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## Evaluation of the Education for All (EFA) Global and Regional Coordination Mechanisms

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## ABSTRACT

Entrusted to lead and coordinate the global Education Agenda (SDG4-Education 2030) and cognizant of the need for adapting the existing global and regional education coordination architecture to the continuously evolving international education landscape, UNESCO commissioned this evaluation of EFA coordination mechanisms that had been established since the World Education Conference in Dakar in 2000. The analysis focused on UNESCO's leadership and coordination role in the areas of Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination, Resource Mobilization, Advocacy and Progress Monitoring across three historic phases (2000-2004, 2005-2010, and 2011-2015). The evaluation was based on a mixed method design, combining the use of different quantitative and qualitative methods, including the review of 250 EFA-related documents, in-depth interviews with over 230 key stakeholders and 10 field missions. The report contains eight key recommendations geared towards the refinement of new coordination mechanisms in order to support UNESCO's current efforts, in collaboration with Member States and partners, to best define and exercise its coordination and leadership role of the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADG/ED	UNESCO Assistant Director General for Education
ANCEFA	African Network Campaign on Education for All
ArabEFA	EFA Coordination Mechanism for the Arab Region
AU	African Union
BSP	UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning
CCA	Common Country Assessments
CCNGO/EFA	Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA
CDPF	Capacity Development Partnership Fund for Education
CEB	Chief Executives Board
CONFEMEN	French-speaking countries' Ministers of Education Conference
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DESD	UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ED/EFA	Division of International Coordination and Monitoring for EFA
EDUCAIDS	Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS
EFA	Education For All
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific
ESP	Education Sector Planning
ESWG	Education Sector Working Group
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative
GAP	Global Action Plan
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GEM	Global EFA Meeting
GMR	UNESCO Global Monitoring Report
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
HLF	High-Level Forum
HLG	High-Level Group
HQ	Headquarters
IAP	International Advisory Panel
IATT	UNAIDS Inter-agency Task Team on Education
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICF	International Consultative Forum
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organisation

INEE	UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
IOS	UNESCO Inspection Oversight Office
ITF	International Task Force on Teachers for EFA
LEG	Local Education Group
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFE	Non-Formal Education
OOSCI	Out-of-School Children Initiative
OREALC	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
OWG	Open Working Group
PfE	Partnership for Education
PRELAC	Regional Education Project for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
REC	Regional Economic communities
RTE	Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion
SC	Steering Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEAMEO	South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization
SWPP	Sector-wide Policies and Planning
TOC	Theory of Change
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UIS-AIMS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics- Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United National Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United National Education, Science and Culture Organization
UNESCO-BREDA	UNESCO's Former Regional Bureau for Education in Dakar
UNESS	UNESCO National Education Support Strategies
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WG	Working Group

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background and purpose

The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted at the end of the World Education Conference in Dakar in 2000, stated that UNESCO would “continue its mandated role in coordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum’ and that, in doing so, the Organization would ‘refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work’. Aware of the significance of its entrusted role to lead and coordinate the newly adopted Global Education Agenda adopted by 184 countries in November 2015 (hereinafter referred to as SDG4-Education 2030) and cognizant of the need for adapting the existing global and regional education coordination architecture to the continuously evolving international education landscape, UNESCO commissioned an evaluation of the EFA coordination mechanisms established at the global and regional levels between 2000 and 2015.

The main purpose of the evaluation was to assist UNESCO in refining and improving the coordination structures and processes established (both within the Organization and internationally) to facilitate the implementation of the SDG-4 Education 2030 Framework for Action. It was based on a participatory approach and applied a mixed method design, combining different quantitative and qualitative methods. It focused on assessing the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of EFA coordination in four specific areas: (i) Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination; (ii) Resource Mobilization; (iii) Advocacy and (iv) Progress Monitoring. UNESCO’s EFA coordination and leadership roles as well as the respective EFA coordination architecture mechanisms put in place have evolved over time and were thus analysed across three historic phases (2000-2004, 2005-2010 and 2011-2015). The evaluation was conducted by an independent evaluation specialist under the overall guidance of the IOS Evaluation Office in 2015.

## Findings

The evaluation identified the following main achievements:

- UNESCO is the international organization that demonstrated the steadiest commitment to the coordination of the holistic EFA agenda between 2000 and 2015. In particular, UNESCO’s coordination focused on ensuring the quality, social equity and inclusiveness of education systems in all its Member States.
- Aligned with EFA’s holistic vision and global mandate in Education, UNESCO’s advocacy efforts contributed to bringing greater attention amongst the international community to issues of quality and equity, such as introducing aspects of gender equality as a cross cutting priority within national and regional education systems and strategies as well as to such neglected - and yet relevant - areas as Early Childhood Care and Education, adult literacy and other learning needs as well as skills development of youth and adults, within a new and more encompassing lifelong-learning perspective. In this way, UNESCO’s advocacy efforts have been successful in influencing the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda and garnered support among its partners to introduce otherwise neglected aspects of education in the global sustainable development agenda.
- In order to coordinate in the area of EFA knowledge generation and dissemination, UNESCO pursued four main strategies: (i) liaising with Category I Institutes; (ii) organizing global and regional meetings to facilitate the development or dissemination of UNESCO knowledge products in a number of EFA-related areas; (iii) fostering regional exchanges on EFA-related good practices; and (iv) coordinating the development of technical publications. All four were effective in promoting the generation and dissemination of EFA-related knowledge. The in-

house production and wide dissemination of cutting-edge research work (especially published as part of thematic series) and specialized literature on education topics, although contingent on the volatility of funding observed over the last fifteen years, enhanced the credibility of the Organization's intellectual leadership, which was amply recognized in such fields as youth and adult literacy (e.g. through UIL), planning (e.g. through IIEP), teachers (through the Teachers Task Force) and statistics (through UIS).

