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EDUCATION
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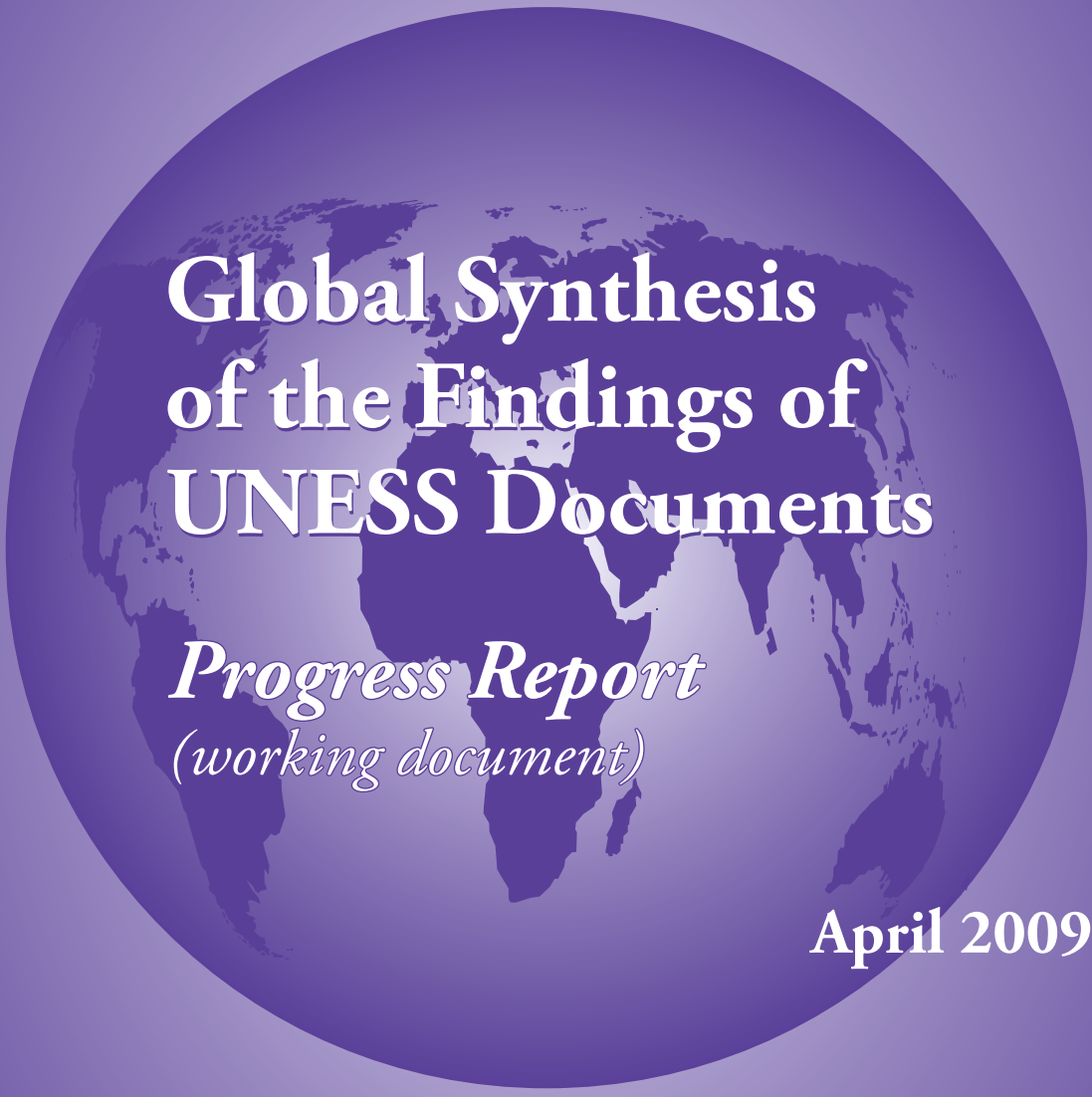

Global Synthesis of the Findings of UNESS Documents

Progress Report

(working document)

April 2009

Section for Education Policy Analysis and Strategies (EPS)
Division for Education Strategies and Capacity Building (ESB)

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO National Education
Support Strategy (UNESS)

Education Sector

Global Synthesis of the Findings of UNESS Documents

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Foreword

This Global Synthesis summarizes the findings of over 80 country-based UNESS documents on national educational challenges, government policies and development partner priorities. Together with a number of entry points where UNESCO can make a difference, it analyses not only areas of strength and comparative advantage but those where improvement is needed as well. It builds on the regional syntheses, conducted by the respective Regional Bureaux.

This study has to be read in context. The goals to which the world committed to in 2000 – the Education for All goals and MDGs – call for much stronger coordination and cooperation at international, regional and country levels. This is our mandate as coordinator of the Education for All drive and it is all the more essential in the context of today's financial and economic crisis. It is my personal belief that the analysis that follows constitutes a key contribution to this mandate and represents an important step forward for the Education Sector. Three factors underpin this conviction.

First, never before has a sector-wide, means-and-ends, self-analysis been conducted within the Education Sector at country level. Does our work match real needs? Is it based on a sound analysis of educational challenges? The UNESS process has been an opportunity to explore this. It has encouraged us to take a dispassionate systemic look at the development of education and its end purpose: to ensure quality learning for children, youth and adults.

Second, the UNESS initiative has afforded an opportunity for UNESCO's education specialists worldwide to work in close cooperation. If the UN system is joining hands and resources to deliver assistance as one at country level, it follows that, as part of that system, we must improve our capacity to do likewise. UNESCO education specialists have accordingly joined together to analyse problems and difficulties faced by countries and regions. Adopting a holistic approach to the understanding of complex and many-faceted problems reduces the risk of oversights and overlaps. It promotes a comprehensive vision of education throughout life that underpins the EFA goals.

Finally, and perhaps most important of all, the Organization is delving into the question of relevance – relevance not just of its cooperation in education but in the context of education for personal fulfilment and for development in the broadest sense – economic, social and political. The analysis confronts, head on, the tendency of development assistance to education to target access and internal efficiency with little thought being

given to outcome and effectiveness, to the overarching question: "what is the purpose of education?"

In closing, I should like to emphasize two points. First, what follows is not a UNESCO cooperation strategy per se but rather a conceptual framework for looking at what is happening on the ground and what might be done to improve our way of working. Important issues are raised in the following pages that deserve reflection and further analysis at every point of the intervention process. Secondly, while it is intended to be a working tool for field offices, many country UNESS documents are not yet complete. Until they are, the data they contain cannot be presumed definitive. Even in "completed" form, UNESS documents should be considered as "active files" that require regular updating in light of new information.

These documents greatly serve our work in education at country level and our Member States. It is my pleasure to commend all those who have contributed to this initiative.

Nicholas Burnett
Assistant Director-General for Education

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Introduction

Launched in 2006, the UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS) initiative was conceived as a means of reinforcing the:

- Coherence of UNESCO's cooperative programme in education;
- Relevance of its response to the expressed needs of Member States;
- Synergy of its actions with those of various other development partners in country;

Organization's capacity to meet the challenges of its mandate by building on areas where it has comparative advantage.

Carried out by concerned UNESCO Field Offices (FOs) in close collaboration with relevant national authorities and development partner agencies, it has involved a critical, in-depth analysis of national educational needs, challenges and priorities, as well as UNESCO's delivery capacities.

By providing FOs with an evidence-based analytical framework, the UNESS documents are expected to contribute significantly to the preparation of realistic cooperative programmes for educational development in Member States. They encompass all UNESCO-proposed interventions, be they Regular Programme or extra-budgetary projects, as well as in the context of UNDAF processes and, of course, as part of wider partnerships with non-UN agencies. They are expected to strengthen UNESCO's global mandate for education, particularly as it relates to EFA, while providing an enabling environment for fulfilling its five functions, namely: laboratory of ideas, clearing house, standard-setter, capacity-builder in Member States and catalyst for international cooperation.

Compiled and analysed at the sub-regional or regional level, the country-based UNESS documents will constitute building blocks for regional cooperation strategies. The four Regional Bureaux for Education have been tasked with the preparation of regional syntheses of the UNESS documents. Most regional syntheses have been produced. The global synthesis, on the other hand, has been the responsibility of the Education Sector (ED) at Headquarters. Building on the regional syntheses carried out in five UNESCO regions as well as the country UNESS documents as necessary, ED has identified the emerging global trends in different regions and groups of countries. Concretely, they shed light on a number of macro-needs and priorities and demonstrate the global inter-connectedness between what some assume are only local or regional problems. Mindful of its own priorities in education and alerted to possible gaps in international cooperation, UNESCO,

together with its development partners, will be better equipped in the future to address them.

Some 85 UNESS documents at various stages of preparation underpin this study. As more are completed according to the agreed standard, the content of the regional and global findings will be refined thereby enhancing their usefulness not only to FOs but to Member States as well. Although only a limited number of UNESS documents highlight lessons drawn from UNESCO's past cooperation, all nonetheless provide valuable insights into ways whereby UNESCO can improve its cooperation. One UNESS document calls attention to the tendency for past UNESCO interventions to focus more on activities and projects than on strategies and results. Another, noting the mismatch between changing global priorities and enduring local needs, calls attention to the lack of continuity in UNESCO actions at country level. A third document argues that many UNESCO interventions have suffered from inadequate prior consultation and contextual analysis. Most documents indicate that the limited resources available to UNESCO were spread too thinly in different locations, with a corresponding significant reduction in impact. Regrettably, owing to the absence of formal or systematic project evaluation, an accurate assessment of the impact of technical assistance in support of national education development could not be made.

The UNESS analyses point to a number of shortcomings. Examples are fragmented interventions, under-budgeting in relation to the stated programme goals, and lack of systematic analysis of real or expressed needs. The large number of education projects and activities per country sheds light on the problem of dispersal of UNESCO's actions in its Member States, a problem probably aggravated by top-down planning processes.

In recent years, however, and as the UNESS analyses make clear, UNESCO has improved its programme focus. There is growing evidence of efforts to avoid overlap with other partners and to address the support gaps in government-identified priority areas. This report records these emerging trends along with the areas where further improvement is required in order to achieve a more relevant, coherent, efficient and effective cooperation programme in education.

The present report consists of five substantive chapters, followed by three annexes. Following this introduction,

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the socio-economic state of play within the context of the current global economic crisis that is impacting educational development;

Chapter 2 analyses the needs and challenges of governments expressed in the UNESS documents, as well as their emerging trends globally and by region;

Chapter 3 explains how donor agencies are responding to national educational priorities and provides a schematic map that shows the thematic focuses of donors. Provided as well is an assessment of whether and to what extent they overlap with UNESCO's work and support is given in accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness;

Chapter 4 examines various country needs and priorities that appear to be insufficiently supported by development partners;

Chapter 5 clarifies the limitations of this report and concludes with comments on the future of the UNESS process.

There are four annexes at the end of the report that provide a broader picture of the UNESS process, as well as the methodology used in the preparation of the present document.

1. Recent developments in the World

The present report has been prepared amid a financial crisis the likes of which the world has not witnessed since the 1930s. In the years following the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the commitment of world leaders and the international community to reduce poverty by half by the year 2015 offered hope to the poor countries of the world. Indeed, during that time, there was clear evidence of positive results: extreme poverty was on the decline, child mortality fell off, access to clean water improved, progress in the achievement of the EFA goals was measurable, and Official Development Aid (ODA) was increasing. Notwithstanding the foregoing, however, the world was nevertheless unfortunately off track on most development goals even before the crisis.

Endemic poverty was and is rampant in many countries, particularly in much of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Problems are legion and growing: un-enrolled school-age children, illiteracy, and young people with no chance either of continuing their education after primary education or of finding paid employment.

