

Report

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

Reported by the Secretariat (UNESCO-Dakar)

Date : 13 December 2018

Location : Sheherazade, Mermoz, Dakar, Senegal

Time : 9h00 - 17h00

List of organization members represented:

Africa Network Campaign for Education for All (ANCEFA), Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers of French-speaking Countries (CONFESJES), The Conference of Ministers of Education of French-Speaking Countries (CONFEMEN), Education International, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNESCO Dakar.

Objectives of the plenary group retreat

The meeting sought to address the following themes:

1. Validation of the Steering team proposition
2. Review of the Plenary group's activities in 2018
3. Reporting from the Global Education Meeting (GEM)
4. Screening of the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) videos
5. Members expectations for the RCG4-WCA
6. Future perspectives for the RCG4-WCA in 2019, including resource mobilization
7. Communications and functionality of the RCG4-WCA, and
8. Renewal of membership commitments to the RCG4-WCA

1. Introduction

Members were welcomed by Gwang-Chol Chang, Chair of the RCG4-WCA. The agenda was introduced and adopted by members. Participants in attendance introduced themselves and the Chair introduced the newest member, Charlotte Berquin, focal point for the UNHCR.

The Secretariat requested that participants indicate any themes or topics, which the Secretariat can use to plan the upcoming plenary meetings using the papers at each table. [The Regional Launch of the Global Education Monitoring Report](#), occurred last week (7 December 2018) and several copies of the report (in English) and summaries (in French) are available.

The last Steering Team meeting was held on December 10th, 2018 and the agenda focused on preparation of the plenary group retreat: including the Steering Team proposition; publication of a report on the state of education in Africa; resource mobilization; and a review of the a agenda for the Plenary group retreat.

2. Sharing of Task Team Activities

Each task team focal point presented their activities since September 2018 within small group discussions at their tables. One member of the discussion then reported back to the Plenary group on what was shared:

A. Higher Education (lead: CAMES)

CAMES is developing a national quality assurance framework for West and Central African universities to be discussed at a regional, and later, at a continental level. CAMES is also reflecting, in consultation with non-academic actors, on how universities in WCA engage in community service, particularly in relation to sustainable governance, ecological responsibility etc. Additionally, ERNWCA, which is a member of CAMES, is working on standardizing higher education tools.

B. GENIE (lead: Save the Children; co-leads: FAWE and HI)

GENIE has focused on advocacy recently, including videos on girls' right to education, which were circulated at the Pan-African High Level Conference on Education (PACE) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Financing Conference. A manual developed by UNESCO, UNICEF and FAWE is under review to be presented to Ministers on how gender plays a role in pedagogy. Plan and FAWE, members of GENIE and of a gender responsive education sector planning work group, are developing a strategy on how to implement the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) Gender strategy.

GENIE has made stronger attempts this year to bridge its work on gender with inclusion and hopes to provide more in-country support in 2019 by working more closely with local education groups (LEGs), as well as the IIEP on integrating gender and inclusion into education sector planning. Projects involving mainstreaming inclusion in education in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso are ongoing.

C. Early Childhood (lead: UNICEF)

The Early Childhood Education Task team did not have a lead organization member present but EI, a member of the group, reported that an international conference on Pre-school education was currently taking place in Dakar. EI will share any resources coming out of the meeting. Members highlighted a need to re-activate the task team, which was re-iterated by the Chair.

D. Learning to Live Together Sustainably (lead: tbc)

The Secretariat held a meeting on December 12th to discuss the direction of the task team with interested parties. The task team is not yet active but will focus primarily on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) (specifically the Prevention of violent extremism through education (PVE-E)), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (specifically education for climate change mitigation).

The Chair closed the session by discussing the participation of the un-represented Task teams. In the case of the Technical and Vocation Education (TVET) Task team, the African Development Bank (AfDB) should be the lead but the group is not active. TVET is a very important theme and a new lead or co-lead should be identified if the AfDB cannot take on this role, perhaps the IIEP or IFEF could play larger roles. FAWE commented that the AfDB has a new Director who has placed great emphasis on skills and training, and she should be re-contacted. In addition, what is the status of the letters to be sent to "inactive" members by the Secretariat? These letters will rejuvenate participation in both the Plenary group and certain task teams. The Secretariat will send letters to inactive organizations early January 2019.

