



## **Report**

### **Retreat of the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 for West and Central Africa**

Version 13/03/17

Reported by the Secretariat (UNESCO-Dakar)

**Location:** Radisson Blu, Dakar

**Date:** 8 December 2016

**Time:** 9:00 – 16:30

## **Background**

The West and Central Africa (WCA) Regional Coordination Group on SDG-4 Education 2030 (RCG4-WCA) was established on 19 May 2016, bringing together the regional representations of United Nations 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 for joint regional technical backstopping, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization for support to national education development.

## **Retreat objectives**

This retreat followed three previous plenary group meetings in May, June and September 2016, and a meeting of the Steering Team in November 2016. The objectives are to review activities undertaken since May, to determine the perspectives as well as follow up on decisions made by the Steering Team.

## **Participants<sup>1</sup>**

In attendance at this meeting were regional representatives from a number of 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'Education des Etats et gouvernements de la francophonie (CONFEMEN), Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Handicap International,

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<sup>1</sup> List of participants in Annex

IIEP-Pôle de Dakar, Réseau pour l'excellence de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique de l'Ouest (REESAO), Save the Children, International Labour Organization (ILO), Plan International WARO, UNESCO-Dakar, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), UNHCR, and UNICEF.

### **Introduction**

The plenary group retreat began with brief presentations of the participants in attendance, followed by presentation and adoption of the agenda.

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

Attendees were then invited to briefly present their organization's activities in line with the key functions of the group since the last meeting of the RCG4-WCA on 15 September 2016<sup>2</sup>.

### **Steering Team decisions**

The Secretariat then updated the plenary group on the decisions of the Steering Team during their meeting on **8 November**:

- The Steering Team consists of 5 members: UNICEF, CAMES, CONFEMEN, an organization representing civil society (FAWE/ANCEFA), and chaired by the Secretariat (UNESCO). Regarding the membership of civil society organizations in the Steering Team, two options were proposed: either FAWE or ANCEFA can share one seat, having one vote, or one organization can become a 'full' member and the other the 'substitute'. Where the full member is not able to attend meetings, the substitute may take their place. Both agencies were requested to inform the Secretariat as soon as decision is made.
- The number of proposed Task Team work themes was reduced from 15 to 7, with better alignment with the targets of SDG4. Any TT without a committed lead entity will be removed.
- The new structure of the work plan was adopted and a draft agenda proposed for the plenary group retreat.

### **2016-2017 revised work plan**

The next item was the presentation of the revised and adopted work plan for 2016-2017, and a review and exchange on its implementation. Some activities were moved under the remit of the Task Teams.

### **Function 1: Preparation, operationalization and monitoring**

- The composition of the Steering Team - that met in November 2016 - was approved, with FAWE and ANCEFA confirming that they will share civil society's seat (i.e. share one vote).

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<sup>2</sup> See details provided by RCG4 members in Annex

- Members were asked to select one focal point and one alternate from each organization, in order to reduce the number of contacts. The Secretariat will circulate a form for this purpose.
- A discussion took place on the annual review and activity report: whether the annual activity report should be prepared in January or at the end of the fiscal year, who should be responsible for the preparation and shall beneficiary countries be involved in the evaluation process? Further discussions are needed to conclude on this.
- The need to share information on the Task Teams' activities between Teams and with the plenary group was raised. It was agreed that periodic reporting and gathering documents on the web portal are needed but the reporting systems shall be kept as flexible as possible. Task Teams and institutions who are responsible for activities will report on activities/results and way forward at tri-monthly Plenary meetings using their own template. A follow-up column could be added in the Task team's work plan as monitoring and reporting tool for example. Templates could be proposed later for harmonized presentation.
- The importance of RCG4 members working together as one was discussed. In particular, when one organization goes to the field, a link should be ensured between those working in that country through the mailing list and/or the web portal in order to increase coherence and synergy. Local Education Groups (LEG) should also be informed. These mechanisms require a willingness to share and cooperate, as well as use of all of the resources available to the group including sharing information at the country level.
- The members agreed on half-day plenary group meetings at three-monthly intervals which include a one-hour session on a knowledge aspect.