Today, the international community is understandably alarmed that past achievements will be jeopardized if not irreversibly compromised by the present crisis and that all other shortcomings will be seriously aggravated. It is feared that international aid, already insufficient before the crisis, will decline not only in the short term but over an extended period. There are in fact already signs that donor countries are back-tracking on their aid-commitments and are either decreasing their contributions to international aid or, in some cases, even completely terminating previous support to certain least developed countries.

It is, as yet, too early to have a clear picture of the magnitude of the impact of the crisis on economic development and social services, whether in developed or less developed countries. Most experts, however, anticipate that impacts will be extensive, leaving an enduring legacy of human development setbacks in many countries, including reduced opportunities for income generation, a rise in already high unemployment levels, diminished gains from trade, shrinking support for basic services, cuts in government budgets and pressure on international aid.

The foregoing is not expected to spare UNESCO's cooperative programme in its Member States. Strong calls are being made to reaffirm the central role played by education in

all countries, be they industrialized or less advanced. Long familiar themes are recalled, namely the role of education in economic growth, technological advances, poverty reduction, improvement of health, income growth, promotion of equal opportunities and progress in democracy. Member States are being urged to persevere in their efforts to demonstrate that education is one of the most viable channels for early economic recovery and enduring development. Countries are encouraged to resist efforts to curb public spending on social services, especially education, and the international community must become no less vigorous in its support of development assistance.

More than ever, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness must be upheld. UNESCO, for its part, must become selective in its future cooperation programmes by avoiding the duplication and fragmentation of its resources and capacities by the improved alignment of the Organization's development assistance programmes with those of its partners. Areas inviting special attention include improving the relevance of education, with due attention being paid to technical and vocational education, to the provision of appropriate learning opportunities in the framework of lifelong learning, and to entrepreneurial education. These three areas show special promise in terms of their potential to help countries recover from the current financial crisis and achieve their MDGs.

2. Emerging trends in educational needs and priorities

Progress in education development has, over the past few years, been uneven both between countries and in respect to education levels. With the exception of a few countries and particularly those suffering the effects of internal or external conflict, achievements in primary education since Dakar are undisputable. Yet as the UNESS documents make abundantly clear, progress in primary education development has carried a penalty in the form of increased pressure on post-primary levels, not only in countries nearing universal primary schooling, but also in those with low primary enrolment.

The emphasis placed on primary education by both governments and the international community has been partly responsible for reduced attention to other levels of education and, as a consequence, for increased gaps and corresponding needs at these levels. Whereas resources have declined for secondary education, primary education graduates, for their part, have appreciably increased with predictable bottlenecks being the result. Providing appropriate learning opportunities and job skills to primary school leavers have thus become pressing issues.

Global

As an analysis of country needs reported in a sample of 36 country studies makes abundantly clear, the challenges are spread out across the sector by level of education. The distribution of selected thematic challenges across levels of education can be presented in tabular form as follows:

Table 2.1
Distribution of education challenges by theme and by level of education

Themes / Levels	ECCE	Primary	Lower sec.	Upper sec.	Higher	TVET	Non-formal	All levels
Coverage	17.5%	**21.3%**	15.3%	14.8%	9.3%	10.1%	11.7%	100.0%
Quality of education	13.5%	**21.2%**	13.5%	13.8%	12.6%	16.6%	8.6%	100.0%
Educational resources	6.9%	22.9%	**17.6%**	**19.7%**	17.0%	12.2%	3.7%	100.0%
Financial resources	15.3%	14.1%	9.4%	11.8%	**21.2%**	**18.8%**	9.4%	100.0%
Institutional development	**30.0%**	6.7%	3.3%	3.3%	6.7%	**33.3%**	**16.7%**	100.0%
Information management	12.0%	**20.0%**	8.0%	8.0%	12.0%	**20.0%**	**20.0%**	100.0%
System management	8.6%	**38.6%**	15.7%	5.7%	8.6%	11.4%	11.4%	100.0%
System planning	**28.1%**	19.3%	8.8%	8.8%	12.3%	12.3%	10.5%	100.0%
Donor coordination	11.1%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	**22.2%**	**22.2%**	**22.2%**	100.0%
Total	**14.6%**	**21.4%**	**13.9%**	**13.8%**	**12.6%**	**14.0%**	**9.7%**	**100.0%**

Note: The above table shows the distribution of items reported in each category at each level of education. The end-of-line total is 100 per cent since all items of each category are reported at a given level. Items, for which the level of education was not specified, are not included in the Table. In the columns, the total refers to the percentage of each level in all reported items.

Table 2.1 clearly shows that challenges appear relatively higher in respect to **primary education** (21.4 per cent) than for other levels of education. The greatest challenge in primary education appears to be the management issue followed closely by the issues of access and quality. Conversely, the problem of the coordination of primary education seems less serious than for other levels of education.

In **early childhood care and education** (ECCE), the areas that appear in the greatest need for immediate attention are essentially institutional. In many countries, ECCE is still a nascent sub-sector. For it to reach its full potential, what is needed is a proper institutional environment underpinned by an unambiguous policy and clear means-and-ends implementation strategies.

For **secondary education**, the problem is more one of educational resources and specifically teachers, instructional materials and infrastructure. The rapid development of primary education has resulted in the siphoning off of educational resources needed at the secondary level to cope with increasing enrolment demands at this level.

The needs in both **technical and vocational education** (TVET) and higher education are similar to the extent that the two sub-sectors require increased financial support and better coordination for their further development. Here again, progress in primary education and, to a lesser extent, at secondary level, has been achieved at the expense of

technical and higher education, both of which appear to be developing in an uncoordinated manner. Management issues and sectoral coordination clearly require immediate attention.

The problem of **statistics and information management**, present at all levels, seems particularly serious in regards to technical and vocational education and non-formal education. Regrettably, while the under-performance of these two sub-sectors is an obvious issue where targeted assistance is clearly needed, the countries concerned seem powerless to channel the often-fragmented interventions and diverse providers of vocational and non- formal education in more productive ways. Addressing the problems of institutional shortcomings and donor coordination is clearly urgently needed.

The following Table is a rank-ordered list of the issues common to more than half of the 36 sampled country studies. They concern all levels of education.

Table 2.2
Most frequently reported educational issues in UNESS documents

Item	Category	Countries (%)
Coverage	Access	97%
Relevance to labour market	Quality	78%
Rural/urban disparities	Access	75%
Data/statistics	Data management	67%
Gender issue	Access	67%
Income-based disparities	Access	64%
Funding gap	Financial resources	61%
Accreditation system	Quality	58%
Learning outcomes	Quality	56%
Programme monitoring & evaluation	System management	53%

Table 2.2 makes clear that, globally and regardless of level, **access to education** remains the major problem in most countries. Those who suffer the most are the children of poor parents, especially those living in rural areas. Many countries experience difficulty in setting up functioning education information and monitoring systems. Other difficulties trace back to the problem of *accreditation and corresponding learning outcomes* and *the relevance of the education system to the labour market and to the lives of those living outside the "marketized economy"*. The frequency with which countries raised these issues is revealing, especially since several traditionally quality-related areas like teacher training or curriculum reform were cited less frequently. Overall, it appears that some attention

has been given to improving the internal efficiency of national education systems while relatively neglecting the more compelling issue of external effectiveness.

Regional

In calling attention to the global trends in educational development, it must be remembered that there are issued and problems specific to each region as the following clearly shows.

Asia and the Pacific (APA)

An analysis of 25 APA countries suggests that universal primary education (UPE) constitutes a relatively higher degree of challenge than for other levels of education. If, on the other hand, one examines needs at the sub-regional level, the picture is somewhat different: for South Asia and South East Asia, primary education poses the greatest challenge whereas for Central Asia, it is ECCE and TVET, and for the Pacific States, it is the expansion of secondary education. It is worth noting that the need to develop non-formal education was especially emphasized by the South Asian countries.

- The wealth of information contained in the UNESS documents made it possible to bring to light a number of meaningful common trends and needs. These are as follows:
- UPE is possible but can only be achieved by solving the problems of access and transition of girls, the poor, minorities, and children living in remote rural areas;
- Progress in UPE is exerting fast-growing pressure on secondary education which needs to expand capacity and coverage as well as go through fundamental reform; there is growing awareness about the importance of ECCE but inadequate commitments from governments and development partners;
- Quality of education in terms of learning outcome and job market orientations are becoming major issues;
- Fundamental reform of contents, delivery systems and teaching/learning methods needed for education and learning in the 21st century, especially to expand learning of life skills and work skills;
- There is growing recognition of the role of TVET and the potential of non-formal education, but inadequate commitment of support and actions;
- Planning and management capacities and mechanisms (including EMIS) still need strengthening at all levels of the education system.

Following are the major issues cited in the UNESS documents as priority areas of need:

- Increasing **coverage** by addressing marginalization caused by urban/rural, income-based disparities and gender and minority discrimination.
- Improving the **quality** of education through better pre- and in-service teacher education programmes and curricula that are more responsive to socio-economic development and to learning outcomes.
- Minority **languages, accreditation systems** and teaching methods.
- Enhancing **management**, programme monitoring and evaluation.

Sub-Saharan Africa (AFR)

The findings of the UNESS documents point to the need to invest more in post-basic education, while coping with pressing challenges like governance, economic difficulties, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and continued demographic growth that impact on education provision.

The impact of these challenges is somewhat different when looking at individual countries or sub-regions. In **West Africa**, adult illiteracy, inequity and poverty constitute particularly serious concerns. These three factors, when added to cultural factors, have undermined government efforts to provide quality education to all. The daunting challenge in **Central Africa and the Great Lakes sub-region**, on the other hand, is to overcome the terrible legacy of internal and external conflict by redoubling efforts to reconstruct the education systems of the countries concerned. In **Southern and Eastern Africa**, the HIV/AIDS pandemic coupled with high levels of illiteracy, together constitute enormous obstacles to education development. Most countries are currently concentrating on mitigating the collateral damage to education systems and on the improvement of living conditions of teachers, students and the growing numbers of orphans.

The challenges identified in 26 UNESS documents available are as follows:

- **Low and inequitable access to different levels of education** attributable to gender, socio-economic and geographical location disparities. As access to primary education has increased, the emerging challenge is, first, determining and, second, providing the education and training needs of young people preparing to join the labour market (EFA objective 3) and adults who are illiterate. The need to develop secondary education and TVET to accommodate primary school graduates has been emphasized loudly and often. But since progress is not expected to keep up with demand in the short term, urgent alternatives are needed. Appropriate NFE learning opportunities should be explored including public-private sector partnerships (businesses, religious bodies, relevant NGOs and the like). Those who have dropped out of school before completing their primary school education or have

been unsuccessful in gaining entrance to secondary school need opportunities to learn the fundamentals of income generating activities (trade, entrepreneurial competencies, etc). Since access to tertiary education remains low in sub-Saharan Africa in comparison to other regions, the UNESS findings make clear that this level needs extensive reform if it is to meet the requirements of labour market and international standards.

- **Poor education quality is the direct cause of reduced internal efficiency and unsatisfactory learning outcomes**. Indicators include low retention rates especially at the end of primary education, high repetition and dropout rates, and weak adaptation of the curricula to the social, economic and cultural contexts. Among the challenges common to most countries, the following recur with the greatest frequency:
  - the resistance of qualified teachers to rural area assignments;
  - over-crowded classes in urban schools;
  - the difficulty of providing education in the suburban buffer zones where poverty, illiteracy and petty crimes are rampant; and
  - the issue of relevance.