- UNESCO's efforts to coordinate the mobilization of resources to support the implementation of the EFA agenda since the year 2000 translated into the implementation of a twofold strategy which consisted of i) advocating for increased funding for education and ii) promoting a more effective use of the existing education funds. At the global level, UNESCO successfully pushed for public-private partnerships and an increase in extra-budgetary support for EFA-related programming and coordination in particular towards the end of the second phase of EFA coordination.
- With respect to its call for a more effective allocation of existing resources for education purposes, the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) and other technical publications provided funders and national policy-makers' with the strongest evidence available on what education areas and topics needed to be addressed the most.
- UNESCO coordinated the EFA progress monitoring at the global level through the production of the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR), and at the regional level through statistical capacity-building conducted in close cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics' regional advisers. The GMR was recognized over the years as the most comprehensive statistical publication on national education systems' progress in relation to the six EFA goals. As a result, UNESCO could claim a leadership role in the tracking of EFA goals at the global and, partly, at the regional level, as confirmed by its pivotal role in establishing the SDG4 - Education 2030 targets.

The evaluation also identified the following main challenges:

- The lack of clarity of the role of each EFA partner and convening agency at global, regional and country level, aggravated by the absence of well-defined accountability mechanisms, made UNESCO's coordination work more challenging than expected. With regard to coherence, the lack of a clear division of in-house coordination tasks and responsibilities between UNESCO regional and national offices, along with the paucity of resources allocated by the Organization to the implementation of projects at the country level, undermined the relevance of UNESCO's coordination with other development partners on the ground.
- Lacking a clear strategic framework internally, not all UNESCO entities were equally aware throughout time of what they should advocate for and how they should do it. UNESCO national staff did not always seem to have sufficient clarity on what their coordination role was. As a result, they implemented, communicated about and coordinated the EFA agenda at the local level, with a large degree of independence. Moreover, EFA Coordination itself was neither monitored nor evaluated on a continued basis, mainly due to the absence of a theory of change or a results-based coordination strategy.
- Given the priority assigned to the fulfilment of the six EFA Goals in countries with the world's lowest enrolment and literacy rates, a certain number of Member States with slightly education records or more advanced education systems were often not adequately engaged in the EFA coordination mechanisms.



- The uneven allocation of UNESCO's financial and human resources to EFA coordination over the last fifteen years had a negative impact on the quality and predictability of UNESCO's related tasks and responsibilities. Furthermore, UNESCO did not have the adequate resources to provide sufficient technical support at national level to assist countries in operationalizing the Dakar Framework for Action).
- The numerous changes in leadership within the EFA coordination team over the last fifteen years were not coherent with the need for a solid and continued stewardship of the EFA agenda within the Organization.
- The quality of EFA Coordination was uneven also due to three other factors: (i) the varying levels of engagement among the other EFA Convening Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and World Bank) over time; (ii) the divide between the six holistic EFA Goals and the Millennium Development Goals); and (iii) the emergence of parallel funding mechanisms for education established outside of UNESCO and supporting only a few specific goals of the broader EFA agenda, such as the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) earlier and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) later on. While EFA advocated for a universal and holistic agenda, global funding mechanisms (e.g. FTI-GPE) and donors' interventions (e.g. programme- and sector-wide approaches) mostly focused on primary education in developing countries.
- The proliferation of well-resourced global education initiatives as well as the strengthening of analytical research capacity on education-related issues within universities and private foundations gradually undermined UNESCO's effectiveness in generating and disseminating EFA-related knowledge. Furthermore, the collection and analysis of national level data by UIS did not leave much space for the review and dissemination of other evidence produced at the national and regional levels, such as education-related data collected by civil society organizations, local research institutions, sub-national government, teacher-parents' organizations and the private sector.

## Way Forward

On the basis of its findings, the evaluation presents the following main recommendations:

- Develop a detailed and results-oriented Coordination Strategy and Theory of Change.
- Shift from a 'Traditional Coordination' model to a more cohesive 'Shared Coordination' strategy towards the attainment of the SDG4-Education 2030 targets.
- Strike a balance between UNESCO's global mandate and the need for a more focused and responsive coordination strategy at the regional and national level.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the SDG4-Education 2030 coordination structures as well as the quality of the corresponding processes on a regular basis.
- Ensure stronger coherence of UNESCO In-house coordination.
- Strengthen the coordination role of the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC).
- Advocate to ensure that the allocation of funding of education in Member States be aligned as much as possible with all the SDG4-Agenda 2030 targets over the next fifteen years.
- Strengthen UNESCO's role in generating and disseminating knowledge on good practices in education at the global and regional levels.

## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

<p><b>Overall Management Response:</b></p> <p>The Education sector appreciates the effort which has gone into this comprehensive evaluation report on a very complex subject. The recommendations will be helpful to further define and exercise UNESCO's coordination and leadership role for SDG4 - Education 2030. The Education sector intends to follow up on the recommendations as specified below.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations</b> are aiming to support UNESCO in its current effort to best define and exercise its coordination and leadership role of the SDG4- Education 2030 Agenda and are geared towards the refinement of new coordination mechanisms developed by UNESCO in collaboration with its Member States and partners on the basis of the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action. Details on suggested strategic actions for consideration are provided in the evaluation report:</p>	<p><b>Management response</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> Develop a detailed and results-oriented Coordination Strategy and Theory of Change.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> Shift from a 'Traditional Coordination' model to a more cohesive 'Shared Coordination' strategy towards the attainment of the Education 2030-SDG 4 targets.</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted.</b> UNESCO should provide leadership as well as coordinate to generate collective discourse and foster coordinated action towards the achievement of the SDG4 targets, based on partnership. This coordination entails shared implementation (rather than shared coordination) based on partners' respective mandates and comparative advantages, in a complementary way.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> Strike a balance between UNESCO's global mandate and the need for a more focused and responsive coordination strategy at the regional and national level.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> Monitor the effectiveness of the Education 2030 coordination structures as well as the quality of the corresponding processes on a regular basis.</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted.</b> This recommendation includes two levels (a) monitoring the coordination landscape and (b) coordination in terms of data. While the recommendations on (b) are well taken, and while a periodic review of the coordination landscape might be useful, it is not realistic to have quarterly (or every six months) notes assessing the progress in coordination among partners. An assessment of the effectiveness of coordination could be envisaged every year or biennium. As part of its coordination role, UNESCO should regularly disseminate notes on joint activities.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Ensure stronger coherence of UNESCO In-house coordination.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Strengthen the coordination role of the Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC).</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> Advocate to ensure that the allocation of funding of education in Member States be aligned as much as possible with all the SDG4-Agenda 2030 targets over the next fifteen years</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> Strengthen UNESCO's role in generating and disseminating knowledge on good practices in education at the global and regional levels.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>

## I. INTRODUCTION

### I.1 UNESCO's EFA Coordination (2000-2015)

1. After fifteen years since the signing of the [Education for All \(EFA\) Framework for Action](#) by 164 countries during the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, a number of the global education targets and goals agreed upon then, still remain unattained. Remarkable progress has been made in a number of areas related to primary education as attested by the 50 million additional children enrolled in primary school between 2000 and 2010 as well as the achievement of gender equality in primary school among 90% of countries around the world over the last decade<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, as of 2012, 184 million children were enrolled in pre-primary education worldwide (an increase of nearly two-thirds since 1999) and, as a sign of improved transition rates and higher retention rates, the lower secondary gross enrolment ratio stood at 85% (a nearly 20% increase compared to 1999) (GMR, 2015).

2. However, the extent to which UNESCO's EFA coordination (according to the Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO had the mandate to '[co-ordinate EFA partners and maintain their collaborative momentum](#)') has contributed to such progress is difficult to ascertain. That is mainly due to the continued evolution of the international education landscape and the emergence of many competing education initiatives, both global and regional in scope, over the last fifteen years.

3. What is apparent, though, is that UNESCO remained steadily committed to the fulfilment of the holistic EFA vision and, as a reflection of that, its coordination efforts focused on those areas linked to the [EFA goals](#) (e.g. education quality and equity as well as adult literacy, skills development, early childhood care and education) that, despite their relevance, had been most neglected by the majority of international development partners (Table 1).

**Table 1. The Six EFA Goals**

1. To expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. To ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. To ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
4. To achieve a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. To eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. To improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Source: Dakar Framework for Action (2000), para.7

<sup>1</sup> Between 1999 and 2012, two-thirds more children were enrolled in primary school; gender parity improved, with the number of countries with fewer than 90 girls enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys falling from 33 to 16; transition and retention rates improved, and the lower secondary gross enrolment ratio increased from 71 to 85 percent (Steer & Smith, 2015; p. 2).

4. Aware of the need for adapting the existing global and regional education coordination architecture to the continuously evolving trends in education policy and programming, UNESCO commissioned an evaluation of the EFA coordination mechanisms put in place under the aegis of UNESCO at the global and regional levels between 2000 and 2015.

## **I.2 Purpose and scope**

### *Evaluation Use*

5. This evaluation responded to UNESCO's request for evidence-based guidance on how to best define and exercise the Organization's leading and coordinating roles of the Global Education Agenda (hereinafter referred to as SDG4-Education 2030) over the next fifteen years. The recommendations developed as part of this evaluation shall assist UNESCO in refining and improving the coordination structures and processes established (both in-house and internationally) to facilitate the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action adopted by 184 countries<sup>2</sup> on November 4, 2015.

### *Evaluation Scope*

6. In reviewing the added value of all EFA global and regional coordination mechanisms established between 2000 and 2015, this evaluation specifically looked at their relevance, coherence and effectiveness. For this purpose, the evaluation unpacked the two constructs of coordination and leadership and assessed them across four main EFA-related areas of intervention: (i) Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination; (ii) Resource Mobilization; (iii) Advocacy and (iv) EFA Monitoring<sup>3</sup>.

7. Besides identifying the key achievements and main challenges of the different EFA coordination mechanisms, the evaluation assessed to what extent the EFA global and regional coordination mechanisms were linked with national-level EFA institutional and implementation arrangements<sup>4</sup>.

8. Although the EFA Agenda started in 1990, the evaluation reviewed the key global and regional coordination mechanisms from 2000 to 2015. The reason for that is the plethora of EFA-related assessments and evaluations already conducted for the 1990-2000 timeframe which would have made a wider temporary scope redundant. That said, in order for the evaluation to highlight the similarities and differences between EFA coordinating and leadership mechanisms before and after the launch of the Dakar Framework for Action, the findings yielded by the earlier EFA evaluations and assessments (that is, those that were conducted before 2000) were duly taken into account in the final evaluation report.

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<sup>2</sup> Such number was higher than that of those countries (164) who had endorsed the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000.

<sup>3</sup> These are the four coordination functions indicated as critical in the Dakar Framework for Action Expanded Commentary (p.21). The decision to concentrate the evaluation focus on these four areas was made in agreement with the Evaluation Reference Group.

<sup>4</sup> Taking national coordination mechanisms into account was all the more relevant as past reviews highlighted the need for a better understanding of what worked and what did not right at the heart of the EFA agenda (Faul & Packer, 2014, p. 3).