## **Function 2: Regional space for dialogue, communication and knowledge management**

- Members were encouraged to make suggestions to improve the Educ'Africa platform developed by the Secretariat. The objective of this tool is to share information, knowledge and experiences between the members and countries with the perspective of sharing a common platform with the East and Southern Africa (ESA) SDG4 coordination group.
- Suggestions for the use of the platform for dialogue and exchange with and between countries were welcomed. Resources such as the online country profiles which UNESCO is developing could be shared with countries, which would need members' feedback and could be further improved by country teams.
- Many resources were also added by the TALENT Task Team following their workshop in October 2016.
- The web portal (currently part of the 'UNESCO Africa' site) can be mutated to another site to reflect the inclusive nature of the group for ownership by all members.
- GPE suggested adding two items to the work plan: (1) a knowledge session on RCG4-WCA & ESA at GPE's next DCP (Developing Country Partners) constituency meeting, and (2) a GPE-RCG4 blog on regional coordination of SDG4 efforts/activities.

### **Function 3: Support activities (analytical work and country support)**

- The preliminary mapping of Lead Agencies of Local Education Groups (LEGs) and GPE Grant Agents done by UNICEF needs to be completed and updated, with other members' support
- The group must reflect about how support will be provided to the LEGs
- International Days: members can propose joint celebrations at national or regional level to Catherine Collin (c.collin@unesco.org)
- Communication between RCG4 and existing working groups, i.e. Education in Emergencies, School-related gender-based violence shall be strengthened
- The development of a resource mobilization strategy by 4-5 members was agreed as an activity of the work plan with inputs from the task teams. No member volunteered for that assignment.

### **Task Teams**

The next item on the agenda was the review of the list of Task Teams and their lead/co-lead agencies; presentation of the guidelines for the preparation of Terms of Reference for Task Teams; and presentation of the Terms of Reference for selected Task Teams.

### **Task Teams and (co-)leads**

- The reduced list of seven Task Teams (TTs) was adopted during the Steering Team meeting on 8 November: (1) Education systems strengthening ; (2) TALENT (Teaching and Learning: Educator's Network for Transformation) ;(3) Gender equality and inclusive education ; (4) Early Childhood Education ; (5) Education for peace, citizenship and sustainable development ; (6) Post-basic education and TVET ; (7) Higher education
- UNESCO has been confirmed as the lead for the Education Systems Strengthening TT, with UNICEF as co-lead
- The TT on girls' education, led by STC, has been extended to cover inclusive education (Task Team on gender equality and inclusive education) and is awaiting a co-lead
- UNICEF will lead the TT on ECCE; CAMES the TT on higher education; and REESAO proposed to lead the TT on post-basic education and TVET (to be confirmed)
- The proposed duration for leading a TT was set at an initial 2 years
- The group was reminded that the role of the lead is to coordinate (meetings and activities) and report back to the plenary group, but they would not be responsible for implementation of activities. Each activity on a TT work plan would have a responsible member including partners which are not particularly members of the TT or of the RCG4.

### **Guidelines for Preparation of Terms of Reference for Task Teams**

- A template was presented as a common basis for Task Team ToRs under the following key working modalities: analytical work and tools development; knowledge management (including knowledge production and dissemination); in-country support; and capacity development. Not every TT will need an activity under each modality and new modalities can be suggested.
- It was agreed that the TTs' objectives should be manageable and prioritised over the period of 1 or 2 years.
- Reporting mechanisms would be flexible, with a brief sharing of main results during Plenary meetings

### **Presentation of established TTs' ToRs**

The three established task teams presented their objectives and main activities planned thus far. This was followed by discussions highlighted below:

#### *Education systems' strengthening*

- Regarding the proposed annual report on the situation of education in the WCA region:
  - Given the current financial situation, UIS cannot commit to supporting the elaboration of an annual report
  - It is necessary to check whether other organizations (i.e. African Union) will be preparing such a report to avoid duplication
  - Existing data should be used (GEM Report, UIS, IYPE, etc.), including a first analysis done at the global level. Financial support from members to hire a consultant for that purpose would be very useful according to UIS.