3. Validation of the Steering Team Proposition

Houraye Mamadou Anne of FAWE, and current member of the Steering Team (ST), led the discussion on the [ST proposition](#). Houraye indicated that a long consultation process has resulted in a proposition wherein the following areas have been updated:

The composition of the Steering Team should consist of one chair (UNESCO) and focal points from six member organizations representing the RCG4-WCA constituencies as follows:

- *One chair, **UNESCO** (permanent),*
- ***African Union/ADEA** (permanent member),*
- *One UN organization: **ILO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWomen***
- *One multilateral organization: **CONFEMEN, CONFEJES, IFEF, ISESCO***
- *Two civil society organizations: **ANCEFA, FAWE, HI, Plan International, Save the Children***
- *One representative of the following constituencies:*
 - *Higher education networks: **CAMES***
 - *The research community: **CODESRIA, ERNWACA, REESAO***
 - *Teachers' unions: **Education International***
 - *Economic actors/private sector: **AfDB, ECOWAS, GPE, WB***
 - *Youth organizations (no current members)*

Members on the ST will have a 2 year mandate, renewable one time.

Members decided to change the composition of the above categories of constituents: AfDB and GPE should be multilateral organizations. World Bank is part of the UN.

CAMES disagreed with the 7th category, indicating that a representative from one of the 5 sub-categories would result in the exclusion of the others. Each of the subcategories should have a seat on the ST. Members disagreed, in that a ST of too many members would be ineffective. A compromise was reached wherein the 7th category would not be broken into subcategories and that all members of the 7th category would need to be consulted as one constituency before the ST member could make a decision.

CONFEMEN suggested that GPE also become a permanent member of the ST, and voiced concern that an organization with a mandate not entirely devoted to education could become a member of the ST. Additionally, certain organizations do not cover the entire WCA region. It is also important that the Francophonie be represented as the majority of countries in the region are French-speaking.

Houraye responded, the most important permanent member is the AU and will represent CESA interests. The WB and AfDB both have human development and youth strategies which focus on education, which would allow them to represent and determine the education agenda. In terms of the linguistic question, we have to make do as it is a reality of the region that both French and English are represented.

The Chair added that the categories above were derived from a long consultation process, and points of consensus from prior plenary meetings were adopted in the proposition. If the Plenary group adopts this proposition today, one member of the finalized list of constituencies should lead an internal consultation among all of the members listed in their category. Before the end of January, the constituents will communicate their representative to the Secretariat. The leads of each category were agreed upon:

- The UN: UNHCR;
- Multi-lateral organizations: CONFEMEN (pending approval from CONFEMEN's Secretary General)
- Civil society: FAWE
- Final category: CAMES

Houraye added that each of these leads must submit a brief report on the consultation process to the Secretariat in order to ensure that it was inclusive.

Current members of the ST shared their experience. CAMES explained that the work load is not too heavy but individuals are not always available to respond or attend meetings. The Chair indicated that

the ST's engagement was strong at the beginning and has slowly dwindled. Potential new members should consider their availability and the availability of their organization. ANCEFA indicated that the ST is working well but there is a lack of dynamism. It will be important for the new ST to clearly define its role, and define what "coordinating" SDG4 means. FAWE added that participating in the ST demands a large time commitment from the individual and their organization; at the same time, ST members have access to a lot of information and contribute to important discussions.

EI commented that the time commitment could not be too large as it requires meetings only 4 times per year. Houraye responded that this is true but the strategic and political reflection involved can be time consuming. CONFJES asked for a clearer definition of a ST members' responsibilities. Houraye indicated that for 2 years, the ST member will be responsible for reporting to their constituents and representing their perspectives on the ST.

4. A Review of the Plenary Group's Activities in 2018

A. 2018 Activities Report

The Secretariat presented the following overview of the 2018 Activities report, which is currently being drafted by the Secretariat, based on the structure of last year's report:

- I. Introduction*
- II. RCG4-WCA Structure*
 - a. Composition and working modalities*
 - b. Resource mobilization*
- III. Main Activities*
 - a. Key function 1: Provide a regional space for dialogue and communication through regular meetings*
 - b. Key function 2: Facilitate exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise and information, including by means of an online platform*
 - c. Key function 3: Develop joint regional programmes to support national education development in light of SDG4 and its targets*
 - d. Key function 4: Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence in alignment with pre-existing mechanisms*
- IV. Challenges and lessons learned*
- V. Recommendations*
- VI. Conclusion*

The Recommendations section will monitor progress toward the achievement of the recommendations from the 2016-17 report. The Secretariat urged the concerned members to submit their task team questionnaires so the report can be finalized for review. The Secretariat opened the floor to questions or comments; as none were received, the first draft will be shared in January 2019.

B. Review of the meeting on LEG collaboration

Members participated in a meeting concerning [RCG4-WCA-LEG collaboration](#) on October 17th, 2018. During the meeting, the GPE presented on the LEG structure, and members discussed past experience with the LEGS, as well as strategies for engagement.

The next steps include: writing a letter to the LEGs to present the RCG4-WCA and its achievements, including a brochure on the group; mapping members' participation in the WCA country LEGs; and review progress at the retreat. EI indicated that once the letter is sent to the LEGs with a call to action, the LEGs that respond will be targeted for the implementation of collaborative activities.