## *Description of the Global and Regional EFA Coordination Mechanisms*

9. This evaluation assessed the Education for All (EFA)<sup>5</sup> global and regional coordination mechanisms established by UNESCO after the launch of the Dakar Framework for Action at the World Education Forum in 2000. To some extent, the evaluation also looked into those EFA-related national processes to which UNESCO's global and regional coordination contribute.

10. The **definition of EFA coordination** used in this evaluation is an adaptation of the one provided in the paper "[Enhancing Effectiveness of EFA Coordination](#)"<sup>6</sup> commissioned by the UNESCO EFA Global Partnership team in 2010. The definition is as follows:

*"Coordination mechanisms consist of structures and processes enabling different partners to work together towards the attainment of the 6 EFA goals. Global and regional coordination mechanisms supporting EFA are also intended to support national efforts to achieve the EFA goals".*

11. By looking at the EFA coordination and leadership mechanisms across the four domains (see para. 6), the evaluation identified the key achievements and clarified the corresponding challenges for each of the following levels:

12. Global: this is the level where the Dakar Framework for Action as well as the Incheon Declaration and the SDG4 - 2030 Agenda Framework for Action have granted UNESCO the mandate to coordinate and lead the global education agenda (e.g. through the High-Level Group and the Working Group on EFA earlier on, and through the EFA Steering Committee and the Global EFA Meeting at a later stage);

13. Regional: this is the level where UNESCO regional bureaux have been tasked with providing some comprehensive guidance to countries on how to spell out the global EFA vision in a way that is adequate to the educational interests and needs of the different regions; this is also the level where UNESCO developed a series of innovative partnerships with other regional coordinating entities operating in the education sector (e.g. ArabEFA in the Arab States region and PRELAC in the Latin America and the Caribbean region) as well as networks, development banks, and other international agencies within the scope of UN regional coordinating mechanisms (e.g. UNDAF);

14. National: this is the level where the Dakar Framework for Action indicated that the 'heart of EFA activity lies' and where, for the EFA agenda to be both translated adequately into national policies and implemented effectively, a close connection between the national EFA fora as well as the national EFA focal points and the existing global and regional EFA coordination mechanisms was critical. This is also the level where other national coordination mechanisms (e.g. Education Technical Working Groups and Donor Coordination groups), not directly linked to EFA and yet complementary to its coordination efforts, were set-up. Such mechanisms provided a platform for national stakeholders and

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<sup>5</sup> According to Faul & Packer (2004): "The term EFA was introduced in 1990 in Jomtien to embrace the achievement of a basic education for all. This commitment was reaffirmed in Dakar in 2000. The Jomtien and Dakar definitions of 'basic education for all' both comprise six goals, but differ slightly in their prioritization of Education for Sustainable Development (lower in Dakar) and girls' education (higher in Dakar)" (p. 6).

<sup>6</sup> The 2010 definition mentioned only global and not regional coordination mechanisms: "Coordination enables different partners to work together towards common objectives. Global coordination mechanisms and activities supporting EFA are intended to support national efforts to achieve the EFA goals through mobilization at the international level".

international partners to exchange on critical education issues and, indirectly, promote policy advice on EFA-related matters.

15. The table below (Table 2) provides a more detailed overview of the major EFA global and regional coordination mechanisms that the evaluation looked into. The shaded area relates to the EFA-related structures and processes established at the national level either by a national ministry or a group of international development partners working in the same country.

**Table 2. List of Key EFA coordination mechanisms (by level)**

<b>A. Global Coordination Mechanisms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFA International Advisory Panel and EFA Steering Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Global EFA Meetings, EFA High-Level Group, the Sherpas Group, the Working Group on EFA and, more recently, the World Education Forum 2015</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination of E-9 work along with E-9 Secretariat to promote dialogue and exchange of information among educational leaders and stakeholders within the scope of South-South cooperation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) aimed to foster reflection, dialogue and joint action between UNESCO and NGOs during the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-level Advocacy to keep education on the top of policy agendas (e.g.G8)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination of data collection for planning and monitoring of EFA strategies on a regular basis (this includes the periodic identification of EFA progress and challenges through the UIS annual data collection and the publication of an annual EFA Global Monitoring Report as well as of Global Report Syntheses conducted every 5 years)</li> </ul>
<b>B. Regional Coordination Mechanisms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge-sharing between countries about successful education practices, policies and relevant EFA documentation (e.g. through meetings, databases and websites)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Partnerships with regional development banks, economic unions and other continental regional bodies to promote EFA strategies and goals</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-term and final reviews of EFA progress and processes associated with them in each one of UNESCO's 5 regions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Partnerships on EFA-related matters within existing donors mechanisms (both UN and non UN)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination of regional EFA mid-term and final reviews synthesizing the results of national EFA progress reports</li> </ul>

C. National Coordination Structures and Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National EFA Forum, National EFA Coordinator, Consultative processes and technical assistance programs provided to national governments towards the development of a National EFA Plan and/or a National Education Sector Strategy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and United Nations Country Team Meeting (UNCT), Donors' Education Working Group, Donors' Joint Education Sector Working Group</li> </ul>

### *Evaluation criteria and questions*

16. The evaluation aimed to identify the main lessons learned in regard to the criteria of coherence, effectiveness and relevance of the coordination mechanisms (both structures and processes) put in place by UNESCO and its partners during the 2000-2015 period to coordinate and lead the EFA Agenda, mainly at the global and regional levels. The following evaluation questions guided the evaluation:

#### Relevance

- To what extent has UNESCO's coordination of EFA initiatives and strategies at the global and regional levels remained relevant over time in maintaining the collective commitment in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals, as spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action?
- To what extent have UNESCO's coordination modalities of the E-9 work and the Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) remained pertinent over time in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals, as spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action?
- To what extent has the hypothesis held true over time that UNESCO's global and regional efforts would translate into the development of more effective educational strategies, policies and goals put in place at the national level to attain the six EFA goals?
- In case UNESCO's EFA coordination tasks and responsibilities changed over time, did UNESCO's role remain predictable to other EFA partners?