#### *TALENT (Teaching and Learning: Educator's Network for Transformation)*

- It was recommended that TALENT and ADEA further discuss on collaboration with the African Union's working group NALA
- It was announced that UNESCO will share TALENT's experiences with the Asia-Pacific coordination group with the purpose of learning from one another.

#### *Gender equality and inclusive education*

- Save the Children agreed to lead the extended topic of 'Gender equality and inclusive education' (initially: 'girls' education')
- ToRs need to be redrafted according to the guidelines and structure presented during the retreat

- FAWE noted that a working group on School-related Gender-based Violence (SRGBV) already exists. The TT will seek to coordinate with other existing groups (i.e. on SRGBV and the regional group on gender led by UN Women).

### **RCG4-WCA Terms of Reference**

The ToRs were then read through and discussed, with attendees invited to make comments.

- The group was reminded that new members may be invited to join the group. Suggestions are welcomed
- Amendments were proposed and will be considered in a new version of the ToRs:
  - Under *Functions*, it was suggested by UNICEF that more ‘domestication’ (contextualization at the country level) is included, in order to assist national adaptation.
  - *Vision*. Similarly, it was agreed that the link with the global and national coordination mechanisms should be emphasized. The organizational structure diagram will be amended for this purpose
  - The four working modalities of the group were agreed; namely (1) analytical work & tool development, (2) knowledge management, (3) in-country support, and (4) capacity development
  - Under *Steering Team*, attendees were reminded that there are 5 voting members, with a civil society organization (i.e. one major subsector) taking one vote.

### **Educ’Africa web platform**

The web platform for sharing experiences and knowledge – Educ’Africa – is currently under development by the UNESCO/Secretariat team. Its current version was presented to the plenary group, focusing on its features and tools and on how each member could contribute, as well as a discussion on how to further develop the platform.

#### *Comments*

- It was suggested that Communications teams from various agencies could assist in its development and running of the platform
- *Resources*: two queries were raised regarding how we manage or validate quality (and what kind of documents should be uploaded), and the technical aspect of how material can be easily added. A log-in was suggested. It was also suggested that resources are tagged (with keywords, not just categories), defined and given a brief summary to aid searching. Access for uploading is currently reserved for the Secretariat, and so the idea of submitting documents for approval was put forward
- *Forum*: a thread could be established as a discussion space about the site for all members
- *List of experts*: the idea was to have a list containing contact information. Again, the query of quality was raised: how can we guarantee their work is of a sufficient standard? All members should contribute in the identification of possible specialists whose information could be shared on the website, based on a disclaimer from the part of the RCG4.

- It was proposed to include on the web platform a calendar of activities, meetings and missions in the region
- It was proposed that country profiles could assist in the comparison of different issues in different countries; for example, ECCE. Such a mechanism would allow for information on certain issues to be searchable and comparable. GPE responded that they have country profiles which are currently being updated. These could be used as a part of the platform.
- Based on the earlier query regarding the URL (related to UNESCO due to the fact that it was started on their server, and there were no other funds currently available), UNICEF will discuss a contribution to a new alternative, as it is important that it reflects the collective group in order to promote ownership
- GPE recommended linking to UNDP's 'African Platform for Development Effectiveness', which does not currently feature education heavily
- It was tabled that 3 or 4 organizations – particularly those with experience in this area – could meet during the third week of January 2017 to discuss the development of the site in more detail. However, it was reiterated that the site belongs to the entire group, and everyone is invited to suggest improvements.

### **Contributions to the functioning of the Secretariat**

Suggestions and appeals for both financial and in-kind contributions were discussed.

