

## Report

### **Eighth Meeting of the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA)**

Reported by the Secretariat (UNESCO Dakar)

**Location:** Institut de la Francophonie pour la Formation et l'Education (IFEFF), Dakar

**Date:** January 18, 2018

**Duration:** 9h00 - 16h30

#### **List of member organizations present:**

Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation (IFEFF), Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Humanity and Inclusion (formerly Handicap International), Plan International, Réseau pour l'excellence de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique de l'Ouest (REESAO), Save the Children, UNESCO-Dakar and UNICEF WCARO.

#### **Objectives of the Meeting**

The meeting seeks to:

1. report on activities and summarize the group's work since its foundation,
2. exchange between members on the expectations for the group,
3. review the activities of the operational task teams since October 2017,
4. validate the work plan for 2018-2019 and
5. discuss member contributions toward the operation of the group.

#### **1. Introduction**

The President of the Group thanked the IFEFF for hosting the meeting on its premises. The IFEFF Director welcomed the meeting participants and briefly presented the work of the Institute.

After the presentation, the agenda was adopted.

#### **2. The Last Steering Committee Meeting**

The three topics discussed during the last meeting of the Steering Committee; which took place on January 15th, were cited and resumed during the following discussions:

- 1<sup>st</sup> analysis of the 2016-2017 RCG4-WCA activities report
- Finalization of the agenda for the plenary group meeting

#### **3. Summary of the RCG4-WCA's Activities Since its Creation in 2016**

The provisional report on the RCG4-WCA's activities since its creation in May of 2016, drafted by the Secretariat, was previously shared with the members of the group to solicit feedback. The objective of the report is to document not only the achievements of the group, but also to carry-out a self-analysis in order to develop the group's functionality and to galvanize participation. Therefore, it is important for the other members of the group to contribute their perspectives so the report reflects a more holistic view beyond that of the Secretariat. The discussion followed four main themes.

### **3.1. Structure and Communication between the Plenary Group and the Task Teams**

- It has been suggested that the structure and communication between the plenary group and the task teams, and between the task teams themselves, should be reinforced and clarified; especially considering the common interests and themes that exist between several of the task teams. It is important to note, however, that certain task teams confer on an ad hoc basis. Further discussion should address these concerns, as well as the role of the Secretariat, to ensure that opportunities to create synergy are not lost due to lack of communication. In particular, the platform should be leveraged to reinforce communication and exchange between the task teams. For example, an update alert could be put in place to motivate members to consult the site.
- Several task teams have mentioned their goal to support countries through local education groups, which will require clear coordination.

### **3.2. Member Participation in the Plenary Group**

- For some, the time commitment required to participate in this group was underestimated: the functionality of each entity should be reviewed to ensure efficiency and greater communication in order to lessen the time constraints on members.
- In view of the relatively weak participation of the focal points in the plenary group meetings, which is the decision-making body, a review of the format has been suggested. In this respect; it is important to see how to ensure technological functionality for virtual participation which should be encouraged.
- The mobilization of members is strongly linked to their interest; certain members are more invested in the task teams, which are directly linked to their objectives, than the plenary group. These members are invited to contribute suggestions to improve the plenary group's functionality.

### **3.3. Members' In-Kind and Financial Contributions**

- Overall, members are willing to participate in the group, but few contribute financially or in-kind to the group. Some member organizations are ready to commit but do not want to be alone in doing so.
- Members will have until February 2<sup>nd</sup> to submit their commitments to financial or in-kind contributions toward the operation of the group.
- To support the Secretariat, members are encouraged to submit proposals to volunteer organizations they have access to (i.e. UNV<sup>1</sup> or AUYYV<sup>2</sup>). The Secretariat is willing to prepare a letter to be sent to these organizations on behalf of the group. Follow up would be the responsibility of the organization that submitted the proposal.
- Plan International announced an increase in their active participation and contributions to the plenary group, as well as their involvement in the Gender Equity and Inclusive Education task

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Volunteers.

<sup>2</sup> African Union Youth Volunteers.

team. Save the Children had previously committed to hosting the next plenary group meeting.

### **3.4. Review of the Key Functions of the Group and the Secretariat**

- Following the preparation of the RCG4's activity report, the Secretariat proposed revisions to several key functions within the group, first in regards to the Secretariat, and second in order to reduce the redundancy between certain key functions and to further elaborate on what the functions entail (see the annex). The members validated certain revised functions and asked the Secretariat to finalize others that would then be resubmitted for validation. The terms of reference for the group will also be revised accordingly.