  One way of addressing the problem of relevance is improving the curriculum so that it is more responsive to both personal and societal needs. For all its merits, this approach carries penalties, however. The problem with matching content and method to the needs of each target group is that it runs the real risk of "ghetto-izing" children, of creating two (or more) education systems, one for the "haves" – those who can afford the best schools and private tutoring – and the other for the "have-nots". It is the unusual child who can escape from the ghetto of the "have-nots" to join the "haves."

- **The high prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic** undermines national efforts to accelerate progress towards EFA. Many countries are seeking to address this challenge through teacher education, development of appropriate curricula, introduction of sexual education in schools, school meals for vulnerable children and AIDS orphans, teacher training and training of school managers on how to best handle the issue.
- **Poor system management and administration:** several UNESS documents suggest that one of the major obstacles to sustained education development is weak institutional capacity in relation to policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The education management information system known as EMIS is often mentioned as a weak area that needs immediate attention. Some reports mention the lack of proper legal instruments or the inappropriateness of legislative frameworks that guide the management of education.

Arab States region (ARB)

In the Arab States region (ARB), despite considerable progress, a number of significant challenges remain. Among them, the following deserve special attention:

- The challenge of having to improve education quality while, at the same time, further increasing access to education at all levels is proving to be daunting for some countries. **Regional and gender disparities**, often aggravated by poverty, are one aspect of the problem. Most of the Arab countries have attained the medium level for the Gender EFA Index (GEI) for countries with data, but only three (Jordan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates) have achieved gender parity at both the primary and secondary levels.
- **Management and governance** issues are in need of attention, especially as regards the increased participation of women in management positions, managing cultural diversity, improving management of the system through capacity building and developing reliable databases to support planning and monitoring.
- **Pedagogical and curricular improvement** including curriculum reform, introduction of new subjects reflecting the evolution of science and technology, improved science education, and the introduction and/or reinforcement of new information and communication technologies (ICTs).
- Building an **education system that is more relevant** to national socio-economic needs: high on the policy agenda are: the reorganization of the university and of technical and vocational education, increasing the role of the private sector, improving technical and vocational education and linking secondary education with development requirements.
- **Modifying national language policies** to reflect the need for: improving the teaching of the Arabic language, promoting local languages; and opening the education system toward foreign languages instruction.
- The **security situation** in the occupied Palestinian Territories, Iraq and Sudan is not favourable to investment in educational development at the present time since the bulk of donor assistance often goes to humanitarian relief. The challenge lies in getting education in emergencies accepted as part of humanitarian response.
- In Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian Territories, Sudan, and the countries of the Maghreb, the **brain drain** problem is a persistent one.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

For Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), twelve country studies served as the basis for the following analysis.

- **Access** to secondary education is a challenged issue. Consistent with the findings reported in the global analysis, the expansion of primary education in the region is

exerting a growing pressure on secondary education. Notwithstanding, problems linger with primary education in many countries. There is an abiding concern to reach and teach the marginalized. As a continent with significant socio-economic disparities, many Latin American countries are struggling to reach the disenfranchised and particularly those living in the rural areas and ethnic minorities.

- Raising the **quality of education** at all levels is another important priority of the region with teachers being the main area of their concern. Teacher morale seems low; pre- and in-service training and the need for a new vision in respect to teacher career development policies invite special attention. Accreditation systems are reported to be inexistent or inadequate in many countries, particularly as regards ECCE and higher education. For some countries, TVET and tertiary education are judged to be poorly aligned to national socio-economical challenges.
- **Management and supervision-related issues** along with programme monitoring and evaluation are reportedly weak and doubtless contribute to reduced quality. Half the UNESS documents analysed point out that the decentralization process initiated in the 1990s has been a failure. Empirically-supported evidence suggests that poorly managed decentralization has led to a low quality system and an increase of disparities.

Europe

Concerning Europe, a report entitled "Education Development and Cooperation in Europe: What Prospects for UNESCO?" was prepared by specialists as a contribution to the UNESS process. The findings are based on material contained in four country UNESS documents as well as a wealth of information provided by various regional and international agencies. The report explains a number of key trends and challenges in European education, compares several key indicators, and analyses issues of common interest, namely governance, networking and partnerships.

This report makes clear that while education is comparatively well developed in virtually all countries, performance in certain specific areas is heterogeneous. Most South-East European countries, the so-called "transition" countries, are faced with education challenges arising from **post-conflict situations and the presence of minority groups**:

- Education policies in these countries are compelled to strike a delicate balance between the triple objective of universality, nation building and the inclusion of minorities.
- They often have to deal with outdated curriculum and teaching methods, declining teacher motivation linked to low professional status, and ill-adapted networks of school facilities.

In 2000, EU governments committed to the strategic objective for the coming decade, namely "becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". The regional response to the EU strategy has been the framing of education policies shared by most countries in the EU-27 area.

- For higher education and as reflected in the Bologna process, building a strong information base as a precondition for excellence.
- For primary and secondary education, a set of concrete objectives to be achieved by 2010 including:
  - no more than 10 per cent of early school-leavers;
  - 20 per cent decrease in sub-standard in-school reading levels;
  - at least 85 per cent of young people completing upper secondary education;
  - increase of at least 15 per cent in the number of tertiary graduates in mathematics, science and technology with a corresponding decrease in the gender imbalance;
  - 2.5 per cent of the adult population actively participating in lifelong learning.

  Progress reports make clear that, using agreed-upon indicators to monitor progress, the above objectives will not be met.

Improving the governance of education systems is a concern shared by all countries in the Europe region. Experiments in decentralizing education administration and strengthening school autonomy, in introducing new financing and accounting mechanisms and in creating independent agencies to support education ministries are currently under way.

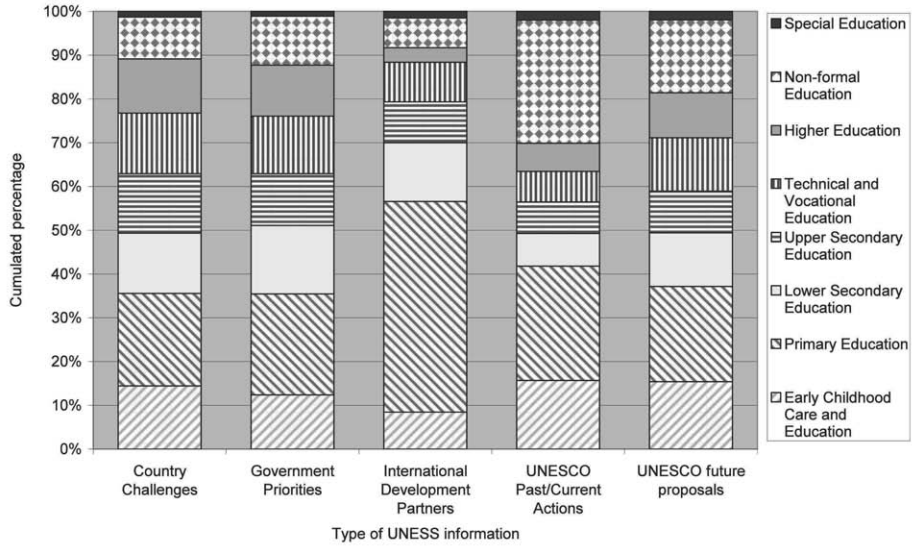
3. A plethora of development agencies: prospects for UNESCO

This chapter contains an examination of the agencies and donor countries (or their groupings) that are most active (or frequently quoted) in education, globally and/or by region. The thematic areas and sub-sector focus of donors are explained along with where and how they overlap with those of UNESCO. It shows whether external assistance is shaped by the need to share the burden, as a result of inter-agency competition, according to the "first come, first serve" principle, or instead in the spirit of aid effectiveness and alignment. Finally, in an effort to better understand the extent to which donor concentration occurs in countries of comparatively lesser need at the expense of needier ones, the chapter looks at the relative strength, by sub-sector and by thematic area, of the match between stated national needs/priorities and donor support.

Global trends: support by level of education

In the previous chapter, the educational needs and governments' priorities for national educational development have been analyzed globally and by region, on the basis of the country-based UNESS documents prepared by UNESCO Field Offices. Globally speaking, and based on a sample of 36 countries, the needs for educational development are relatively evenly spread, with slightly higher proportion of needs expressed for primary education (Table 2.1 and Graph 3.1).

Graph 3.1
Comparison of country needs and partner responses



The relative weight and frequencies of concerns expressed as needs in the UNESS documents were correlated to the interventions of international development agencies, as shown in Graph 3.1. According to this analysis, in the 36 sampled countries, the educational challenges, notwithstanding the slightly higher proportion for primary education, are fairly evenly distributed across all levels. These challenges appear to be well reflected in government priorities.

By contrast, international partner interventions betray an overwhelming concern for primary education: Fully half the partner-assisted interventions are directed at that level. This concentration reflects the commitment of the international community to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015. Several UNESS documents support this conclusion. For example, the Bangladesh analysis makes explicit reference to the challenges arising in connection with its efforts to achieve the MDG and EFA goals. The Gabon document speaks of the need for "international cooperation (…) to support national efforts towards the achievement of EFA goals".

The concentration of interventions at the primary level has produced a levelling off, often at the expenses of other educational sub-sectors.

Box 3.1
Trade-offs in sector investment

More analyses are needed to determine whether the emphasis on primary education has had what economists call "opportunity costs", that is to say prejudicial effects on other components of the education system. The analysis of the UNESS documents suggests some food for thought.

In Vanuatu, scarce financial resources have meant that, short of drastically cutting expenditure on post-primary education, basic education for all is, in a word, unattainable. For Bangladesh, the trade-off for the current emphasis on EFA has resulted in reduced quality. In the case of Nepal, seriously overcrowded classes are the consequence whereas the Philippines, lacking classroom space, has had to resort to three to four shifts a day.

On the other hand, of the 33 developing countries in the sample, 17 having over 100 per cent gross enrolment ratios in primary education were twice as vocal in expressing their desire to expand access to post-primary education as the 16 remaining countries, those with ratios below 100 per cent. It is far from clear at the time of writing how governments will address this challenge.

In some countries, advances in universal basic education are leading to shifts in government priorities. In India, TVET and tertiary education rank among top priorities. In Kiribati and Vietnam, where UPE is all but a reality, the former has shifted its focus to the expansion of secondary education whereas the latter, with a growing local demand for skilled labour, is looking to expand TVET. Even in countries like Niger, where universal access to primary education is still far away, increased numbers of those with primary school leaving certificates are creating a demand for "post-basic education (and particularly technical/vocational education) that was neglected during the first implementation stage of the 10-Year Education Programme".

In sum, there appears to be a need to focus on two fronts: a) improve quality in primary education; and b) and increase accessibility in post-primary education. Left unattended, the result may be a loss of education benefits in terms of employability and, as reported by Morocco, a long-term threat to a sustained family demand for education: "For most people, literacy and education lead to a dead-end. The longer this phenomenon continues, the more likely the disillusion about these skills will grow, probably with long-term drastic consequences."

Where primary education is concerned, UNESCO interventions appear to be more responsive to country needs than those of other development partners. A notable exception, however, exists in the case of non-formal education where there seems to be a significantly higher proportion of projects than what appears in individual country needs

and priorities (Graph 4.2). This situation obviously reflects the global priority given by UNESCO to literacy programmes at country level.

