

## Report

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

Reported by the Secretariat (UNESCO-Dakar)

**Location:** Save the Children, Dakar

**Date:** 16 May 2018

**Time:** 14h00 - 16h30

#### List of organization members represented

Conférence des Ministres de la Jeunesse et des sports de la Francophonie (CONFESJES), Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Education International, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Save the Children, UNESCO-Dakar and UNICEF WCARO.

Africa Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA), the African Union (AU) the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Plan International were present through Skype.

#### Objectives of the Meeting

The meeting sought to:

1. Present the activities of the RCG4-WCA task teams;
2. Discuss the outcomes from the Pan-African Conference on Education (PACE), including the Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education;
3. Discuss a Peace Education task team;
4. Present updates on the online platform

#### 1. Introduction

The members were welcomed by Eline Versluys (Regional Education Coordinator) of Save the Children. Participants in attendance were introduced and the agenda was adopted.

#### 2. The Last Steering Team Meeting

The last Steering Team meeting held on May 14<sup>th</sup> discussed the following topics:

- Suggested agenda of the plenary meeting
- Discussion on the outcomes from the Pan African Conference on Education (PACE) 2018 in Nairobi.
- The need expressed by several regional partners to establish a coordination mechanism on peace education, specifically in West and Central Africa.
- The renewal of the Steering Team members was also tabled, as it was established almost two years ago. Other agencies may have an interest in joining the Steering Team.

#### 3. Renewal of the Steering Team

The Steering Team is comprised of two UN organizations (UNICEF and UNESCO - Chair), one civil society organization (FAWE/ANCEFA) and two intergovernmental organizations (CAMES and CONFEMEN). After almost two years, the Steering Team is operational but there are some shortcomings. The Chair sought the members' views on a possible renewal of the Steering team and the potential modalities to do so.

In order to understand the rationale for renewal and to make an informed decision at the next plenary meeting, members agreed that the Secretariat will:

- Share the TOR for the group, which describe the expected role of the Steering Team
- Send a brief report on the Steering Team's accomplishments over the past two years with guiding questions for decision-making.

#### **4. Presentation of Task Team Activities**

Each task team lead<sup>1</sup> presented a brief overview of their recent activities.

##### **1) Education Systems Strengthening (lead : UNESCO)**

- The task team collectively decided on a new name "SYSTeam" and on a logo, paired with the RCG4 logo.
- The team established a subcommittee on indicators. The committee agreed on a sub-set of SDG4-CESA indicators to launch the online indicators project "for dummies". Two members of SYSTeam participated in the CESA Advisory Group meeting in Abuja in March for the validation of the proposed CESA indicators and to ensure synergies.
- The CESA Thematic Cluster on Education Planning was recently launched – the lead is ADEA who is also a member of SYSTeam. Discussion is underway on how both groups can collaborate, not only with regards to supporting capacities for reporting on common indicators, but also regarding how the RGC4 can support countries on the implementation of SDG4 and CESA.
- At PACE 2018, the team was active in the:
  - Preparation and diffusion of [Key Messages](#) related to the various conference themes;
  - Co-organization of the session on [Inclusion of Refugees in Education Sector Planning](#);
  - Support to the session on Supporting Better Financing of Education.
- Lily Neyestani-Hailu, the task team focal point, shared that she will be replaced in the coming months as she moves to a new assignment. Her replacement will continue the role of coordinating the work of SYSTeam.

##### **2) TALENT (lead: UNESCO)**

- TALENT organized an internal meeting in Dakar in February to complete a calendar of events for the coming two years, discuss a proposal sent to the GPE for financial support and confer on the themes for PACE.
- In March, a second meeting in Dakar took place where the activities calendar was validated, plans were established to chair a parallel session at PACE on teaching and learning and an [advocacy brief](#) was drafted to be distributed at the conference. It was announced that the team would receive financial support (of 600,000 USD) from the GPE for a two year project

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<sup>1</sup> The task team on Technical and vocational education and training was not represented.

on country capacity-building in learning assessment systems as well as a platform for experience sharing across and between countries. The next upcoming workshop will be in Tanzania, bringing together some 15 countries.

- TALENT also participated in the 5th International Advisory Group of PISA-D, where they met with key stakeholders, reviewed progress on the task team's activities and sought opportunities for collaboration.