#### Coherence

- To what extent has UNESCO been able to carry out its mandated EFA coordination tasks and responsibilities (in the four areas of knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization, advocacy and monitoring) according to what was agreed upon in the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000?
- To what extent has UNESCO been able to link the EFA agenda within the activities and strategies implemented through UN inter-agency coordinating mechanisms (e.g. within the scope of UNDAF and 'Delivering as One' pilots) put in place at the regional and national levels?
- To what extent has UNESCO been able to harmonize the EFA agenda with the activities and strategies implemented by other non-UN organizations at the regional level?



- To what extent have the human, technical and financial resources made available to UNESCO for carrying out its EFA coordination mandate at the global, regional and national levels been commensurate with the scope of the corresponding tasks and activities?
- To what extent has UNESCO been able to mainstream the EFA agenda within its broader organizational programming (within and outside of the Education sector) at HQ, regional and country offices?

#### Effectiveness

- To what extent has UNESCO EFA coordination contributed to the strengthening of global, regional and national partnerships in the four key coordination domains (knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization, advocacy and monitoring) spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action?
- How well has UNESCO coordinated the E-9 work and the Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action?
- What are the main lessons learned regarding UNESCO's ability to use its coordination role as a way to increase EFA, knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization, advocacy and monitoring at the global and regional levels?
- What are the factors that either enhanced or hampered UNESCO's capacity to coordinate and/or lead the EFA agenda at the global, regional and national levels?
- What are some of the most important unintended dynamics associated with the UNESCO EFA coordination and/or leadership- at the global, regional and national levels?
- What are some innovative coordination and/or leadership tasks and responsibilities that UNESCO could take up in order to increase its leverage at the global, regional and national levels in response to the changing political, social and economic scenarios?

### I.3 Methodology

#### *Theory of Change*

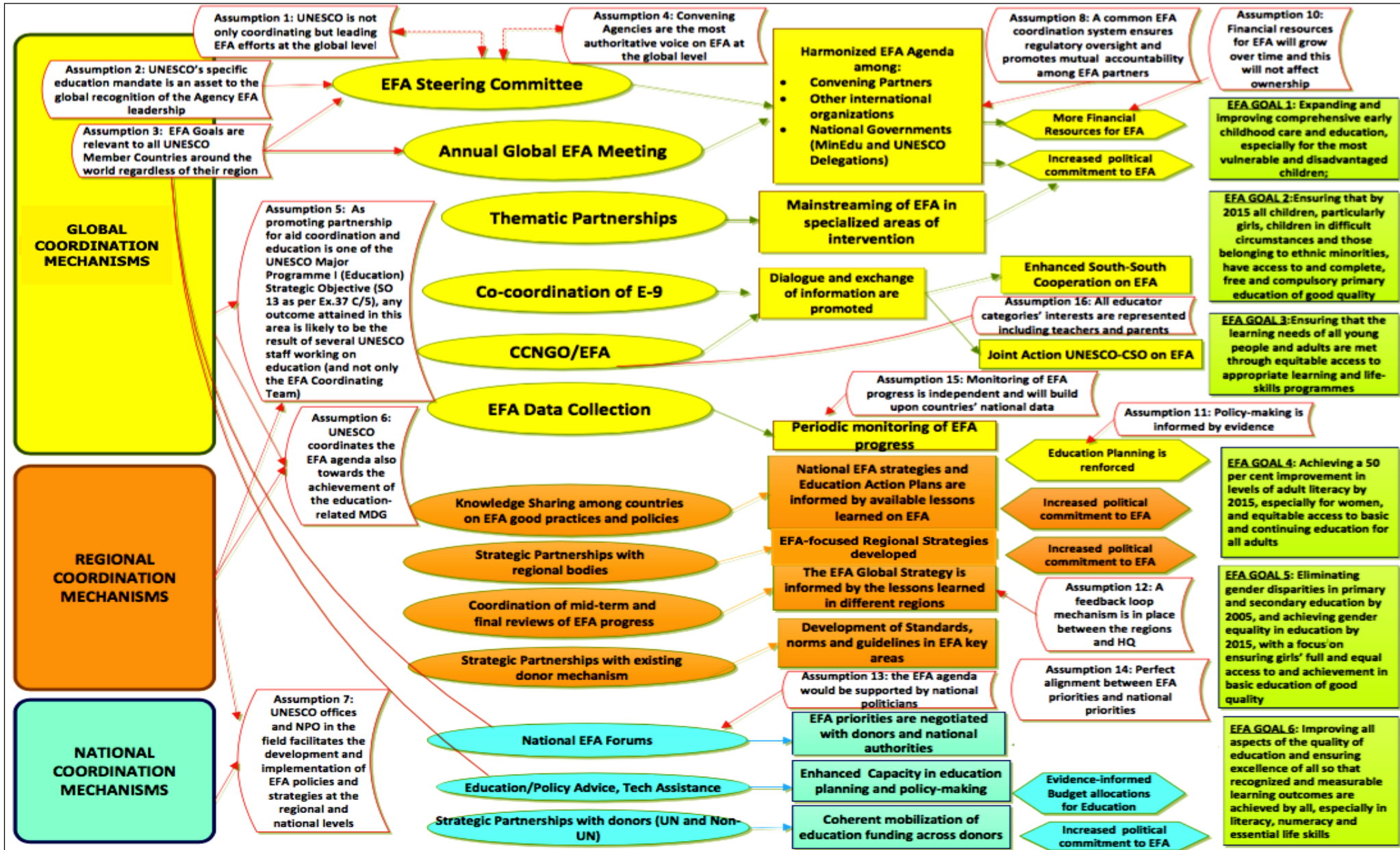
17. The focus of this evaluation (e.g. the different EFA coordination mechanisms and their corresponding results) was determined on the basis of the development of a theory of change (ToC)<sup>7</sup> (Figure 1). The main objective of the EFA Coordination ToC was to visualize how and to what extent the short-term and intermediate results produced by the EFA coordination mechanisms contributed to their ultimate goal, that is, the fulfilment of the EFA goals. For the sake of this evaluation, the ToC focused on the four key areas of EFA coordination at three different levels (national, regional and national) in four main areas: (i) Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination; (ii) Resource Mobilization; (iii) Advocacy; and (iv) EFA Monitoring.