The Secretariat will share a draft letter and the brochure before the next Plenary reunion for members' feedback.

5. Reporting from the Global Education Meeting (GEM)

Ludovic Levasseur of CONFEMEN, presented on the [GEM](#), held in Brussels, Belgium from December 3 – 5, 2018; Ludovic thanked UNESCO for helping to organize CONFEMEN’s participation. At the meeting, all five global regions were represented. Africa was represented by the AU, which highlighted CESA results. The data was improved in terms of collection and quality thanks to a partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

CONFEMEN participated in the workshop on early childhood education, wherein African countries committed to providing one year of free pre-school education. Throughout the GEM, emphasis was placed on inclusion and access for migrants and displaced children, including in the final “[Brussels Declaration](#).” All the documents, including the Declaration, are available online. [CONFEMEN’s report](#) on the GEM is available on the RCG4-WCA platform.

The Chair indicated that African countries were implicated in the finalization of the Declaration, especially in areas involving higher education and research. It was a dynamic meeting, the first world meeting on education since Incheon; these universal, inclusive meetings are organized every four years. Additionally, the SDG Education 2030 Steering Committee was renewed; in Africa the member states are now Kenya, South Africa, Angola, Benin (tbc) and Burkina Faso. Kenya was named as the vice-president of the African member states. The two co-presidents of the Steering Committee are UNESCO and Japan (which replaced Norway) for 2 years. Japan will preside over the G20 next year and will thus reflect education and training as a G20 priority.

FAWE asked how the RCG4-WCA can influence the global agenda. The Chair replied that in other regions like Latin America and Asia, it is easier to influence the agenda because the regional representing organizations work closely with the regional coordination groups. In Africa, the AU represents the continent and Kenya is the only country currently working closely with the AU. Dialogue between the RCG4-WCA and the AU is absent. Integration of CESA and SDG4 needs to occur simultaneously and the AU needs to expand its focus to include SDG4, in addition to CESA.

FAWE responded that the integration of SDG4-CESA was the topic of PACE. Have we started to address these questions following PACE?

UNESCO has scheduled a meeting with ADEA and the AU but only the Government of Kenya was able to represent the AU. A meeting is being planned for February 2019 in Addis Ababa; the AU has not yet confirmed its participation. It is important to find a way to truly implicate the AU/ADEA in our coordination group.

FAWE reminded members that when the discussion of expanding the group to East and Southern Africa (ESA) was discussed, the group decided to wait until a coordination group was established there first. The Chair responded that it is difficult to unite ESA because there are two hubs: Johannesburg and Nairobi (as well as Addis Ababa which houses the AU). A coordination group exists, but only UN agencies are members.

At the global level, a website has been established: sdg4education2030.org.

6. Screening of GEMR videos

Members previewed the first draft of two videos from the Regional launch of the GEMR, which will be posted on the new RCG4-WCA Twitter account: [@Ed2030Africa](#).

Members provided suggestions to improve the videos: add images of migrants themselves and education settings on the ground in WCA so as not to see only the faces of the GEMR regional launch speakers; add the RCG4-WCA website and Twitter handle; add text to help the viewer understand key messages; correct grammar; add statistics and facts from the GEMR; and ensure that the two videos are differentiated.

The videos will be shared via the listserv for final comments following the close of the retreat.

7. Members expectations for the RCG4-WCA

Members participated in a group activity to determine their expectations for the RCG4-WCA. The following list of individual and common expectations was developed:

Common Expectations	Individual Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in functional thematic groups and have the opportunity to be an observer in certain groups (to benefit from the information exchanged) • Federate actors, with a view to creating synergies and sharing best practices and supporting the implementation of SDG4 in countries • Strengthen exchanges and cooperation between the different actors within the sector • Ensure that the strategic orientations proposed to Ministers are aligned with the strategic orientations of all members (speak with one voice, no conflicting messages) • Provide a framework for analysis and monitoring of SDG4 activities in order to better define strategic options and directions • Inclusion of vulnerable and/or marginalized groups in education systems • Knowledge production • Take joint action based on the comparative advantages of member organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the place and key role of the teaching profession in the success of SDG4 • Exchange and sharing of information that can be reported back to Ministers • Emphasize informal and non-formal education in achieving SDG4 • Monitor university governance, undergraduate-graduate-doctorate reform, quality assurance and management of higher education information systems • Reach the objectives of the continental education agendas • Advance FAWE's agenda by promoting gender through education and in education • Ensure that refugee populations are included in educational planning • Ensure that the education and lifelong learning agenda is promoted in national education

After 2 years of existence, FAWE commented that the functioning task teams function well and have succeeded in mobilizing member participation, more so than the Plenary group. One major objective for 2019 should be to mobilize the participation of the AU. The Chair added that the Secretariat should work on strategies to revitalize participation in the Plenary group, while focusing on the common interests of members.