### **3) Gender Equality and Inclusive Education (lead: Save the Children)**

Since the last plenary meeting on January 18, the team:

- Organized a session on girls' education in WCA at the GPE conference on financing education (Dakar, February 2018), produced [a video](#) summarizing the main facts and recommendations from its [policy brief on girls' education in WCA](#), addressed key recommendations to both GPE and national governments during the session. A youth ambassador testified about her fight to pursue her education. Also at the GPE conference, Humanity and Inclusion (co-lead of the task team) organized a session on disability inclusive education, with a testimony by a young hearing impaired woman.
- Prepared [an advocacy package](#) and shared with all LEGs, asking them to meet with country delegations in advance of the PACE.
- Led three topics within two PACE sessions: inclusive education for children with disabilities/albinism, CESA Gender Equality Strategy, sexual and reproductive health & education.
- Was also involved in the revision of the final conference outcome document. The team is very satisfied that its efforts have been reflected in explicit references to gender and disability in the final declaration.
- Organized a working session with Pole de Dakar on integrating gender and inclusion within education sector analysis and planning. This discussion will be continued and translated into concrete actions, including conducting qualitative research, jointly identifying knowledge gaps, complementing data with recommendations for policymakers to follow and identifying good practices for what works on the ground.
- Participated in early May in Lomé in a workshop on gender responsive education planning organized by UNGEI, GPE and UNICEF.

The team will be looking for a new name shortly.

### **4) Early Childhood Development and Pre-School Education (lead: UNICEF)**

This task team was established recently. The Terms of reference and an action plan have been developed. The team will be represented at the CONFEMEN Ministerial meeting that is devoted to the topic of early childhood learning. They will participate in two panel discussions and deliver a 5-minute keynote speech. In mid-June the lead UNICEF representative to "Early Childhood" will be leaving Senegal.

### **5) Higher Education (lead: CAMES)**

CAMES developed tools that have been validated by technical working groups and at the Rectors' Conference (Comité consultatif général du CAMES). These tools were edited and will be presented next week at the CAMES' Council of Ministers for approval (19 members):

- A methodological guide on internal quality assurance: including training, research and institutional governance quality;
- A methodological guide to establishing external national quality assurance agencies; a report compiling proceedings from quality assurance workshops to formulate guidelines on quality assurance;
- A distance training repository;
- An evaluation framework for doctoral schools;
- All the existing frameworks were reviewed and updated (these frameworks are available and ready to be added to the platform).

These tools were all included in the Common Declaration of Ministers of Higher Education for Quality Higher Education.

The RCG<sub>4</sub> Chair added that one limit on the task team could be its ability to engage non-francophone countries in its work.

## 5. Discussion on PACE

### I. Conference Proceedings

PACE was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 25-27 April. The conference provided an opportunity to share progress, success, lessons, challenges and opportunities for the further alignment of national education systems in view of ensuring a transformative education for Africa and towards the 2063 AU vision: [The Africa We Want](#).

The two first days that were followed by a one-day ministerial meeting focused on ([see the PPT in the member space](#)):

- “Building skilled African citizenry as agents of change through leveraging the Demographic Dividend in Africa”
- “Building a conducive environment for education transformation in Africa: promoting good governance, leadership and accountability in education management”.

### II. Conference Outcome Document

The conference outcome, i.e. [the Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education](#), with the overarching theme of “lifelong learning”<sup>2</sup>, was elaborated by a drafting committee (15 members) co-chaired by the AU, the Government of Kenya and UNESCO.

The Declaration, which is comprised of recommendations from each parallel session, was presented to the participating Ministers. All country delegations were given one week to provide their comments. The AUC’s Steering Committee will need to confirm whether the document can be considered at this stage as officially adopted by the Members States.

In order to better understand who has committed to the Declaration, in view of holding countries accountable once the document is fully endorsed, FAWE suggested to share a list of participating countries, subdivided by those represented by Ministers and those by representatives of Ministries, with all the members.

FAWE asked that the [youth declaration coming out of PACE](#) be shared with the group.

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<sup>2</sup> Including the following sub-themes: access to quality education; gender and inclusion; skills and competencies for life and work; promoting the Addis Ababa Convention and STEM in higher education and research; inclusion of youth and youth-led organizations; integrated approaches to education policy; improved expenditure for education; strengthening national assessment systems for CESA and SDG<sub>4</sub>; sector-wide and cross-sector coordination. See the Powerpoint for more details.

### **III. Joint Coordination Mechanism**

The Declaration is a first commitment toward the establishment of a joint CESA-SDG<sub>4</sub>-Education 2030 coordination mechanism that will build on existing mechanisms.

During this plenary group meeting, the following three questions were presented for the group's future reflection:

1. Should the CESA coordination structure be extended to include SDG<sub>4</sub> as a foundation for a joint CESA/SDG<sub>4</sub> mechanism at continental level, to be based in Addis Ababa?
2. Should a Regional Coordination Group (RCG) on SDG<sub>4</sub> for East and Southern Africa (ESA) be established, similar to the RCG<sub>4</sub>-WCA?
3. Would the CESA Thematic Clusters and the two RCG<sub>4</sub> groups (WCA & ESA) report to the CESA/SDG<sub>4</sub> coordination structure, with the RCG<sub>4</sub> groups also reporting to the SDG global mechanism?