- All members were requested to contribute to the Secretariat's work for increased ownership: by co-funding a part-time member of staff assigned to the RCG4 Secretariat function, hosting meetings, supporting the participation of members not based in Dakar or the preparation of the annual SDG4 report and any activities of common interest, etc. A document will be circulated for group members to offer their financial or in-kind contribution commitment.
- The possibility of attending virtually, via Skype, could be explored for agencies having difficulties attending the meetings.
- RCG4-WCA could also combine its efforts and resources with those of the East and Southern Africa coordination group through pooled-funding
- Collaboration with RCM (Regional Coordination Mechanism) was suggested.

### **Conclusion**

The RCG4-WCA retreat saw the following decisions taken:

- The work plan was adopted with some modifications required
- Leads were confirmed for five Task Teams<sup>3</sup>. ToRs need to be prepared/revised according to the guidance note and shared with the members before the next plenary group meeting

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<sup>3</sup> Lead for TT on Education for peace, citizenship and sustainable development ; Post-basic education and TVET to be confirmed

- Suggested amendments to the RCG4 ToRs will be added
- Plenary group meetings: one half-day every three months
- Members were requested to communicate with Local Education Groups and national offices/antennas to ensure liaison between RCG4 and the country level
- A sub-group will be established to work on the web platform which will be moved to another domain name. A meeting on that topic was proposed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January 2017 to reflect on how to mobilize resources and make the site accessible and useable for all parties
- The group was encouraged to ‘reach out’ to other partners
- A form on which members can detail their contributions to the functioning of RCG4 will be circulated
- Members should offer specific additions to the work plan, such as an international day and the related activities which they would like to organize/lead
- Three-monthly reports on the group’s work must be submitted to the R/UNDG
- The tentative date for the next meeting was agreed as 7 March 2017 (to be confirmed).



## ANNEXES

### 1. List of participants

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## 2. Tour de table

### UNICEF

- UNICEF have instigated a number of activities around the use of ICT in education, such as a consultancy investigating how to transform education using ICT
- Another consultancy focuses on life skills education, which was suggested to be linked to the work of the TALENT Task Team.

### UNHCR

- UNHCR published the new 2017 Nigeria Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) for Cameroon, Chad and Niger ([link to the report](#)). For all three countries education is an important protection and development tool. A summary of the Education Components will be shared with RCG4. The relevance for the group is that *“Access to quality education in safe learning environments for all, including for children who are out of school, will be further improved. RRRP partners will support their integration into the education system of their respective asylum countries and the completion of recognized certificates through temporary and alternative learning opportunities.”*
- UNHCR Liberia has initiated the [transition to the Liberian curriculum](#) (from the Ivorian curriculum) and the handing-over of schools to the national authorities
- UNHCR and GPE: The formal partnership with GPE was launched in April 2016. A [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between UNHCR and GPE was signed which aims to strengthen their collaboration to support education for refugee children and youth. At the global level, UNHCR is represented on the [Board of Directors](#) of the Global Partnership for Education together with UNESCO, where UNHCR represents the Constituency ‘Multilateral Agency 1’ among the five constituencies. In West and Central Africa, UNHCR and GPE have identified pilot countries to translate this partnership into action – namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Liberia, Chad, Burundi, and DRC – with regard to the [GPE country-level process \(FRENCH\)](#), specifically [ESP development/update \(FRENCH\)](#) and/or [grant program preparation \(FRENCH\)](#)
- [Ghana](#): as part of the process to include refugee learners in the national education system of the country of asylum (Ivorian refugees in Ghana in this case), UNHCR has successfully negotiated the inclusion of three schools in three refugee camps in West Ghana in the Ghana School Feeding Programme. To learn more about the inclusion process in Ghana please see [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of the GPE Blog Post on ‘Including refugee students in national education systems’.