Overall, UNESCO support favours initiatives that clearly relate to EFA. The focus on EFA goals has translated into relatively weaker support to other levels of education. UNESCO's focus on EFA, especially non-primary, basic education compares distinctively with UN agencies' actions as well as with other agencies, as illustrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Intervention distribution by education level and by category of partners

Levels	**Bilateral agencies**	**Financial institutions**	**UN agencies**
ECCE and primary education	57%	65%	96%
Post-basic, including higher education	43%	35%	4%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Table 3.2 shows that non-UN agency interventions have been relatively balanced across levels of education. The predominant share of ECCE and primary education in UN agencies interventions is not surprising, since, other than UNESCO which is dealt with separately, UNICEF takes the lion's share of the resources invested by UN partners in reported field activities. This "disproportion" may reflect the strong commitment of UN agencies to the MDGs. As UNESCO is often regarded as EFA global leader, Graph 3.1 and Table 3.2 illustrate UNESCO's special position vis-à-vis financial and bilateral institutions on the one hand and UN agencies on the other.

The financial information in the UNESS documents is not sufficient to make a reliable estimate of international aid allocations by level of education. In the Philippines, however and by way of an example, more than 70 per cent of international funding is devoted to primary education.

According to an independent case study,[1] despite improvements in recent years, external assistance is both too widely dispersed and too inequitably distributed if the yard stick of poverty is used to rank order recipients. To the contrary, the level of assistance and the selection of countries selected for assistance typically reflect historical and political ties between donor and recipient (Box 3.2).

1 S. Cuenin. 2006. *Costing and financing education in developing countries* (ED/EPS/2006/PI/16) UNESCO.

Box 3.2
Is Aid Equitably Distributed?

In 2005, the DAC exceeded, for the first time ever, the figure of $100 billion. This achievement was due in part to the relief of Iraq's and Nigeria's debt burden ($19 billion) and to the assistance provided to the victims of the tsunami in South-East Asia ($2.5 billion). Five countries contributed the most in absolute terms to development assistance, namely the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. In terms of per capita aid, however, the top honours go to the Northern European countries: Norway (0.93 per cent of GDP), Sweden (0.92 per cent), Luxemburg (0.82 per cent), and Denmark (0.81 per cent). Considerably farther down in the ranking are France (0.47 per cent), Germany (0.35 per cent), Japan (0.28 per cent) and the United States (0.22 per cent).

It might be supposed that the level of development assistance is inversely proportional to the per capita wealth of a recipient country. In the event, the level of assistance and the country targeted for assistance reflect long-standing historical and political ties between donor and recipient. It is thus entirely common for countries enjoying middle level incomes to receive very large levels of assistance. The disparities in aid allocations for education are also notable within sub-Saharan Africa:

- In 2002, Tanzania, which accounts for 8 per cent of the population of the 26 countries of sub-Saharan Africa, received 43 per cent of total aid. This figure represented $13.3/inhabitant in contrast with $2.2 for the rest. For basic education alone, per capita aid to this country came to $54 whereas 21 out of the total 26 received less than $10.
- Namibia, with a per capita GNI of $6,700 in 2002, received $26/student for basic education. Only Tanzania, with an annual per capita GNI of $540.00, received more.

Source: Based on S. Cuenin, 2006 (Op.Cit).

Turning to future UNESCO interventions, there appears to be a readjustment to past/current support, as Field Offices improve the match between country needs/priorities and UNESCO-proposed actions. This new approach is expected to result in increased support to post-primary education, be it secondary, technical, vocational, or higher education. This trend suggests that the UNESS process has influenced this readjustment to the extent that it takes emerging country needs and priorities into account in framing future cooperation strategies.

Global trends: support by thematic area

A better understanding of country needs and priorities by thematic area and the extent to which external assistance is available to meet them can be expected to shed light on assistance gaps. UNESCO will accordingly be in a better position to design more problem-sensitive responses to requests for external assistance. To this end and on the basis of the 36-country sample, country needs and priorities in selected thematic areas have been examined to determine whether they were reflected in the determination of partner priorities and interventions at the country level. From this cross-tabulated analysis, the following results are noted:

- Country UNESS documents cite various **disparities that constitute barriers to schooling**: *Income-based; Rural/Urban; Gender; and Minorities*.
- The analysis shows that international agencies give adequate attention to the needs associated with "gender" and "minorities" disparities whereas problems associated with income and rural/urban disparities in education provision do not fare so well. In the same vein, the problems arising in connection with physical and mental disabilities and with *out-of-school children* rarely attract the attention of international aid agencies.
- Concerning country **educational resource needs**, partners are providing support for *infrastructural capacity, instructional equipment, learning materials, and ICT*, yet little is forthcoming for the construction and equipping of science laboratories.
- In the area of **quality**, support has been concentrated mostly on *pre-service and in-service teacher training, with curriculum design and reform* coming in second. Problems like *accreditation, relevance of education to economy and labour, learning outcomes and external examinations and certification* are attracting less support from the principal development agencies.
- The UNESS documents cite **educational planning and management** as critical areas requiring improvement. There are particularly significant gaps in specific fields like statistics and information systems, system management, sector/institutional reform, human resources management, micro-planning/school mapping and programme implementation, and programme monitoring and evaluation.

Regional trends

Although the above global trends apply to most regions, distinctive regional specificity nevertheless exists, as the following demonstrates.

Asia and the Pacific (APA)

In Asia and the Pacific, international interventions have, with the notable exception of UNESCO, concentrated overwhelmingly on primary education. Little assistance to post-primary education has been forthcoming from the international community as a whole. Apart from discrete assistance to the sector as a whole, UNESCO seems to have focused on ECCE and non-formal education. The FOs are actually planning to increase support for ECCE development in the future, which will leave post-primary education to continue as "donor-orphan" sub-sectors. Overall, there are clear patterns of challenges and priorities by level and type of education and in relation to specific problems and issues, but mismatch in governments' priorities and partners' interventions, lack of coordination, and sub-standard implementation resulted in considerable waste of resources, efforts and time if not also opportunity costs. All stakeholders emphasize the importance of quality especially in terms of learning outcomes, but without common understanding nor international quality standards.

Concerning the thematic areas, international development partners appear to be supporting policy-related issues more than the countries concerned ostensibly believe is necessary. In contrast to other agencies, UNESCO has concentrated on what may be termed "soft" issues like quality questions, management, policy and planning. Unlike FTI, the upcoming thrust in post-primary education is not only about building more schools and training more teachers, it is more about how to help young people to make the best of this critical transformational period of their life, in effective learning and building up their vision and skills for life in the 21st century. UNESCO must quickly strengthen and demonstrate its capacities and networks for solidly doing so with the highest quality and performance standards.

Among the thematic areas that have attracted less support from other development partners and which consequently constitute possible "niche" opportunities for UNESCO, the following may be cited:

- **Institutional development**, clarifying the coherence, relevance and articulation of the various components of education systems across all levels.
- **Improving national education sector statistics and information management systems**, including information on costs and financing, as the means whereby countries will be better able to monitor and evaluate the performance of their education systems.
- **Capacity-building in cooperation modalities**.

Sub-Saharan Africa (AFR)

In sub-Saharan Africa, major development partners in education include the UN agencies, the international and regional financial institutions (particularly the World Bank and AfDB), the bilateral cooperation agencies (mostly the EU countries, USAID, CIDA/Canada and JICA) and various NGOs. Partner interventions focus heavily on basic/primary education, a reflection of the commitment of the international community's determination to achieve the EFA and MDG goals by 2015. It is emphasized, however, that the various partner interventions cover the full range of thematic areas and levels of education. Unfortunately, in the absence of information on the financial contribution in each theme/area of intervention, it is difficult to assess the full extent of each partner's contribution/interest to a particular theme or sub-sector.

The substantial number of development assistance agencies actively involved in promoting the development of education in Africa is indicative of the extent to which donor coordination and harmonization are needed. Despite the strong advocacy for the Paris Declaration, few UNESS documents address the issues of aid effectiveness and coordination with the degree of rigour they deserve. Several UNESS country studies - those for Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Niger and Senegal in particular – referred to the existence of formal coordination mechanisms between government authorities and aid partners. As for inter-partner coordination, mechanisms exist in most countries. However, very few countries have put in place appropriate and effective government-led coordination mechanisms.

In the sub-Saharan region, most UNESCO interventions have targeted the promotion of EFA (with a focus on quality, gender and inclusion issues), teacher training through TISSA, literacy and NFE (LIFE), and education for HIV/AIDS prevention. Regarding the future, most countries expect UNESCO to continue its focus on EFA, capacity building and support for education planning and policy formulation, particularly as regards TVET and tertiary education. Several country study suggestions call for the better integration of programmes related to EFA, MDGs, UNLD (2003-2012) and DESD (2005-2014). Findings from UNESS reports also express the hope that lessons will be learned from past dysfunctions caused by the excessive number of small activities that lacked the critical mass to achieve a real impact.

Arab States region (ARB)

In the Arab States region, major development partners include UN agencies (including UNESCO), the World Bank, the European Commission and USAID. The contributions of NGOs and the private sector have also been significant in some countries.

- The UN system is a major development partner in most countries in addition to the World Bank and the European Commission. UN agencies are committed to an array of development strategies and interventions based on countries' needs and within the UNDAF as well as the MDG framework.
- UNICEF's main focus is on child health and education (specifically, ECE, the rights of the child, disparities, literacy and special needs), UNDP with the attainment of MDG goals like poverty reduction, sustainable development, environmental protection, higher and technical/vocational education and, finally, governance. The European Commission and the World Bank, for their part, are focussing on education quality, higher and technical and vocational education, the education of girls, and information management. Finally, the European Commission supports ICT and literacy while the World Bank furnishes assistance to sector reform efforts.
- Significant financial and technical assistance is also provided by a wide variety of bilateral donors like the United States, Japan, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Spain and Italy. In addition, a substantial number of projects are implemented by international NGOs. Examples include Quest, Scope, Care International, and Save the Children.
- In some countries, shortfalls in State budget allocations to education have resulted in the systemic impossibility of meeting EFA Goals. Improved coordination between the various donors may help to overcome this problem. Several countries are currently seeking assistance from civil society organizations and from the private sector.

A gap between policy and implementation has been found to be a common problem in countries suffering from a limited institutional capacity in strategic planning and management, in project implementation and in the generation and use of educational data for policy making. Many are unable to make use of assessments, performance feedback and communication, a situation that has had a demonstrably negative effect on the use of reliable, evidence-based data in planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

In Latin America and the Caribbean and as noted at the global level, development partners have concentrated the bulk of their efforts on developing primary education by means of school construction, instructional materials, and addressing the problem of disparities in access. It is worth noting, however, that secondary education is given more attention in this region than elsewhere in the world, a fact that, in addition to reflecting government priorities, underscores the achievements of the region in respect to UPE. To the extent that the quality of education appears prominently as a regional concern, international partners are actively supporting curriculum design and reform processes, teacher education programmes and the increased involvement of communities in local governance.

UNESCO's main areas of support have been in the fields of **ECCE, upper secondary and non formal education**. According to the proposals for future actions contained in the country studies, UNESCO Field Offices intend to slightly expand support to post-primary levels, including secondary, technical and higher education. Non-formal education nevertheless remains the main area of the Organization's preoccupation.

As for proposed areas of action, the 12 UNESS documents report a significant concentration of UNESCO's activities on **improving the quality of education and policy development and planning**. UNESCO's weight behind teacher training programmes seems to overlap with several important on-going interventions of other agencies. Interestingly, the FOs are seeking ways whereby UNESCO can support to strengthened linkages between education and employment/economy, an area seldom attracting the interest of other partners. Other areas of UNESCO-proposed support include management capacity building and enhancing local governance through civil society participation. It is a matter of record that UNESCO has been willing to play the role of donor coordinator in five countries, a function that is consistent with clear, on-the-ground needs.

Europe

In Europe, there are many multi- and bi-lateral as well as non-governmental bodies that are actively promoting educational cooperation. It is largely for this reason that UNESCO has not been active in this region nor is likely to be so in the future. Staying on top of the overall picture of education cooperation in Europe and understanding its mechanisms and how they interface with analogous undertakings elsewhere in the world is thought to be the most useful contribution that UNESCO can play in this region at the present time.