The recommendations toward the establishment of the joint coordination mechanism, which were included in the Nairobi Declaration, were not considered as satisfactory as anticipated at their issuance during the conference. In response, the AU has suggested that a meeting take place between the African Union Commission and the UNESCO Regional Offices in Africa to deepen the discussions on the joint mechanism. The group members requested that multiple actors participate in that discussion, in addition to UNESCO.

The RCG<sub>4</sub> Chair informed the group that the recommendations will be further pooled and consolidated by the Global Steering Committee, who will ensure that the Declaration is reflected in the Global Education Meeting (Brussels, December 2018).

### **6. Task Team on Peace Education**

The possibility of creating this task team has been discussed since the group's inception, but there was no clear lead agency. UNESCO reported that several regional partners expect the establishment of such a regional coordination mechanism in this area.

The AU suggested that this task team work with the CESA cluster on peace education which is coordinated by Save the Children International. GPE reiterated that it is crucial to be very clear on the responsibilities accorded to both the CESA cluster and the potential RCG<sub>4</sub>-WCA task team. Clear linkages between these structures and how they link with the regional coordination mechanism (RCM), the global steering committee, etc. must be established.

The Chair proposed a structure be established encompassing a SDG<sub>4</sub> continental coordination group with regional branches in West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa and North Africa. The task team would coordinate in the WCA region from Dakar, where most partners are located, and contribute to the CESA cluster.

FAWE added that these questions must be raised at the meeting suggested by the AU regarding a joint mechanism for continental coordination.

The Chair suggested that Save the Children leads the WCA task team on Peace Education and added that UNESCO would like to strongly contribute to this work. Save the Children will look into the possibility of becoming the lead organization. CONFEJES, which is advancing peace education through youth and sports expressed its interest in joining this task team.

### **7. RCG<sub>4</sub>-WCA Platform Update**

Several updates have been made to the platform:

- Each organization received a login to the platform member space on May 15th.
- The member space has three components:
  - [A list of member contact information](#) (designated focal points)
  - [A calendar](#) of group events
  - [Internal documents](#) that include: joint activities; communication materials; member contributions (to the functioning of the group - budget); working documents (the group's terms of references, work plans, etc.); task team components (each team has its own folder, the orientation note), monitoring reports (including the activity reports) and Plenary and Steering team meeting information (agendas, reports, presentations, useful documents, etc).
- Members are encouraged to share updates to contact information, new events and documents with the Secretariat.
- The task team's member spaces are available too. The Secretariat is currently working with the gender task team on a pilot.
- Links to online [country profiles](#) (WCA countries) include information on the general country overview, Education Ministry structure, the national education system and national plans and assessments. Other sources of information are welcome and can be added to the profiles.

The Secretariat is planning two upcoming meetings as part of the implementation of the recommendations agreed on in the [RCG4-WCA 2016-2017 Activity Report](#):

- To discuss with the task team leads how to improve communication between the task teams and the Plenary group, including through the platform;
- To reflect on how to engage the LEGs in the RCG4's work

A list of the LEG lead agencies is being developed by SYSTeam and will soon be added to the platform's resources and the Secretariat will also include it under the country profiles.

The Secretariat is ready to make updates, including changes to the platform's functionality, to login access and rights upon members' suggestions.

The Chair stated that the RCG4-WCA platform was discussed with AUC colleagues, and rather than create a new AU specific platform, the current platform, meant for the whole group, could be used by the AU as a working tool and to communicate on the clusters, etc. This can be further discussed with the AU if they find it relevant.

All members are invited to share the platform within their network.

## **8. Member updates and Next Plenary Group Meeting**

Member organizations shared their recent and upcoming activities:

- **Save the Children:** is part of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), which recently launched its report "[Education Under Attack 2018](#)". The report tracks attacks on education in 28 countries across the globe. Save the Children WCARO is also preparing to launch a study on the relationship between girls' education and child marriage in the region.
- **AU:** is organizing the "[Innovating Education in Africa Expo](#)," October 4-6 in Dakar, Senegal in collaboration with the Government of Senegal. Any interested partner may contact the AU to get involved.
- **FAWE:** the [Gender Equality Strategy for CESA](#) has been endorsed by the AUC.

- **TALENT:** is organizing a regional workshop at the end of June or in July on curriculum alignment, teacher training and assessment. Another workshop on quality assurance will be organized around November. An advocacy paper on teaching and learning following the PACE outcomes is being developed and will be published shortly.
- **GPE:** the partnership has grown to 67 members and is currently in the design process for two new funding mechanisms – [Knowledge and Innovations Exchange \(KIX\)](#) and the Advocacy and Social Accountability Fund (ASA). KIX seeks to strengthen national education systems and accelerate educational progress by engaging developing countries and other partners in knowledge generation, innovation and capacity strengthening. Both are set to be launched by early next year. ASA aims to build the capacity of civil society by making investments in the capabilities of civic groups.

The date for the next meeting is **Thursday, September 13, 2018**.