### **4. Activities led by the Task Teams**

Each task team facilitator or their representative<sup>3</sup> briefly presented the main activities of the team and the challenges encountered<sup>4</sup>.

#### **1) Education Systems' Strengthening Task Team**

- The preparation of the annual work plan was an opportunity for reflection on the work of the task team.
- Within the team's 2017 work plan, members included the activities aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) that they had planned to carry out within their own organizations. In 2018, the team planned for the execution of more joint activities.
- The team completed a number of notable activities, including the production of articles, information collection on SDG4 mainstreaming in West and Central African countries' education sector plans, including joint sector reviews (a calendar currently being updated is available on the platform), development of a tool for SDG4 mainstreaming, which is currently being piloted in Mali. The task team's page on the platform has been updated and content has been uploaded.
- One of the task team's functions includes providing countries with technical assistance in education sector planning, which has thus far not been fulfilled, apart from in Mali, and should be a priority for the team.
- The task team will organize a parallel event at the upcoming GPE conference on the topic of education financing.

#### **2) TALENT**

- TALENT is very visible and is recognized as a reference network similar to NEQMOP<sup>5</sup> (in Asia). Some members hope the team can expand its reach across the entire African continent.
- Fostering connections with strategic partners is of interest to the members of this task team. Members are also motivated by their meetings, which have become more and more technical and less administrative in nature.
- The team should reflect on how to better engage at the country level and with leaders, first by widely communicating the work the team has already completed. The resources mobilized at the GPE (\$600,000 USD) for learning outcome assessment could contribute to this objective.

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<sup>3</sup> The TVET task team was not represented.

<sup>4</sup> The activities planned for 2018 are available in the work plans of the respective task team.

<sup>5</sup> Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia Pacific (NEQMOP)

- The communication system the team had established through the previous website was interrupted following the migration to the new platform in March and April 2017.
- Collaboration with other task teams should be improved, especially with the Systems' Strengthening task team.
- In terms of functionality, TALENT hopes to remain flexible toward the participation and the contributions of its members, keeping in mind the unique situation of each participating member.

### **3) Gender Equity and Inclusive Education Task Team**

- The task team, though few in number, is dynamic and leads concrete activities (the production of a policy brief, the organization of an inclusive education workshop, work on "end girls' marriage", etc.) focused on specific themes and priorities which are of interest to each team member.
- In 2018, the team envisions greater collaboration with local education groups, which would allow for greater support to countries, especially in the areas of education sector planning and school-related gender-based violence. The team hopes to mobilize funds at the country level, if a request is made to engage the team's support. The GPE hopes to be more active on the team and has introduced several activities to the team's work plan this year.
- The team seeks to determine how inclusive education can be expanded to other targets, such as girls' education, to break the barrier between the two themes of gender and inclusion. The team has already had several discussions on this subject and is open to all suggestions.
- It has been suggested that the team could mobilize resources through an inter-agency proposition submitted to donors, as TALENT has done. In effect, the team's objective is of interest to the United Nations and could be integrated into the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS).

### **4) Early Childhood Development and Pre-School Education Task Team**

- The first team meeting took place on December 14th. The second meeting is planned for the third week of February and will establish a scope of work for the team.
- Two sub groups could possibly be created: early childhood education (beyond the education sector) and pre-school education.

### **5) Higher Education Task Team**

- The mission of the task team is to unite the actors within the higher education field, establish synergy and share best practices.
- The team was officially established in July 2017 and several partners expressed their interest in becoming a member. Two focal points have been designated.
- Activity has yet to take place. The major challenge has been the mobilization of actors on a voluntary basis without a budget. A concrete activity organized by the task team could provide the necessary momentum.
- FAWE suggested that CAMES (focal point) contact the Pan-African University and the African Union regarding the possibility of collaborating with the higher education thematic clusters they have put in place to support CESA 16-25.<sup>6</sup>
- The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) was asked to support CAMES with the coordination of the task team.

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<sup>6</sup> The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 2016-25)

- Concerning the platform, CAMES will upload information once the access codes have been shared.

In general, the task teams were encouraged to be more visible and to prioritize sharing their information. The Secretariat should lead a discussion on the reinforcement of communication, especially via the platform, to ensure a greater exchange of information.