To this end, five selected modes of cooperation in Europe were examined. Individually and collectively, they were thought to provide the means of gaining a clearer understanding of the key functions and objectives of the programmes planned or currently being implemented by multilateral agencies, a self-evident pre-condition for UNESCO's advancing integrated proposals of its own.

- **Goal-setting and monitoring**. Within the EU-27 area, countries have adopted "shared" goals for their education systems, systems that are assessed every two years through an elaborate system of indicators. While UNESCO has a recognized role in monitoring EFA goals worldwide, the goals seem too "generic", less specific to the European context.
- **Standard-setting**. OECD, through its PISA, PIACC and comparative indicators programme, has become the leading standard-setting agency on the European scene. In higher education, the search for quality standards is a major feature of

the Bologna process. UNESCO could usefully partner with OECD as a means of strengthening its position in this area.

- **Policy dialogue**. There is little doubt that, in a continent that is becoming more globally influenced by the day, the policy dialogue responds to a need for a) highlighting national policy challenges in light of the accomplishments of regional neighbours and b) for disseminating "best practices". Within the EU-27 area, UNESCO's voice carries little weight. Yet there appears to be ample room for initiatives, particularly in the South-East European (SEE) countries which are not well covered by OECD and EU programmes.
- **Capacity-building for institutional development**. The needs in the region are arguably immense in a great deal of Europe. Like many other multi- and bi-lateral agencies, UNESCO has a strong institutional commitment to capacity development. Regrettably, the Organization's initiatives in the region have thus far been fragmented and suffer from a lack of thematic focus, coherence and visibility.
- **Value-setting role**. UNESCO has long adopted a "normative", value-setting role, one that few agencies operating in Europe are in a position to perform. Its approach to human rights education, promoting universal values, inter-cultural education, linguistic diversity or the revision of textbooks is welcome in Europe. This approach stands in stark contrast to the work of OECD, the EU and the World Bank, all of which tend to concentrate more on the "learning to know" and "learning to do" dimensions of education, leaving the "learning to live together" dimension to UNESCO and the Council of Europe. This pillar of education has not been translated yet into operational programmes despite its relevance in many European countries.

4. Re-framing a UNESCO strategy in education: implications and opportunities

The previous analyses shed light on the:

- emerging trends in the evolution of country priorities;
- various responses to them by the international community; and
- gaps that, thus far, have failed to attract the attention of any development partner.

These gaps, provided they are substantively linked to the Organization's mandate, are clearly potential entry points for future UNESCO assistance, it being understood that two pre-conditions exist. First, prior to operationalizing any proposed intervention, a careful analysis of the nature and extent of its delivery capacity and functions must be carried out. Second, the intervention must be carried out in concert with the on-going or planned work of other development partners.

Global

As a result of the noticeable progress made in respect to EFA, many countries are responding to an increasingly pressing need, namely the provision of post-primary schooling. Development partners who, until now, have mainly supported primary education, are confronted with a growing demand for a more balanced approach to the development of the sector as whole.

The concern for improved relevance of the education system is expressed in many UNESS documents. Concretely, it is not sufficient to limit interventions to the achievement of the EFA primary education goals; the full range of desired outcomes must be targeted as well. For this reason, support to secondary, technical and vocational, and higher education is required if both the efficiency of the sector and especially its external effectiveness are

to be ensured. It is widely believed that post-basic education (particularly technical and vocational education) has strong linkages with socio-economic development and employment. To date, this largely neglected area invites a substantially larger UNESCO role in the future, one where collaboration with other partners, and especially ILO, is vital.

Areas that constitute potential UNESCO intervention possibilities include:

- **Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)**: support to designing institutional reform, improving statistics and management information systems, and coordination of partners. Indeed, in some countries, various departments and even Ministries share the responsibility for TVET. Weak or in some cases totally absent coordination results in duplication, fragmentation and the concomitant waste of already scarce resources. If management shortcomings are, as they seem, in need of attention, UNESCO could usefully support initiatives like an in-depth diagnosis of this sub-sector, the clarification of the role of each stakeholder, improvement of the contribution of education and training to economic development and employment, and support for the preparation of a robust development and reform programme.
- **Secondary education**: in order to cope with the increasing number of primary school graduates, shortfalls in the physical and material resources needed to meet the demand for post-primary education must be resolved. Since, for many countries, the resources allocated for the achievement of universal primary are already straining national budgets, increasing secondary enrolment remains an intractable problem unless drastic cuts are made elsewhere in the Education Sector or indeed from other Sectors. Alternative, non-conventional programmes may be needed to cater to the masses of children who have completed primary or basic education but who are denied the chance to continue their studies in the formal system. This challenge, statistically significant by virtue of the enormity of the numbers of children involved, is one that has elicited virtually no response from any partner and thus deserves UNESCO's attention.
- **Higher education**: More upstream, policy support to all forms of post-secondary education is reported to be an area of concern to many. Examples of areas of need are: in-depth diagnostic studies, reform strategies, and the coordination of partner actions.
- **Primary education**: addressing marginalization (the needs of children from poor urban and rural families or who suffer from physical or mental disabilities), despite being the most frequently quoted challenge, continues nevertheless to be insufficiently supported by the international community. Likewise, school management, programme monitoring and evaluation are also inadequately covered by development partners.
- **Early child care and education** and non-formal education clearly need stronger support from the international community to reinforce national efforts to develop

credible policies and strategies and to create appropriate institutional frameworks. Such upstream support is another area where UNESCO can make a difference.

- **Cross-cutting themes**: other priority needs that have failed to attract significant support from the international community and consequently recommend themselves as candidates for UNESCO involvement include: development of education information and monitoring systems, improvement of the relevance of education, support to establishing mechanisms for learning assessment, accreditation, examination and certification systems, capacity building in policy analysis, and finally, and planning and management.

Thematic or sub-sector areas of cooperation by region

Asia and the Pacific (APA)

UNESCO can and should continue supporting those specific EFA areas where less consideration is forthcoming from other development partners, e.g. quality improvement, ECCE and non-formal education and adult literacy. At the same time, a **more balanced approach to the development of the Sector as a whole** is needed. Viet Nam and other countries of the region are increasingly emphasizing sub-sectoral development beyond ECCE and primary education in order to respond to the need for a more skilled and entrepreneurial labour force. Areas of potential interest to UNESCO are accordingly as follows:

- **Institutional development**, particularly as regards the need to clarify the coherence and relevance of educational development across all levels.
- **Promoting international standards in education**, ranging from curriculum to teaching methods to management, statistics, indicators and test assessment methodology, not to mention defining various quality and assessment norms. UNESCO can revive its actions in standard setting by involving the best available expertise, and actively disseminate the standards and assist the Member States to enforce them.
- Further **activating its clearing house functions** in systematically identifying, gathering and widely disseminating education innovations, promoting their adaptation and application in countries, and animating exchanges of feedback and ideas for new innovations. Many innovations continue to be introduced and salient experiences available across the continents down to local villages and schools, but these are not known to the world.
- **Active participation in donor coordination** to strengthen government leadership in education development and to avoid resource wastage.

The regional UNESS synthesis shows that there are plenty of 'niches' for UNESCO. Learning from the EFA and many other similar experiences, what really counts when

building partnership is a clear demonstration of UNESCO's intellectual plus implementation capacity in terms of the rigour and excellence of its staff and networks of expertise and institutional support. Knowledge about the realities on the ground and abilities to identify problems and solving them will be essential. This is about being able to mobilize the most appropriate knowhow and effectively bringing it to bear on planting changes adapting to different situations and needs.

Sub-Saharan Africa (AFR)

The analysis of the UNESS documents highlights twenty themes out of which ten have been identified as areas that commend themselves to increased UNESCO cooperation. They can usefully be grouped into four distinct categories:

- **Strengthening institutional capacities to manage reform initiatives**: support to EMIS development, strengthening national sector policies, up-grading curriculum design and management at schools and education centres, EFA support, support for higher education reforms, especially in French-speaking countries (BMD).
- **Improving access to education and student retention**: Most UNESS documents insisted on the importance of both access to education and retention of students at school until they complete basic education. They considered that education should be developed in a holistic way, including: improvement of school and training centre facilities, strengthening TVET and youth skills training, promotion of ECCE and head-start programmes, and developing programmes on education for peace, human rights and cultural diversity.
- **Improving quality, equity and relevance of education**: The question of quality in AFR is, first of all, a function of the availability of a sufficient number of accredited teachers with proven instructional skills. The three important themes also stood out from the others: 1) paying particular attention to specially disadvantaged groups, 2) strengthening the non-formal – lifelong learning subsector, and 3) reviewing curricula for better relevance in primary and secondary education.
- **Cross-cutting or transversal issues**: those that are most frequently mentioned concern health education and resource mobilization. As regards health education and particularly the limiting the spread of HIV/AIDS, two themes stand out, namely: 1) strengthening HIV&AIDS preventive education; and 2) support for orphans and those either infected or affected by the pandemic. Regarding resource mobilization, while most countries mentioned the problems they faced with educational financing, few gave them a priority status (doubtless because they were aware that UNESCO is not a funding agency). The problems are legion but the most common are: mobilizing domestic local and national resources for education; increasing financial aid levels; developing a stronger Public-Private Partnership; increasing the national capacity to receive and manage external assistance cost-effectively; and developing credible and efficient management accountability mechanisms. UNESCO could

well play an important role as both catalyst for the mobilization and coordination of external assistance and capacity building.

Arab States region (ARB)

A number of areas have been identified in the UNESS documents where opportunities for useful UNESCO support are evident. Added weight was given to them in a consultation that brought together all the FOs concerned together with representatives of the countries of the region. They include:

- **Capacity building in planning and management**, especially in EMIS, data-based and empirically-informed policy development, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. Needed are a comprehensive sector-wide approach to policy formulation and its translation to the design and implementation of operational programmes. Acute sub-sector imbalances strongly suggest the need to shift from the centralized system of education governance towards decentralized education management, and to enhance coordination and communication among various stakeholders.
- **Improving the quality of education** will unquestionably turn the tide of the diminished achievement scores that have come to light in recent assessment results. As teacher-related issues appear to be critical in this regard, support is needed to develop a comprehensive teacher policy and programme covering pre- and in-service teacher training, career development, conditions of service, teacher status and morale.
- **Weak external effectiveness**: It is becoming increasingly apparent that many of today's education systems are not geared to satisfying market needs. There are several short-comings in secondary, technical and vocational, and higher education, most important of which are: lack of necessary structural linkages between school curricula and labour market requirements; irrelevance of current TVET curricula, training programmes and their inability to provide adequate skills; negative image of TVET education; lack of public higher education offerings and diversity.
- **Literacy and non formal education**: despite very considerable achievements in respect to literacy and the development of non-formal education, vast segments of the population – especially the urban and rural poor, women and vulnerable youth - live in places where education facilities of any kind are very limited. Opportunities for school dropouts – young and old - to re-enter the education stream being extremely limited, UNESCO could unquestionably provide support to reinforce and expand existing facilities. The current curriculum for adult literacy programmes needs to be updated, integrating life skills and income generating skills for youth adults, and more training for literacy personnel, teachers and trainers.
- **Early childhood care and education (ECCE)**: Two reasons are ostensibly responsible for the large numbers of children of pre-school age children are not enrolled in any ECCE programme. First, pre-school is not compulsory; and second, there is a general lack of awareness of its importance for the overall development of the

child. To resolve them, countries will, in the first instance, need a national policy for ECCE and a legal framework to support. Once formulated, subsequent steps will include the development of a strategy to raise public awareness, the review and/or preparation of appropriate ECCE curricula and the training of ECCE teachers who, it is emphasized, require very different skills from those of an accredited primary school teacher.