### FAWE

- FAWE has taken the lead in the development of an implementation plan for the ‘gender equality’ pillar of the Continental Strategy for Education in Africa (CESA 2016-2025), in the framework of the implementation of the African Union’s Agenda 2063
- FAWE is currently in the process of implementing a project which promotes secondary education for girls, in line with SDG4 and 5. Along with ADEA, FAWE is searching for the most significant stories of change (researching innovative and scalable ideas and programmes/projects/activities which can be/have been successful at improving secondary education for girls in Africa). In particular, the challenge is to provide a platform for identifying possible success models in accelerating girls’ education at the secondary level, as well as programmes or projects which can be replicated or scaled up to provide girls with access to quality education across the continent. It also aims to provide a compendium of best practices on gender equality in the education and training sector. Innovations at the secondary level are particularly relevant for post-2015 as the

Education for All (EFA) targets and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on gender equality have not been met, especially at the secondary level.

### **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**

- GPE participated in an ADEA Validation meeting in preparation for the Triennale – GPE presented on ECCE, based on a paper it has submitted for the Triennale, and also touched on education financing
- Inclusion of RCG4 updates in GPE Southern Partners Update - a newsletter to developing country partners and CO coalitions
- GPE participation in the ED2030 global steering committee meeting
- Pre-Board DCP constituency meeting in Nov/Dec, which featured, amongst others, a knowledge and good practice session on ECCE. Meetings are attended by 70+ Developing Country Partner (DCP) Focal Points (national and some federal states) from 65+ MoE, including from the WCA region
- GPE continues to work on developing JSR (joint sector review) guidelines and guidelines for domestic financing to be used by LEGs
- Released a policy brief highlighting GPE's approach in three key areas: increased mobilization of domestic financing in developing country partners, gender equality and gender-responsive education systems, and an updated brief on GPE's role in fragile and conflict affected states and a policy brief on ECCE
- Lastly GPE organized a webinar on National Education Accounts in November in collaboration with UNESCO-Dakar, IIEP-Pôle de Dakar and UIS, which featured countries from the WCA region
- GPE also contributed to the Gender Equality and Inclusive Education task team by providing a list of WCA countries which feature gender as a component of the Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (ESPIGs).

### **Save the Children (STC)**

- STC has implemented projects on basic education and early childhood development in 9 countries in WCA, working towards quality education for all.
- They launched the global campaign 'Every Last Girl' on 11 October (the International Day of the Girl), focusing on girls' right to quality education.
- They have launched national advocacy campaigns on girls' education in 5 countries in WCA.

### **UNESCO**

- UNESCO and CODESRIA co-organized a meeting of 18 African scholars to rethink the purpose of education in Africa in light of SDG4, in the process of contextualizing the UNESCO publication 'Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Goal?'
- Following the regional launch of the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report in WCA on 15 September 2016, there have been a number of national launches. These events – in Benin, Togo, Cameroon, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria and Mali (upcoming, at the end of December) – have been organized in collaboration with UNESCO National Commissions, some being followed by national consultations on SDG4.
- UNESCO launched a new series of Education 2030 briefs, with one volume on 'Education in emergencies and protracted crises' published (English and French) and three other volumes under preparation: 'Integrating & Monitoring Education 2030 within National Education Sector Plans,' 'Sexual and reproductive health education,' and 'GCED/ESD.'

- IIEP-Pôle de Dakar organized two roundtables gathering ministry of education officials and partners from a number of SSA countries to discuss and exchange on rethinking education planning processes in light of SDG4-ED2030 in particular sector analyses, and the capacity strengthening needs of Member States around the new vision of lifelong learning for all.

#### **UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)**

- UIS is preparing data collection on 29 SDG4 indicators that will be used by Member States in 2017
- In the framework of the pilot CapED programme in Mali, DRC and Senegal to support the integration of SDG4 into education sector plans, UIS supports the countries' capacities to analyze their data systems, sets up a platform on educational statistics, advocates for capacity building financing, develops self-training modules and develops national strategies on educational statistics.

#### **ADEA**

- ADEA has involved four countries – Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Zambia – in a pilot study aiming to develop an assessment reference framework that would contribute to establishing a linkage between PASEC and SACMEQ.