18. In prospective terms, an EFA Coordination ToC is valuable in that it provides an opportunity for UNESCO to discuss and further refine it in view of the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda. In particular, the ToC could serve as the basis to: (i) assess the functioning of future coordination mechanisms; (ii) their likely impact; (iii) and the extent to which their envisaged goal can realistically be reached with the time and resources available.

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<sup>7</sup> The EFA coordination ToC was reconstructed in the early phase of the evaluation based on the review of EFA program documents and several interviews with UNESCO education staff.

Figure 1. EFA Coordination Theory of Change



### *Data collection and methods*

19. This evaluation was based on a mixed method design, combining the use of different quantitative and qualitative methods during the different phases of the evaluation. Once an EFA Coordination Theory of Change was developed jointly with the EFA coordination team, the methodology consisted of the following:
20. A review of 250 EFA-related documents (including a number of peer-reviewed articles published on global and regional coordination of education programs);
21. In-depth interviews conducted with over 230 key stakeholders (e.g. UNESCO education staff, education officers of several EFA convening agencies and other development partners, ministries of education officials, scholars and representatives of civil society) as well as 10 field missions to Member States in the different UNESCO regions including four regional hubs);
22. A series of direct observations conducted during key events and meetings (e.g. EFA Steering Committee meetings and a number of sessions during the World Education Forum 2015); and
23. Follow-up interviews for validation and quality assurance with a selected number of respondents.
24. The evaluation was conducted by an independent expert in collaboration with the UNESCO Internal Oversight Service, and accompanied by advice, peer review and quality control of an Evaluation Reference Group, as well as other key stakeholders.
25. The evaluation findings were triangulated via different data collection methods and various data sources throughout the different phases of the evaluation. The findings yielded by the semi-structured interviews with staff at UNESCO HQ and its partners as well as those generated through the review of specialized literature and program documents during the initial phase were supported by: (i) interviews with regional and national level staff and stakeholders (ii) discussions and follow up proceedings of several key events and meetings; (iii) observation of and participation in several key events and meetings and (iii) case studies developed across different coordination mechanisms in various regions during the later phase (see Table 3).
26. The data collection sites were selected by balancing specific selection criteria, such as: the level of a country's progress against the attainment of the six EFA goals based on the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) data; the balance among sites in terms of geographical position (sites in each of UNESCO's regions as well as a balance between Regional Bureaux and National Offices); level of field presence (e.g. countries with or without UNESCO field offices); the level of UNESCO's interaction with civil society as well as the level of UNESCO's engagement with other partners in regional/national coordination mechanisms). Such criteria and the list of countries selected were agreed upon with the Evaluation Reference Group as well as with the UNESCO regional bureaux.
27. The information yielded by the country and regional case studies conducted as well as the direct observation of EFA meetings helped strengthen the evidence base which the evaluation conclusions and recommendations are based on. More in particular, the case studies (both regional and national) allowed validating and refining some of the preliminary findings on how EFA coordination worked and what the corresponding enabling factors and challenges were.

**Table 3. List of case studies locations (by region and level of coordination)**

UNESCO Region	Level of EFA Coordination mechanism and related data collection site
Africa (AF)	Regional Coordination
	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia): UNESCO Liaison Office with the African Union Dakar (Senegal): UNESCO Multi-sectoral Regional Office for West Africa and former Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (including a discussion with the former Regional EFA Coordinator) Nairobi (Kenya): UNESCO Multi-sectoral Regional Office for East Africa as well as location of all other major development partners' regional offices
	National Coordination
	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia): UNESCO National Office
Arab States (AR)	Regional Coordination
	Beirut (Lebanon): UNESCO Regional Bureau in Beirut (including participation in a two-day regional event to discuss the outcomes of the World Education Forum 2015 with over a dozen education specialists working in the region)
	National Coordination
	Beirut (Lebanon): National Minister of Education, direct observation of two meetings (the 'Reaching Children with Education' Inter-Agency Working Group meeting and the meeting of the national Donors' Coordination Group).
Asia and the Pacific (PAC)	Global Coordination
	Incheon (South Korea): World Education Forum 2015
	Regional level Coordination
	Bangkok (Thailand): UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education and other major development partners' regional offices
	National Level Coordination
	Phnom Penh (Cambodia): UNESCO National Office with a strong leadership position within the national education community Vientiane (Laos): Country with no UNESCO representation Dhaka (Bangladesh): E-9 country with a strong civil society participation in the education agenda

Europe and North America (ENA)	Global Coordination
	Paris (France): EFA Steering Committee meetings and other EFA-related meetings organized at UNESCO HQ in Paris, as well as interviews with a selected number of UNESCO Staff, Member States' Delegations and visiting education specialists.
Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)	Regional Coordination
	Santiago (Chile): UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education staff as well as education specialists at major development partners' regional offices
	National Coordination
	Guatemala City (Guatemala): UNESCO Office (this field office is the one in the region with the closest ties to the Ministry of Education).