- **Education financing** is a problem for a few countries where the funds allocated to Education Ministries from the state budget are not sufficient to achieve EFA Goals. UNESCO's role in such instances should focus on more vigorous advocacy as regards the vital role played by education in national development and on promoting improved coordination between donors and the private sector.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Broadly speaking, the opportunities for UNESCO cooperation in the LAC region are similar to those identified at the global level: the alignment of TVET, secondary and higher education with labour market needs and the expansion of upper secondary education.

- Until now, UNESCO has targeted three EFA levels - ECCE, primary education, and non-formal education. A readjustment of priorities appears to be taking place at the present time inasmuch as future interventions are increasingly giving pride of place to **post-basic education** and concretely to upper secondary, technical and vocational, and higher education.
- **Education information management systems and planning** were not seen as strong needs and priorities by LAC governments, which seems to contradict the global trends, as noted in all other regions. Notwithstanding, FOs are proposing a large number of activities to support the setting up and/or strengthening of information systems, policy development and planning. While introducing no change in this overall trend, it is expected that UNESCO's future action will be directed more at management and coordination issues.
- **Improvement of education management** appears to be in high demand in the region, particularly in the fields of school management and programme monitoring and evaluation which, until now, have received little assistance from international development partners.
- **Improvement of the quality of education:** LAC governments tend to correlate quality with the following variables: accreditation, tests and measurements, teaching career issues and teacher morale, none of which seem to have attracted much in the way of external support.

Europe

The general profile of a possible UNESCO strategy for education cooperation in Europe was suggested in the regional UNESS report. Areas of cooperation between the Organization and the countries in this region were reviewed in the light of UNESCO's limited resources and the potential of the substantial network of partnerships within which it can work in the future.

To date, UNESCO's activities in Europe have tended to be too fragmented and the available human and financial resources too thinly spread over too many initiatives with the result that lacked the critical mass needed to achieve visibility among other major actors on the education cooperation scene. To overcome this situation, UNESCO activities in Europe need drastic "re-profiling" by concentrating on a smaller number of issues that reflect a coherent vision of its role in the region. Following are a number of recommendations that hold promise for the future:

- **"Diversity" and its human rights implications**: The "diversity" issue plagues many European education systems to the extent that it implies, on the down side, resistance or obstacles to the social inclusion of minorities and special needs groups and on the up side, the need for inter-cultural dialogue in order to achieve both equity and equality of opportunities. An opportunity is at hand for UNESCO to focus on diversity and the related issue of equity and to promote policy dialogue.
- **Improving governance of education systems through capacity-building**, a concern shared by all European education systems, is one that UNESCO can put at the very centre of its capacity-building initiatives in Europe. Concretely, if a national approach is too costly and too financially or technically demanding, UNESCO can explore avenues for regional or sub-regional net-working.
- **Contributing to knowledge-sharing in higher education**: Amidst the constellation of bi- and multi-lateral agency programmes supporting higher education in Europe, none explicitly targets the regional transfer of knowledge. Promoting the twinning of European universities twinning would be an excellent initiative for UNESCO.

Building on comparative advantage and leveraging opportunities

A SWOT analysis (see below) has been carried out on the basis of the findings of UNESS documents in order to derive a possible cooperation strategy that builds on the Organization's strengths and opportunities, while recognizing both those areas that are in need of further improvement and the potential obstacles that must be overcome. Following is the above-referenced SWOT matrix.

This matrix, far from being exhaustive, itemizes a few features that characterize UNESCO, its programme, methods of work, and working environment. While there are important strengths, other areas clearly need improvement.

The international community has given UNESCO the mandate to exercise global leadership in education. With reinforced capacities, it has the potential to exert a greater influence on the global undertaking to build a just and stable world. Unlike other development agencies, UNESCO's Education Sector covers the full gamut of education and training questions and, having several related programme sectors, is well positioned to address the multidimensional and complex facets of today's educational issues and challenges. It has access to a diversified network of specialized and decentralized entities which, if further strengthened and more programmatically utilized, can play an effective and influential role in educational development in general and in hastening the achievement of the EFA goals in particular. The UNESCO National Commissions play an important role in furthering the Secretariat's actions at country level.

Strength	Weakness
a) Unique global and sector-wide mandate for education (unlike that of other agencies) b) Willingness of senior management to change and improve c) Global leadership and mobilization capacity for EFA d) UNESS-sourced information on national needs and priorities in education, together with evidence-based cooperation strategies e) Prospects for stronger technical capacities and resources built on UNESCO's sector-wide and inter-sectoral setting f) Network of thematic capacities, including specialized institutes and centres g) Potential to exercise 'soft', intellectual power in a long term perspective	a) Limited representation at country level b) Difficulty to close the gap between UNESCO's global action and country-specific needs c) Difficulty in implementing accountable decentralised management procedures d) Complexity of administrative and accounting procedures e) Limited capacity and resources, aggravated by lack of systematic on-the-job learning opportunities for staff f) Weak coordination among different entities of UNESCO, leading to fragmentation and diversion of priorities and programmes, as well as to duplication of mandate and operations of UNESCO entities. g) Difficulty of measuring the impact of implemented 'soft' actions in short term
Opportunities	**Threats**
a) Network of natural alliances, including NATCOMs, UNESCO Clubs, etc. b) Increasing consensus on the role played by education in achieving MDGs c) UNESCO expected by governments to be a neutral and trusted partner d) Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and UN reform for delivering as one at country level e) Some donors expecting UNESCO to play a bigger role in addressing policy and capacity gaps at country level	a) Mixed and occasionally conflicting views of some countries and partners vis-à-vis UNESCO b) Unpredictable changes in international environment e.g. internal conflicts and economic crises c) Arbitrary and ad hoc demands of Member States for UNESCO support d) Weak coordination among development partners, leading to competition, duplication and overlap of agency mandates and interventions at country level e) Unsteady commitment of donors to international cooperation in education

While the foregoing summarizes UNESCO's considerable potential, it belies the reality within which the Organization operates. Owing to its limited resources, UNESCO actions are, as stated earlier, widely considered to be too thinly spread over too many initiatives. Lacking the critical mass to achieve an enduring impact, they undermine the Organization's efforts to discharge professional competencies in some areas. Thanks to the reform, certain structures and operations have changed. Unfortunately, however, certain rules and procedures remain that must be made more flexible if real progress on the ground is to be made. Thanks to UNESCO's decentralization policy, the visibility of its presence at country level has increased along with, to a lesser extent, its credibility.

The willingness of senior management to work to improve the Organization's credibility is manifest. The UNESS process provides an opportunity to further improve the relevance, effectiveness and alignment of its actions to support the development of education in its Member States. Henceforth, partnership must be regarded as a programmatic obligation, not an option. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the UN reform at country level for "Delivering as One" together can leverage a strengthened inter-partner synergy and an informed division of labour. Making choices in our cooperation with countries will be a necessity if the Organization is to regain credibility in its mandate and the areas where it enjoys a comparative advantage. For this to happen, UNESCO must seek to furnish assistance in those areas of its mandate where there are documented assistance gaps, while leaving certain areas to its partners when it is clear that they are able to intervene more efficiently and effectively.

5. Conclusions

The present synthesis is based on an analysis of some 80 UNESS documents which, being in varying stages of completion, suggests that the conclusions drawn there from must be regarded as tentative until all studies have met the standards established for their preparation. It is, however, emphasized that these documents, even when considered "complete", should be regarded more as photographs of a given state of play at a certain point in time in the country concerned than as "finished works". For that reason, they will be treated as active, living documents and updated accordingly by the FOs concerned in the light of any new and relevant information that may surface. By proceeding in this manner, UNESCO hopes to improve the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of its cooperative programme in education development in its Member States.

From the emerging trends in the needs and priorities of individual countries and the apparent gaps in development partner support, certain patterns are taking shape. Their levels and forms of manifestations converge in some cases, yet differ between regions, and between countries within a region in some others, as seen in the previous analyses of this report.

The needs for further expanding EFA, including pre-primary and primary education, are persistent across most regions. Providing quality education for all by addressing marginalization, is a concern in most countries. Concomitantly, countries are under increasing pressure to cope with the expanding numbers of those who have completed basic education. Even in countries with a long way to go before achieving UPE, **pressure is growing on post-basic education**. As resources become scarcer, some form of trade-offs, adjustments and savings is thus inescapable. The question of the most appropriate kind of education, however, remains an unresolved issue at the present writing. EFA goal No. 3 – "Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes" – is tellingly seldom discussed.

Improved relevance of the education system is reported as representing a key challenge in most UNESS documents. Meeting it will involve addressing the levels and forms of education that are not explicitly reflected in the EFA goals, namely general secondary, technical and vocational education and training, and tertiary education. Irrespective of the fact that UNESCO has been entrusted with the global leadership in EFA and the fact that other partners are substantially involved in supporting basic education at the country level, the Organization must redouble its efforts to ensure a more comprehensive sectoral approach to the problem. It must increase its support to post-basic education by

emphasizing the need to develop skills and competencies that are relevant to the society and economic development of the country that its education system was created to serve.

The thematic areas in greatest need of increased support are: (1) institutional and policy development for ECCE; (2) planning to reinforce the relevance of educational programmes, institutional management, EMIS, coordination of stakeholder support for TVET, and NFE; (3) in-depth analyses, reforms, financing modalities and coordination of external assistance for higher education.

Addressing marginalization remains an important issue for countries struggling to achieve UPE. To resolve the problem, a range of interventions will be needed: policy formulation and capacity building, school management, monitoring and evaluation. Information management continues to be a serious, largely un-addressed challenge. Other areas calling for attention are tests and measurements (internal and external testing) and accreditation.

Many lessons have been learned from the material provided by the UNESS documents. Although appreciable improvements have been undertaken in recent years, areas where improvements are indicated include the following:

- Fragmentation and dispersion of UNESCO's programmes and activities;
- Lack of continuity of UNESCO programmes between one biennium and the next;
- Insufficient monitoring;
- Narrowing the focus of UNESCO's activities in order to increase resource levels.

A few words may be said about UNESS in this conclusion. A country UNESS document can constitute a major documented reference for UNESCO, the government and development partners with regard to cooperation in education in the Member State. It helps to identify niches and priorities not only for UNESCO programming, but also for generating government actions and partner interventions as much as possible in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner.

UNESCO, both at HQs and field offices, needs such a systematic reference document for keeping abreast of developments in the Member States and for better programming and partnership building. Elaborating UNESS can be hard work, but this will prove to be an excellent internal capacity-building exercise which will lead to a key reference and tool for dialogue on education development for all parties concerned, a process which will also help to continuously update and upgrade the UNESS initiative. It may be noted that there have been recent experiences in some countries for UNESS to become a common education development strategy reference for all UN agencies.

Annexes

Annex A

The UNESS process

From pilot experience to roll-out: overall status

The decision having been taken to adopt UNESS as UNESCO's conceptual framework for programming the Organization's strategy for cooperating with Member States in their on-going educational development efforts, a pilot process was launched in May 2006. Eleven so-called "CapEFA" countries made up the target group, namely: Angola, Bangladesh, Egypt, Guinea, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Vietnam. To assist Field Offices and NATCOMS in the task of preparing the country analyses, a guidance note entitled "Building a UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS) Document: 2008-2013"[2] was prepared and distributed to all concerned.