8.Future perspectives for the RCG4-WCA in 2019

A. Brief review of the 2018 Work Plan

The Secretariat presented the [2018-19 Work Plan](#), which was previously developed by the Plenary group. The Secretariat suggested that the Work Plan requires the following changes:

- Update activities based on the new key functions (there are now 4, rather than 5)
- Activities need to be re-formulated into concrete actions
- Deadlines should be included
- Results need to be defined, with indicators so the group can determine whether these results have been achieved or not (ie monitor the work plan)

FAWE and CONFEMEN suggested that the Plenary group review the Work Plan during each meeting, not just once per year. The Secretariat should continually monitor progress so group activities are geared toward the Work Plan's objectives. These changes would allow for the Work Plan to become a real tool to facilitate the RCG4-WCA's work. EI and the Chair agreed that results need to be defined for each activity. The activities that are proposed are very general, and therefore cannot be easily monitored. Furthermore, the current activities do not necessarily correspond to each members' skills

and expertise, this is better captured in the task teams' work plans but should be incorporated here as well. The Secretariat needs to collect information from members and suggest changes for review at the next meeting.

B. Publication of a report on the state of education in Africa

At PACE, one of the biggest questions surrounded how to bridge SDG4 and CESA reporting, as the AU would like to periodically report on CESA implementation. The Chair suggested that the RCG4-WCA prepare a thematic report on regional topics that could be overlooked due to several factors, including lack of data. The RCG4-WCA could pick 1 – 3 topics for case studies, mobilize partners and recruit a consultant to prepare the report. If certain themes are aligned with a task team, the task team could work on the case study, otherwise overarching themes that unite multiple members would be ideal. Members agreed on the following themes:

- Non formal education, including skills, training, teachers, community service
- The relevance and quality of education

In terms of coordinating and financing the report, FAWE suggested reaching out to research institutions within the group who could have funding and who could co-Chair the study, employing their research expertise. CAMES suggested that a TOR be drawn up, and CONFEMEN suggested UNESCO take the lead. The Chair asked FAWE to work on a TOR for the non-formal research topic and UNESCO develop the quality and relevance of education TOR. These TORs should be shared with the Plenary group by mid-February and a second draft would be ready in mid-March. The study would take 5 to 6 months to complete, and it could be published in November 2019.

The Secretariat will discuss possibilities with CODESRIA and ROCARE. The TORs will be developed and will be circulated for peer review.

C. Resource Mobilization

- I. Member contributions: during the Steering Team meeting, it was decided that the Secretariat will develop a list of activities for 2019 and their costs. Members can then decide if their organization can fund certain activities. Due to time constraints, the 2018-19 "[Member Contributions](#)" document was not reviewed.
- II. External resource mobilization opportunities: the biggest opportunities are currently [GPE's KIX](#) and the Education Cannot Wait Fund. To submit proposals for these funds, the group must prepare concept notes in advance.

The Chair suggested that the Secretariat manage an online discussion to determine the most appropriate themes for funding so the corresponding concept notes can be developed. If a member organization would like to take the lead on preparing the concept note and the funding application, funds will arrive in that organization's account, and they would then lead a collaborative project with other members.

9. Communications and functionality of the RCG4-WCA Workshop

The objective of this session was to determine concrete actions to improve communication. Members discussed several questions in small groups and reported back in plenary.

A. External communication:

- Articles and information should be posted by task teams and members on the platform and then shared with the Technical and Financial Partners (PTF) in each country.
- An external newsletter with links to our articles and posts would drive traffic to our platform.

B. Internal communication:

- The Secretariat sends many emails, it is difficult to determine what is new information vs. reminders. A monthly/bi-monthly newsletter could resolve this issue.

- Task teams should ensure that they share their activities with the group, and post more information on the platform.
- The Secretariat should be included in each task team's mailing list so that relevant information can be forwarded to the Plenary group.
- Invite other members to individual members' events and activities to establish greater understanding of each organization's work and areas for collaboration.
- Plan together in order to avoid short deadlines and the busiest times of year for members.
- Ensure that members have enough time to respond to messages.
- Instead of using attachments, the Secretariat's messages should use links to the platform when sharing documents.
- Add group and members' events to the platform's calendar.
- Develop an alert that would notify members when new resources (ie. publications, documents etc.) are added to the platform.

The above suggestions will be reviewed by the Secretariat and their potential implementation will be discussed with members.

10. Conclusion

The Chair thanked members for attending the retreat. Due to time constraints, the renewal of membership commitments to the RCG4-WCA was postponed to the following meeting.

Participants agreed on **April 2, 2019** as the date for the next plenary meeting.