#### 5. Connection between RCG4 and the SDG4-Education 2030 Monitoring Process at Global and Continental levels

The objective of this portion of the meeting was to explain the implications of the RCG4's work in the global monitoring process of SDG4-Education 2030.

- The global monitoring of SDG4 is performed by the High Level Policy Forum (HLPF), which meets annually in New York to examine specific SDGs each year. SDG4 will be evaluated in 2019.
- Preparation of the relevant information for the 2019 forum will be completed by the SDG4-Education 2030 global steering committee, which meets twice annually, bringing together the co-convening Education 2030 agencies, regional representatives, donors and regional organizations (ADEA in Africa).
- Leading up to HLPF 2019, the global steering committee proposed the organization of an international conference on education in December 2018 (which will be the first global conference of this nature since Incheon).
- In preparation for this conference, regional conferences have been organized and Kenya will host the African regional conference (April 25-27, 2018). Approximately 400 participants are expected to attend, including the Education 2030 co-convenor organizations, other continental, regional and sub-regional organizations and delegations from the 54 countries in Africa. UNESCO Dakar handles coordination in West and Central Africa, while Nairobi coordinates East and Southern Africa.
- The country delegations will be composed of at least four participants, including one Minister of Education, who will be hosted by the government of Kenya, one high level education official, one representative from the Ministry of Finance and one representative from civil society. The different ministries in charge of education are encouraged to join the delegations, which could lead the delegation number to surpass four participants.
- Contributions from regional partners are expected and may include the following actions:
  - **Feedback on the first draft of the concept note** prepared by UNESCO with the contributions of the Kenyan government and the African Union. In particular, it is important to determine whether the general and specific objectives and expected results correspond to the needs and priorities of our region. All perspectives must be respected, although it is important to keep in mind that the themes are more or less already determined. The agenda will also be shared for feedback from group members.
  - **Communication with colleagues** in their respective offices and at country level regarding the organization of the conference. Contact the respective Ministries in due time to help prepare the material to be presented at the conference and to promote appropriate representation in the national delegations.
  - **Financial support for country participation** from the regional or international organizations or through country representation. UNESCO will contribute financially to the organization of the conference and will sponsor country participants.
  - **Technical and logistical participation** of the RCG4-WCA in the preparation and management of the conference. Member organizations are invited to communicate

their interest in participating in the conference and to inform the Secretariat if they require a letter of invitation from UNESCO, as well as the names and contact information for the invitations.

The importance of participating in the conference as a coordination group was emphasized and the establishment of a task force within the group was suggested. Those who wish to participate in such a task force are welcome to indicate their interest.

## **6. Exchange with the Education in Emergencies (EiE) Working Group**

This working group co-facilitated by UNICEF and Save the Children, covers West and Central Africa and acts as a liaison between the global and country levels, especially in coordination with local education groups. The group meets four times annually. An equivalent group exists in East and Southern Africa.

### **The impact of conflict and epidemics on the education sector**

- The number of children who are in need of humanitarian aid is has been increasing in West and Central Africa due to attacks on schools and school closings due to insecurity, conflict and epidemics.
- In emergency situations, education systems deteriorate quickly – compromising the progress toward the achievement of SDG4 - and their reconstruction is slow and costly. The impact of these emergency situations can be limited through cooperative risk mitigation. Lessons learned during crisis situations should help influence policy, including sector planning with a risk-sensitive approach.

### **Preparation and risk mitigation**

- **System strengthening:** reinforced coordination mechanisms, emergency planning in the Education Ministries, key competency training in national teacher training systems, development of innovative pedagogical tools for students in situations of crisis etc.
- **Interventions on the ground to strengthen mitigation while responding to ongoing crises:** teacher training on conflict and disaster risk education and psychosocial constructs, education emergency preparedness and response plans, advocacy and education on school protection during attacks.

### **Collaboration potential between the RCG4 and the regional EiE Working Group**

- It has been proposed to share the tools developed by EiEWG and to organize a training for each organization that can then train their respective national offices. Depending on funding, a training for national teams could be conducted by UNICEF. In the case that a training is not possible, specific modules could be relayed at the country level.
- RCG4-WCA could be involved at the planning level and/or through the task teams, including through advocacy, but not in relation to emergency response.
- Upload resources on the Education 2030 in Africa platform (including a link to the OCHA<sup>7</sup> website, which houses EiE resources).
- Information exchange between the two groups.

## **7. 2018-2019 Planning**

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

The work plan for the RCG4-WCA has already been distributed several times to the organization members without receiving any feedback. It will be redistributed a final time by the Secretariat. In the absence of a response by January 26th, it will be considered validated.