### *Limitations to the methodology*

28. Given the large number of EFA global and regional coordination mechanisms and the extensive breath of activities and processes associated with each of them, the evaluation could not review all mechanisms with the same desired level of analytical depth. The lack of accessible documentation on some of the coordination mechanisms, especially for those that were set-up during earlier phases of the EFA coordination, entailed the reconstruction of processes based on the indications of individuals who were either directly or indirectly familiar with them.

29. As fifteen years have gone by since the establishment of the Post-Dakar EFA coordination mechanisms, a number of key informants (now retired and difficult to reach) could not be interviewed. Although the staff in all regional offices were interviewed, it was not possible to reach all of their former colleagues who had worked on coordination since the year 2000.

30. Although the interviews with staff and stakeholders at national level allowed to identify some recurring patterns associated with the implementation of the EFA agenda at the national level, these case studies are not intended to be representative for all national contexts, but helped to understand the effects of global and regional coordination mechanisms and how these were linked with and translated into the national level in a specific national context, and under specific circumstances, considering the relevant regional and national interventions of UNESCO and other development agencies.

31. A survey was not conducted since the main purpose of this evaluation was to explore in depth why and how coordination mechanisms worked in a specific context. As a result, in-depth interviews and collective reflections among a selected number of informants representing a wide variety of perspectives were preferred to the administration of an online survey. Three additional reasons explain such methodological choice. First, due to the high turnover of staff directly involved or participating in EFA coordination mechanisms and the lack of e-mail contact information for those among them who had worked on them in the early 2000s, the effort to reconstruct the history of EFA coordination since 2000 would have been undermined by survey respondents' greater familiarity with the most recent mechanisms. Second, given the wide variety of partners, individuals and organizations involved in EFA coordination and in light of the different relevance that EFA coordination had in different countries, a survey might have risked privileging the ideas and opinions of one specific region or category of respondents and, therefore, might have led to eschewed conclusions. Third, survey respondents might have concentrated on one or two EFA coordination mechanisms at a specific level only (e.g. either global or regional) and such unbalance would have compromised a more complete and holistic understanding of the EFA coordination structures and processes.

## II. FINDINGS

32. This section will provide the findings in terms of key achievements and challenges related to three dimensions: Relevance, Coherence and Effectiveness of EFA Coordination.

33. In order to put the findings into context, an introductory section on the **Evolution of the EFA Coordination Architecture (2000-2015)** provides the background necessary to understand the circumstances, risks and challenges associated with UNESCO's coordination role since the year 2000. This section provides not only a description of the different EFA global and regional coordination mechanisms but also presents their major structural changes over the last fifteen years and according to three main phases: (i) 2000-2004; (ii) 2005-2010; and (iii) 2011-2015. Where relevant, the assessment in the following sections will make reference to the different historical phases.

34. The section on **Relevance of the EFA Coordination** focuses on the extent to which EFA coordination has remained aligned with the priorities and policies of the Dakar Framework for Action; as well as the needs and interests of its Members States and partners.

35. The section on **Coherence of the EFA Coordination** clarifies the extent to which UNESCO carried out its EFA coordination tasks and responsibilities according to what was agreed upon in the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 by also remaining consistent in its intents and practices across levels, i.e. at the global, regional, and to the extent possible, national levels.

36. The section on **Effectiveness of the EFA Coordination** focuses on the extent to which UNESCO coordination has attained its envisaged objectives in the four key domains spelled out in the Dakar Framework for Action: knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization, advocacy and monitoring.

### II.1. The Evolution of EFA Coordination Architecture (2000-2015): The three main phases

37. UNESCO EFA coordination and leadership roles have evolved over time in line with the evolution of the global international education community (e.g. the need for increased national budget allocations to education in response to the growing number of in-country school-age youth, the emergence of new global and regional initiatives, the set-up of innovative funding mechanisms<sup>8</sup> aimed to support specific education-related causes, and the unprecedented proliferation of spaces for creative knowledge generation and dissemination on education made possible by the use of the modern technologies<sup>9</sup>).

38. Cognizant of its global mandate for education and aware of the need for the whole Organization to remain an influential player both at the global and the regional level, UNESCO has taken the EFA coordination responsibility granted to it by the Dakar Framework for Action seriously and has sought to learn along the way on how to carry it out most effectively. The periodic commissioning of independent analytical research on coordination as well as the in-house development of reflective pieces focusing on the achievements and challenges associated with the EFA coordination attest to the Organization's genuine interest in assessing and improving its practices and processes. For instance, it was in response to the conclusions of two such coordination reviews, conducted respectively in 2004 and 2012<sup>10</sup>, that the Organization introduced important modifications to its EFA coordination architecture.

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<sup>8</sup> The EFA Fast Track Initiative, later named the Global Partnership for Education, is one of the most well-known ones.

<sup>9</sup> The World Education Blog, the Global Partnership for Education daily Tweets, the Norrag News online articles. The Global Campaign for Education Facebook page

<sup>10</sup> In the aftermath of the HLG meeting held in February 2010, UNESCO staff undertook a comprehensive literature review of EFA coordination efforts, including outcome documents arising from major EFA meetings (WG, HLG, UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA, regional EFA meetings). Consultations on this topic

39. In order to ensure a fair assessment of the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of EFA coordination mechanisms since the year 2000, it becomes necessary not only to acknowledge the evolution of the coordination structures and processes occurring during the last fifteen years but also to group and analyse the transformations of the coordination infrastructure according to the specific period of time when they were introduced. Therefore, the history of EFA coordination between 2000 and 2015 was analysed across three main phases: (i) 2000-2004; (ii) 2005-2010; and (iii) 2011-2015.

