (e.g. a UN organization, a civil society organization, or a regional multilateral organization). ERNWACA was not represented at the meeting.

CODESRIA's concern was that the list contained a majority of Francophone organizations and is not representative. ADEA and CODESRIA, who were not present at the previous two meetings, recommended that the WCA-RCG4 be made yet more inclusive.

It was asked if it would be possible for the organizations not present at the first or second consultations to be included in the Steering Team. Members were reminded that a request had been sent to all agencies – repeatedly – but not all organizations had responded. If not received, members were advised to contact

UNESCO-Dakar and confirm their interest in taking part. Further to this, they were prompted to complete the questionnaires already disseminated.

Finally, the group agreed that UNICEF, CAMES and CONFEMEN would form part of the Steering Team, while the civil society organizations – FAWE and ANCEFA – were invited to undertake a bilateral consultation to further discuss and agree on who would also join this team.

Discussion on the establishment of task teams

The task team already established – TALENT – gave updates on their activities since the previous meeting.

TALENT task team

- During the second meeting of the WCA-RCG4 (16 June, 2016), the initial proposal was made to create a task force on a regional network: ‘Teaching and Learning: Educators’ Network for Transformation’ (TALENT). UNESCO-Dakar’s representative for the TALENT team updated the group on its activities since then: a workshop on early child learning assessment; development of a platform on which educators can share ideas, materials, and evaluation and monitoring information; information shared on the network and a first meeting held in September that enabled the team to identify 6 sub-themes. The next meeting is scheduled in the next two weeks.
- The official launch of TALENT is planned for the end October/beginning of November with the participation of ECOWAS and WCA countries. The terms of reference will be shared with group members.
- So far, ANCEFA, CONFEMEN, FAWE, Handicap International, REESAO, ERNWACA, UNESCO and UNICEF are members of this task team. Interested members were invited to join the team.

Presentation of the suggested topics for task teams

Education policy, planning and monitoring

- UNESCO-Dakar proposed to establish a task team on education policy, planning and monitoring. It was proposed that UNESCO and UNICEF WCARO could co-lead the systems’ task team with participation of UIS, IIEP-Pole de Dakar (under discussion) and GPE who has already expressed interest in combining efforts on updating the results-based planning handbook. The proposed task team would be responsible for some of the activities under the current suggested RCG4 2016-2017 work plan, including the regional GEM report for WCA which was suggested to be led by UIS, and with further activities to be elaborated based on the proposed ToRs.

Girls’ right to education

- Save the Children (STC) proposed to establish a task team on the topic ‘Girls’ right to education’. Given the time constraints, an alternative to the initially suggested celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October) was suggested. This could be to prepare a policy brief on the link between education and early marriage, in preparation for the Child Summit which will be held in Sierra Leone in March 2017. The policy brief would highlight the organizations’ good practices in the purpose of advocacy to donors (for them to invest more). This is a concrete and feasible activity over the six-month period and could lead to tangible results.

- UNESCO-Dakar launched a series of Education 2030 policy briefs this year on education in emergencies, sector planning, health education, gender, global citizenship education and sustainable development. Linking or collaboration with partners on policy briefs was encouraged.

Higher education

- CAMES suggested to the group as a possible topic 'Higher education'. They will share a proposal which will include the focused areas and a request of members' interest.

Discussion on the list of topics suggested by group members

In preparation for the meeting, group members were invited to suggest topics for task teams that they would like to lead or of which they would like to be a member. The following discussions were held after the presentation of the list (see annex):

- It was agreed that the list contained too large number of topics, with some similarities, to which the response was that it consisted of all themes received. Which topics should be kept, or the ways in which they could be combined, was offered as a subject for discussion.
- It was proposed that the task teams should be linked with the Education 2030 targets.
- It was finally agreed that the Secretariat would prepare a suggested reduced list.
- It was suggested and agreed that members who wish and have the capacity to lead a task team must develop and share the Terms of Reference (TORs).

Discussion on the draft work plan for 2016-2017

The work plan was drafted by a small committee (CONFEMEN, Plan International, UNESCO and UNICEF), based on activities suggested by members. This was shared with the group members before the meeting to enable them to express their interest in leading any of the activities.

- It was mentioned that some activities could be included in the task teams, emphasizing the urgent need to draft the ToRs to clarify their scope. Group members were invited to clearly indicate the activities they would like to lead or of which they would like to be a partner.
- FAWA raised the concern of the short deadline set for members to give feedback on the work plan. They also expressed the need to have the work plan in both English and French for strategic decision-making, and the need to provide more details on the objectives and content of some activities which are unclear. The latter was also an issue for the small committee. Members who suggested activities were requested to clarify the content. The absence of justification could lead to a lack of interest from other members or the removal of the activity.
- It was agreed that the revised work plan and list of task teams would be shared by the Secretariat to all members by 21 September. Members would then be expected to provide more details on their suggested activities within two weeks so that the work plan can be finalized during the first week of October.

At the end of the meeting, CODESRIA asked whether other organizations could be suggested to be part of the WCA-RCG4, for better representation and given that all members (except CAMES and ERNWACA) are based in Dakar. It was replied that other organizations outside Senegal were invited but did not respond. New suggestions were welcomed.

Conclusion

The third meeting of the WCA-RCG4 saw the following:

- Presentation of members' activities since the last meeting in June, in a 'tour de table'.
- The request for new members to complete the form detailing their organization's focus, activities and suggestions for additional members and task team topics.
- Agreement of three members of the Steering Team, with further discussion between ANCEFA and FAWÉ to take place.

The next meeting of the WCA-RCG4, suggested as a conference outside Dakar, was tentatively arranged for 8 or 9 December, with the request that this is confirmed as early as possible to allow time to make arrangements.

Due to technical difficulties, GPE were unable to follow the entire meeting, but thanked the group for their interest in GPE's involvement. They requested that they be sent a copy of the meeting report.

Reported by UNESCO-Dakar

Draft version 29/09/16

Annex: Suggested task team topics

Suggested task team topics	Lead(s)	Members
Evaluation	CONFEMEN	
Out-of-school children	UNICEF	UNICEF
Early Childhood Education	UNICEF	UNICEF
Early learning		Plan International
Knowledge and skills for the promotion of peace and sustainable development (SDG4.7)	ERNWACA	
Education for peace	UNICEF	UNICEF
Affordable, quality TVET and higher education (SDG4.3)	CAMES	
Higher education		REESAO
Quality of teaching and learning		REESAO
Quality teachers (SDG4.c)		ERNWACA, ANCEFA
Inclusion and gender equality		ANCEFA
Girls' right to education		Save the Children
Education resources management and accountability		ANCEFA
Secondary education (financing, access, quality)		UNHCR