## **8. Platform and Communication**

- The platform's member space:
  - Access will be provided to each organization after a few technical modifications have been finished.
  - The space contains focal point contact information, a calendar where task team meetings can be added (which will help avoid scheduling two task team meetings at once), internal documents, etc.
- Members are invited to send the Secretariat publications related to SDG4 to publish on the platform.
- Administrator access codes will be given to task team facilitators which will allow them to add content, articles and resources to their respective pages.
- A page is being developed that will host country profiles and information which already exists on West and Central African education systems (information collection is underway, this page has not yet been published).
- A newsletter will be set up to help distribute information and increase utilization of the platform. This requires regular updates to the platform.
- The RCG4-WCA logo: the logo colors that won the most member votes were slightly modified to align with the SDG4 colors. A few minor changes were made during the meeting and then the logo was accepted by the group.

## **9. Miscellaneous Topics and the Next Meeting**

- CAMES announced that its 50th anniversary celebration will take place in May and the group members will be invited.
- The task teams that are organizing parallel events at the GPE conference can share the details of these events via the listserv.
- Next meeting: the next meeting of the plenary group was proposed to take place at the Pan-African Conference in Nairobi, which would allow other African partners from different geographical regions to participate. If the majority of regular members will not be present at the conference; the meeting could take place at the beginning of May.

## ANNEX: Key Functions of the Group and the Secretariat

### PROPOSAL TO REFORMULATE THE KEY FUNCTIONS OF THE RCG4 PLENARY GROUP

Previous functions	New functions
1) <b>Establish a regional space for dialogue and communication through regular meetings</b>	1) Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience, expertise and information, <b>as well as collaboration</b>
2) Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise and information, including by means of an online platform	
3) Develop joint regional programmes to support national education development in light of SDG4 and its targets, including in areas of results-based planning, the use of SDG4 indicator framework, advocacy, capacity development and resource mobilization for national plan development, implementation and monitoring;.	2) <b>Implement joint initiatives to support the development</b> of education in countries, in alignment with SDG4, its targets and with CESA 16-25.
4) Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence ( <b>in terms of e.g. policy, financing, monitoring, and reporting</b> ).	3) Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence at the country level.
5) Ensure <b>coordination and cross-fertilization</b> with the (planned) <b>Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) RCG4</b> , as well as with other continents' coordination mechanisms.	4) Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with other coordination mechanisms in the region and on other continents.

### PROPOSAL TO REFORMULATE THE KEY FUNCTIONS OF THE SECRETARIAT

Previous functions	New functions
1) <b>Mobilize</b> resources for the RCG4's activities	1) <b>Manage RCG4's members' participation and mobilize their participation, and their financial and in-kind contributions</b>
2) Organize a yearly retreat, convene quarterly meetings, and any other meetings of the RCG4-WCA as necessary	2) Organize a yearly retreat, convene quarterly meetings and all other necessary meetings of the RCG4, including the <b>drafting of reports and monitoring progress</b>
3) Prepare notes for the record of all RCG4-WCA meetings and retreats	



4) Coordinate the development, management, and monitoring of the RCG4-WCA annual work plans	3) Coordinate the development, management, review and monitoring of the RCG4's annual work plans and <b>the RCG4's annual report</b>
5) Identify strategic or emerging issues requiring RCG4-WCA's attention and/or action	4) Share strategic or emerging issues requiring RCG4-WCA's attention and/or action as well as pertinent information including key events, reports, etc.
6) <b>Compile and disseminate</b> information on key events and reports	
7) Communicate on and coordinate RCG4-WCA activities through the dedicated web portal and electronic information exchange	5) <b>Facilitate communication between the different task teams, as well as between the teams and the plenary group</b> , particularly through the use of the web platform and electronic exchange of information
8) Facilitate the development of advocacy and communication tools and channels with relevant national education institutions including local education groups	6) Support <b>communication</b> between global-level and country-level actors, including the Local Education Groups (LEGs) and the Development Partners
9) Support collaboration, coordination and communication with "wider" bodies, such as the SDG4 Global Steering Committee, the AU Commission, UNECA's Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), the R/UNDG Team, , as well as local education groups and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)	7) <b>Facilitate a group effort toward linking the global level and the processes, challenges and evidence at the country-level, in accordance with the SDG4 coordination mechanism in ESA and on other continents.</b>