A year later, the UNESS process was expanded to cover more than 60 countries in 2007 with the intention of increasing that number by a further 50 in the 2008-2009 biennium. As of March 2009, UNESS documents for 50 countries have been completed or in the final stages of editing with a further 35 currently under preparation. For this latter group, some require technical or institutional validation with Government and international agencies whereas others are still working through Chapters 4 and 5. A few will have to be re-worked in varying degrees in order for them to meet the standards specified in the UNESS Guidance Note.

UNESCO Field Offices have, in most cases, played a key role in the preparation of the UNESS documents for the countries for which they are responsible. Regional Bureaux furnished technical backstopping and peer-review support to Field Offices as required. The HQ UNESS team, for its part, in addition to coordinating the global undertaking, provided technical backstopping and financial support to those requesting it at the regional and country level.

2 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001485/148566E.pdf

At this writing, more than 50 UNESS documents, in either final or advanced forms, have been posted on ED Intranet and are available for internal consultation.[3] They include:

- AFR (22): Angola, Burundi, Cameroun, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Congo DR, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo
- APA (13): Bangladesh, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Pacific Islands (5 countries), Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.
- ARB (11): Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Autonomous Territory, Sudan, Syria, Qatar, Yemen
- LAC (12): Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama
- EUR (4): Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova

Information and professional development

In an attempt to further refine the guidelines for the preparation of the country analyses, a seminar was organized in September 2006 to review and build on the experience of FOs involved in the preparation of the pilot country studies. It was concluded that four regional UNESS preparatory workshops should be organized. They were duly held in Bangkok (Dec 2006), Zanzibar, (Nov 2006), Santiago, (March 2007) and, for the Arab States, several short meetings (between March and May 2007).

Responding to FO requests for professional development in needs assessment, policy analysis, education planning and international development cooperation, a series of two-week training workshops were organized by the Education Sector in collaboration with IIEP and respective Regional Bureaux:

- IIEP Paris – Jan 2008: validation of the course content and methodology and training of 25 English-speaking from, primarily, AFR and APA;
- Dakar (Senegal) - May 2008: workshop for 25 French-speaking specialists from AFR,
- Sharjah (UAE) - July 2008: workshop for some 25-30 education specialists, drawn mainly from ARB with a few from APA and AFR;
- Phuket (Thailand) - August 2008: workshop for education specialists from APA;
- Buenos Aires – December 2008 for staff in LAC;
- Paris/HQ – Jan-Feb 2009: for ED Sector staff.

The preparation of a learning package, with necessary adaptations, is also being considered for Heads of Field Offices.

3 These have been posted for consultation at: http://eppsandbox.hq.int.unesco.org/sites/ed-intranet/Pages/default.aspx

UNESS management and implementation structure

The management structure for implementation and monitoring of UNESS preparation has reflected the principles of decentralized accountability and of the complementary role of the UNESCO Education Sector.

- Since Cluster and Field Offices will responsible for the implementation of future programmes developed on the basis of the UNESS documents, they are or will be tasked with their preparation.
- Regional UNESS coordinators have been or will be designated in each regional bureau with the exception of Europe, for which the HQ/UNESS team has acted as regional coordinator.
- The HQ-based UNESS Team has provided overall orientation for the exercise (*UNESS Guidance Note*, design of the UNESS pilot exercise, launching and monitoring), furnished ED Sector-level coordination of the funding processes managed by the Executive Office under the "CapEFA" extra-budgetary programmes, and provided advisory services to Field Offices (technical missions, information sharing, analytical review of the UNESS documents, and documentation, including web posting).

UNESS syntheses

In addition to serving as reference points for the development of future ED Sector regional and global cooperation strategies, the country studies provide the framework within which 35 C/5 work plans for individual countries will be elaborated. Regional syntheses and a global synthesis of those existing UNESS documents are prepared respectively by the Regional Bureaux concerned and HQ.

To respond to the need to identify relevant criteria to guide the preparation of the next C/5, ED/ESB, in coordination with ED/EO, has prepared a number of cross-country, experimental syntheses of some 40 UNESS documents. Three complementary methodologies were used. The occasion provided an opportunity to test the feasibility and relevance of the three complementary methodologies used and to hold critical discussions on the preparation of the regional UNESS syntheses.

The principal characteristics of each of these methodologies are as follows:

- Experts' report on education cooperation in Europe: in light of the socio-economic status of most European countries and owing to the limited resources and capacity of UNESCO for that region, only four UNESS documents have been prepared. To provide greater depth to the regional synthesis, a team of European experts was

recruited to carry out additional studies and to propose external views on the role and position of UNESCO on education cooperation in Europe.

- Quantitative analysis: using the UNESS documents as standardized statistical questionnaires, the frequency in the reporting of certain categories and items in each chapter is noted. Cross-tabulating them has made possible the identification of trends in emerging needs, priorities and challenges.
- Textual analysis: the use of a standardized format for summarizing each of the UNESS documents has made a credible cross-country synthesis possible.

The preliminary findings drawn from the UNESS process confirm that UNESCO's past work in support of national educational development has, despite the considerable limitation of its resources, often been fragmented with insufficient connectivity between one biennium and another.

The analysis of the UNESS documents indicates that UNESCO will, in future, have to consolidate its limited resources and concentrate on fewer activities and countries if it hopes to contribute more effectively to policy and capacity development in the field of education.

The UNESS documents and their syntheses call attention to a number of emerging needs and priorities which include the following:

- The expansion of primary education, by putting increased pressure on post-primary levels, may be the cause of a growing sector-wide imbalance. Regrettably, this very real risk continues to be given little or no consideration by development partners in many developing countries.
- More efforts for improving the quality of education, assessing learning levels and measuring institutional performance are needed, particularly at primary level given the level of resources committed to that part of the system.
- In light of the often weak articulation between education and the socio-economic needs of a given country, support is clearly needed to redress this situation by reinforcing opportunities for continuing learning as well as technical and vocational education and training.
- Policy and institutional frameworks for non-formal education, ECCE, technical and vocational education, and higher education are weak and deserve more attention on the part of development partners.
- Planning and management capacities, including data collection and analysis, are deficient in most countries and call for a special attention on the part of UNESCO.

UNESS roll-out, syntheses, strategies and 35 C/5 work plans

The UNESS process continues with the preparation of the UNESS syntheses, both by region and globally. Their purpose is to underpin the formation of regional education cooperation strategies as well as to influence the programmes to be included in draft 35 C/5.

The Education Sector organized a 3-day global UNESS review workshop in October 2008 to:

- review the progress of the UNESS process globally and by region, and
- discuss the next steps in regard to the UNESS roll-out and the preparation of UNESS syntheses.

The Directors of the Regional Education Bureaux, together with the respective UNESS Regional Advisors and Regional Programme Coordinators, attended the meeting. One FO Programme Specialist from each region was also invited to participate as were the staff of both ED/EO and certain institutes.

Some emerging issues and challenges

At the above-mentioned global UNESS review meeting (1-3 October 2008), participants discussed the challenges of the UNESS process, as well as the follow-up actions, especially in regard to bridging the UNESS and 35 C/5 processes. Below are summarized some of the major issues and challenges discussed at the workshop:

- **UNESS is both "process" and "product":** conceived both as a "product" (the document), as well as a "process" intended to reflect UNESCO's approach to the programming of development assistance, its usefulness is therefore to be assessed as much on the basis of the quality of the structure and content as on the way in which it is produced. As a process, developing UNESS has multiple possible beneficial functions, including:
  - strengthening internal analytical capacity within the Organisation;
  - encouraging communication and programmatic synergy between the various entities of UNESCO, notably with the Institutes;
  - providing a platform for dialogue among educational partners at national level;
  - entering into or strengthening strategic partnerships with UN agencies in the context of the One UN approach at country level (Delivering as One), as well as other development partners and donors in the spirit of aid effectiveness.

- **Purpose of UNESS:** It is intended that UNESS – the country UNESS documents together with the regional and global syntheses - serve as the principal ED planning tool for the C/4 and C/5 documents, to provide frameworks for FO C/5 work-plans (n.b. particularly in relation to Chapter 5), and to constitute the Organization's commitment to the achievement of the GAP-EFA goals at country level. The UNESS documents are expected to provide documentary sources for ED country profiling as the basis for the development of in-country Regular Programme and extra-budgetary activities. It is expected that they will serve as the sector-wide reference point for UNESCO regarding its:
  - participation in TTISSA, LIFE and EDUCAIDS;
  - policy in respect to national and international education-related goals;
  - efforts to develop an instrument for donor mapping;
  - devising an instrument to facilitate joint programmatic inputs to CCA/UNDAF and the "One-UN" approach, and to strengthen linkages between UNESCO's work carried within the C/5 framework as well as the priorities established in UNDAFs, UCPDs and other mechanisms of the Joint Programming exercises in the "One UN" framework.

  From the point of view of organizational cohesiveness, UNESS provides an excellent means to contribute substantively to the UNESCO Family approach to planning. Moreover, in current and future "One UN" pilot countries as well as 'self-starter' UN County Teams, UNESS shows considerable promise in becoming the principal UN national education support strategy.

- **Country expectations:** Preparing UNESS documents necessarily raises country expectations. The reaction is inescapable inasmuch as the UNESS Guidance Note asks readers to take stock of the expectations of national educational authorities and development partners in relation to UNESCO's contribution to national education development. To ensure that what they prepare in the way of country needs analyses is firmly anchored in reality, it is imperative that FOs be frank not only in their assessment of UNESCO's institutional delivery capacity but in their dealings with national education authorities. The occasion is a good one not only to clarify the Organization's sectoral mandate but also its resource limitations so that national expectations reflect our capacity to meet them.
- **Quality assurance and control:** In some cases, the UNESS documents do not yet meet the qualitative standards established for the exercise. Some FOs need to be more substantively involved in the exercise. It is not sufficient simply to serve as a "mail box" between the Organization and external consultants. The skills learned at the training workshops organized by HQ and IIEP must be put into practice. Henceforth, FOs should be fully involved in the preparation of the country analyses commencing with the writing of the UNESS documents and continuing through the consultation, validation and endorsement stages. The critical role of the Regional

Bureaux is emphasized: if the Regional Offices are to continue to coordinate and monitor the quality of the work, the staff concerned must be more fully involved.

- **UNESS syntheses:** The linkages between the UNESS exercise, the preparation of the 35 C/5, and the alignment to the "One UN" approach are being established. Further clarification of the need for regional syntheses was called for since the answer has implications for the methodology to be adopted in the preparation of the country analyses as well as for those implicated in the process and deadline for their completion. Given the expectations in respect to UNESS, the importance of selecting the right methodology for the task was emphasized. The ambitious role assigned to the syntheses would be hard to over-state to the extent that they are intended to inform the content of the next C/5 and serve as an advocacy tool to both underpin and provide structure to future discussions with Member States.
- **Updating UNESS documents:** To the extent that the UNESS documents will be the programmatic frameworks used for the preparation of the Medium Term Plan (C/4) – a six year time frame, they will have to be regularly updated to ensure their reliability. This process of updating affords an opportunity for FOs to verify data and fill in eventual gaps in the UNESS documents by integrating the recent relevant statistics and utilizing, say, an EFA Mid-Decade Review/Assessment, or providing the sector-based justification of UNESCO's actions. Updating the UNESS data will be the responsibility of FOs.
- **Time and resource constraints:** In the course of the discussions, many comments were made about the lack of staff time and insufficient resources needed to prepare the UNESS studies. Some FOs spoke of heavy prior commitments and corresponding work loads as obstacles to meeting these new expectations. Others sought clarification about UNESCO's "family" approach to the preparation of the UNESS documents especially as regards the integration of the UNESCO institutes. The use of external consultants, while an option, was thought to work against institutional ownership and sustainability. Preparing UNESS studies in countries with no physical UNESCO presence poses special problems.

In sum, enormous achievements have been made since the launch of the UNESS process in 2006. It is now in progress in close to 90 countries, which, once the studies are complete, will improve the relevance and coherence of UNESCO's country cooperation strategies in education. At the current pace, it is expected that the studies will have been completed for most developing countries by the end of 2009. Several challenges nevertheless remain.

Given the novelty of this process for UNESCO, the experience for most FOs has been essentially one of "learning by doing". Furthermore, some are not yet fully convinced of the UNESS potential to improve UNESCO's country-level response. The quality of the UNESS documents arguably needs improvement in many cases, especially in respect to the need to ensure the internal consistency of the component parts of the studies (see

in particular Chapter 5). While professional development workshops in policy analysis, planning and development cooperation have been given to most field staff within the framework of the UNESS process, many have yet to apply the skills learned.

The UNESS syntheses at regional level have served as the basis for the preparation of the global UNESS synthesis. The global synthesis is shared with all stakeholders concerned in order to further improve UNESCO's cooperation programmes, irrespective of the source of funding and to better align the Organization's actions with the priorities of its Member States as well as with the programmes of its partners.

Annex B

Methodology used in the global synthesis

This global synthesis is the result of a yearlong collaborative process that started with the preparation of an experts' report "Education Development and Cooperation in Europe: What Prospects for UNESCO?", in the form of European regional synthesis of UNESS documents.

Following this first experience, UNESCO (HQ Division for Education Strategies and Capacity-Building – ED/ESB) launched the process of preparing global and regional syntheses in June 2008, starting with an experimental methodology (which eventually evolved into two "sub-methodologies") for "synthesizing" the UNESS documents that were available at that time. These two sub-methodologies involved recording the frequency of reported items and themes by means of either a macro database of 36 documents or the textual analysis of 12 documents.

These HQ-tested methodologies, including the proceedings, the limitations, and the preliminary findings, were then discussed at a Global UNESS Review Workshop organized in October 2008. Subsequently, Regional Bureaus were tasked with drafting their regional synthesis using either of the tested methodologies with necessary adaptations to the regional contexts. Most Regional Bureaux opted for clustering countries into sub-regions as a basis for the regional synthesis, in order to take account of the different contexts within the same region. HQ provided technical support and backstopping upon request.

This process resulted in a variety of regional and sub-regional synthesis formats. Some contain full-fledged narrative analyses while others consist of analytical matrices and graphs derived from a comprehensive database. In preparing this global synthesis, the work of ED/ESB involved gathering and analyzing all the material collected, irrespective of the various forms and levels of completion. The experimental synthesis was used as well since many of its findings and trends were later confirmed by the regional syntheses. All

findings were compiled and their presentations harmonized to fit into the format of the global report.

In sum, the global synthesis draws on the regional syntheses, themselves based on the analysis of some 80 UNESS documents at varying stages of preparation. The quality of the UNESS documents is unequal but improvements can be made in many cases by taking care to ensure the internal consistency of the various parts of the UNESS documents. Professional development courses in policy analysis, planning and development cooperation have been given to most education staff at HQ and in the field within the framework of the UNESS process. The knowledge acquired will be tapped into for improving the UNESS documents.

It is hoped that in the coming months, UNESCO will have developed UNESS documents for most developing countries, wishing to cooperate with the Organization in the field of education and their quality further improved. The present progress report will then evolve and be sharpened in the identification of the countries' needs and priorities, as well as in fine-tuning and improving UNESCO's global cooperation strategy in education. Most importantly, UNESCO can further improve the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of its education cooperation programme in country in response to the needs and priorities of Member States, in alignment with the actions of its development partners, as well as in accordance with its own mandate and comparative advantage.

Annex C

Status of UNESS by region and country

No	Countries	Region	Unit in Charge	Observations
	UNESS completed or in progress as at March 2009			
1	Angola	AFR	Windhoek	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
2	Burundi	AFR	Bujumbura	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
3	Cameroon	AFR	Yaounde	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
4	Cape Verde	AFR	Dakar	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
5	Central African Republic	AFR	Yaounde	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
6	Chad	AFR	Yaounde	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
7	Comoros	AFR	Dar es Salaam	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
8	Cote d'Ivoire	AFR	Accra	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
9	DR Congo	AFR	Kinshasa	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
10	Eritrea	AFR	Nairobi	Cluster report completed, Available on ED Intranet
11	Gabon	AFR	Libreville	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
12	Guinea	AFR	Dakar	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
13	Guinea-Bissau	AFR	Dakar	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
14	Kenya	AFR	Nairobi	Cluster report completed, Available on ED Intranet
15	Lesotho	AFR	Windhoek	In progress
16	Liberia	AFR	Dakar	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
17	Malawi	AFR	Harare	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
18	Mauritius	AFR	Dar es Salaam	In progress
19	Mozambique	AFR	Maputo	In progress
20	Namibia	AFR	Windhoek	In progress
21	Niger	AFR	Bamako	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
22	Nigeria	AFR	Abuja	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
23	Republic of Congo	AFR	Brazzaville	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
24	Rwanda	AFR	Nairobi	Cluster report completed, Available on ED Intranet
25	Senegal	AFR	Dakar	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
26	Sierra Leone	AFR	Dakar	In progress, Available on ED Intranet

No	Countries	Region	Unit in Charge	Observations
27	South Africa	AFR	Windhoek	In progress - 1 Province South Africa
28	Swaziland	AFR	Windhoek	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
29	Togo	AFR		Completed, by NATCOM, Available on ED Intranet
30	Uganda	AFR	Nairobi	Cluster report completed, Available on ED Intranet
31	UR Tanzania	AFR	Dar es Salaam	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
32	Afghanistan	APA	Kabul	In progress
33	Bangladesh	APA	Dhaka	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
34	India	APA	New Delhi	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
35	Indonesia	APA	Jakarta	In progress
36	Kazakhstan	APA	Almaty	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
37	Kiribati	APA	Apia	Completed, Not available on ED Intranet
38	Kyrgyzstan	APA	Almaty	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
39	Lao People's Democratic Republic	APA	Bangkok	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
40	Micronesia	APA	Apia	Completed, Not available on ED Intranet
41	Mongolia	APA	Beijing	Completed, Not available on ED Intranet
42	Nepal	APA	Kathmandu	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
43	Pacific (Fiji, Tonga, Cook, Niue, Tokelau)	APA	Apia	Completed, Not available on ED Intranet
44	Pakistan	APA	Islamabad	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
45	Papua New Guinea	APA	Apia	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
46	Philippines	APA	Jakarta	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
47	Solomon Islands	APA	Apia	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
48	Sri Lanka	APA	New Delhi	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
49	Tajikistan	APA	Almaty	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
50	Tuvalu	APA	Apia	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
51	Uzbekistan	APA	Tashkent	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
52	Vanuatu	APA	Apia	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
53	Vietnam	APA	Hanoi	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
54	Algeria	ARB	Rabat	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
55	Bahrain	ARB	Doha	In progress
56	Egypt	ARB	Cairo	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
57	Iraq	ARB	Iraq	In progress
58	Jordan	ARB	Amman	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
59	Lebanon	ARB	Beirut	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
60	Mauritania	ARB	Rabat	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
61	Morocco	ARB	Rabat	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
62	Oman	ARB	Doha	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
63	Palestine	ARB	Ramallah	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
64	Qatar	ARB	Doha	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
65	Saudi Arabia	ARB	Doha	In progress
66	Sudan	ARB	Khartoum	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
67	Syrian Arab Republic	ARB	Beirut	Completed, Available on ED Intranet

No	Countries	Region	Unit in Charge	Observations
68	Tunisia	ARB	Rabat	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
69	Yemen	ARB	Cairo	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
70	Armenia	EUR	Moscow	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
71	Bosnia Herzegovina	EUR	HQ	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
72	Georgia	EUR	HQ	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
73	Moldova	EUR	Moscow	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
74	Bolivia	LAC	Quito	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
75	Brazil	LAC	Brasilia	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
76	Chile	LAC	Santiago	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
77	Costa Rica	LAC	San Jose	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
78	Cuba	LAC	Havana	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
79	Dominican Republic	LAC	Havana	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
80	Ecuador	LAC	Quito	Completed, Available on ED Intranet
81	El Salvador	LAC	San José	In progress
82	Guatemala	LAC	Guatemala	In progress
83	Haiti	LAC	Port au Prince	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
84	Honduras	LAC	San José	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
85	Jamaica	LAC	Kingston	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
86	Mexico	LAC	Mexico	In progress
87	Nicaragua	LAC	San Jose	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
88	Panama	LAC	San José	In progress, Available on ED Intranet
89	Peru	LAC	Lima	In progress

1	**UNESS to be further launched and completed in 2009**			
2	Benin	AFR	Accra	
3	Botswana	AFR	Harare	
4	Burkina Faso	AFR	Bamako	
5	Djibouti	AFR	Addis Ababa	
6	Equatorial Guinea	AFR	Libreville	
7	Ethiopia	AFR	Addis Ababa	
8	Gambia (The)	AFR	Dakar	
9	Ghana	AFR	Accra	
10	Madagascar	AFR	Dar es Salaam	
11	Mali	AFR	Bamako	
12	Sao Tome and Principe	AFR	Libreville	
13	Seychelles	AFR	Dar es Salaam	
14	Somalia	AFR	PEER	
15	Zambia	AFR	Harare	
16	Zimbabwe	APA	Harare	
17	Bhutan	APA	New Delhi	
18	Cambodia	APA	Phnom Penh	
19	China	APA	Beijing	
20	Iran	APA	Tehran	
37	Korea DPR	APA	Beijing	

No	Countries	Region	Unit in Charge	Observations
39	Maldives	APA	New Delhi	
40	Myanmar	APA	Bangkok	
41	Samoa	APA	Apia	
50	Thailand	APA	Bangkok	
51	Timor-Leste	APA	Jakarta	
52	Turkmenistan	ARB	Tehran	
53	United Arab Emirates	ARB	Doha	
54	Kuwait	ARB	Doha	
55	Libya	EUR	Doha	
56	Albania	EUR	HQ	
57	Azerbaijan	EUR	Moscow	
58	Macedonia	EUR	HQ	
59	Montenegro	EUR	HQ	
60	Serbia	EUR	HQ	
61	Belize	LAC	San Jose	
62	Colombia	LAC	Quito	
63	Guyana	LAC	Kingston	
64	Suriname	LAC	Kingston	
65	Uruguay	LAC	Montevideo	
66	Venezuela	LAC	Quito	

Annex D

Abbreviations

AFD	French Development Agency (Agence française de développement)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFR	Sub-Saharan Africa
APA	Asia and the Pacific
ARB	Arabic States
BMD	Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate
CapEFA	UNESCO Capacity Building for EFA Programme
C/4	UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy
C/5	UNESCO Biennial Programme and Budget
CCA	UN Common Country Assessment
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	OECD's Development Assistance Committee
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
DFID	The UK Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ED	UNESCO Education Sector
ED/ESB	UNESCO Division of Educational Strategies and Capacity Building
EDUCAIDS	UNESCO Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System(s)
EUR	Europe region
FO	UNESCO Cluster or National Office
FTI	EFA-Fast Track Initiative
GAP-EFA	Global Action Plan on Education for All
GEI	Gender-specific EFA index
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNI	Gross national income

HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	UNESCO Headquarters in Paris
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICT	Information and communication technology
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LIFE	UNESCO Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MST	Mathematics, science and technology
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NATCOM	National Commission for UNESCO
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)
PIACC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SEE	South-East European
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TTISSA	UNESCO Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Saharan Africa
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UCPD	UNESCO Country Programming Document
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESS	UNESCO National Education Support Strategy
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

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