### **Box 1. The three phases of EFA Coordination: Brief Overview**

#### *First phase: 2000-2004*

Shortly after the end of the [World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 \(April 26-28\)](#), UNESCO put in place two main types of EFA coordination mechanisms:

(i) In-house coordination mechanisms (first, an informal group working on EFA follow-up issues -under the direct leadership of the UNESCO Interim ADG for Education- and in which different staff were involved on an hoc basis depending on the specific task to carry out)<sup>11</sup>; second, an EFA Follow-up Unit set-up within the Executive Office of the Education Sector; third, an ad hoc EFA Coordination section within one of the Education Sector Divisions with EFA focal points being appointed within each one of the Education Sector Divisions).

(ii) Global EFA coordination mechanisms (e.g. an EFA High-Level Group was created to mobilize high-level political support for EFA, a Sherpas Group was established within the EFA High-Level Group and tasked with the development and follow-up of the HLG communiqués, and a Working Group on EFA was set up to perform a more technical function. In those same years, UNESCO was also involved in coordinating multi-county education programs (e.g. the E-9 Initiative focused on the world's nine most populous countries), theme-specific Flagships Initiatives (e.g. sustainable development, teachers, education in emergencies) and civil society coordination mechanisms (e.g. the CCNGO on literacy and basic education created in 1984 was reformed in 2003 to include national and regional NGOs).

During this first phase, UNESCO also encouraged the set-up of coordination processes at the regional and national levels. At the regional level, each UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education developed a different EFA coordination strategy (e.g. the Bangkok office, where a special EFA coordination unit was created, was the one that organized the largest number of meetings, either with regional EFA coordinators or education specialists from across the region). At the national level, UNESCO encouraged countries to develop national processes and structures that would contribute to linking the global and regional coordination efforts to the implementation of the EFA agenda on the ground (e.g. the set-up of national EFA fora, the appointment of national EFA Coordinators and the development of 'credible' National EFA Plans of Action).<sup>12</sup>

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also took place with a variety of EFA partners and UNESCO colleagues, including field office staff. These activities resulted in a discussion paper on the effectiveness of EFA coordination that served as a background document for initial consultations with EFA partners, including members of the International Advisory Panel on EFA (IAP) and the CCNGO/EFA.

<sup>11</sup> This group contribute to the development of a working document (Global Initiative) introducing six key strategies to enhance the EFA movement internationally .These six original strategies included (a) increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education; (b) ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance; (c) providing earlier, more extensive and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education; (d) facilitating more effective donor coordination; (e) strengthening sector-wide approaches; and (f) undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards the EFA goals and targets, including periodic assessments. For more information, see <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001240/124019e.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Dakar Framework for Action, para. 17.

However, government officials in many developing countries were often unclear on how to develop such Plans and frequently lacked the planning capacity or full political support to integrate the EFA principles in their national strategies.

*Second phase: 2005-2010*

With the second phase of EFA coordination (2005-2010), EFA coordination mechanisms became more inclusive. Likewise, building on the lessons learned from the first coordination phase, UNESCO tried to make its EFA coordination better integrated not only with its Members States' Education Sector Plans (compared to the earlier years of coordination, UNESCO placed less emphasis on the creation of ad hoc EFA National Plans of Action) but also with their respective national development plans and PRSPs. Towards the end of this second phase, UNESCO was able to strengthen the linkage between not only the EFA High-Level Group and the Working Group on EFA (e.g. through the creation of the International Advisory Panel, a new coordination structure providing the HLG and WG with both technical and policy advice) but also between the EFA and FTI/MDG initiatives (e.g. UNESCO developed a Global Action Plan that spelled out more clearly the five EFA conveners' respective areas of action and responsibilities).

*Third Phase: 2011-2015*

During the third and last EFA coordination phase (2011-2015), UNESCO capitalized on the efforts and lessons learned during the previous two phases. As a result, the EFA coordination team as well as the rest of the Education Sector gained more visibility globally, especially within the scope of the consultative processes leading to the finalization of what used to be called the Post-2015 Agenda and that is nowadays referred to as the Agenda 2030. In an attempt to strengthen its coordination role, UNESCO established a new coordination mechanism (the Global EFA meeting) as well as a structure (the EFA Steering Committee) during this last phase. The Steering Committee had four main merits: 1) it conferred greater legitimacy on the EFA deliberations due to its more stringent membership requirements; 2) it helped strengthen coherence and inclusiveness into UNESCO 'coordination' processes after a decade of uneven coordination; 3) it provided UNESCO with a balanced platform where to find a common voice on EFA-related issues, as attested by SDG4 - Education 2030 Framework for Action signed at the World Education Forum 2015; and 4) it strived to re-establish the universality of the EFA agenda and movement, especially in view of the development of SDG4 - Education 2030. During this third phase, UNESCO also supported the creation of a High-Level Forum (HLF) that replaced the HLG and brought together (usually at the margins of other international meetings) a selected number of world leaders and champions of education.



## II.2. Relevance of EFA Coordination Mechanisms

### Key Messages

#### *Achievements*

- UNESCO is amply recognized as the organization that has most coherently promoted the [EFA agenda](#) and the entirety of its 6 Goals globally throughout the last fifteen years (2000-2015), despite the mushrooming of concurrent - if not competing- initiatives funded by other development partners.
- UNESCO's EFA coordination was found to be most relevant in relation to its political mobilization, and in the area of monitoring of EFA goals especially by bringing greater attention amongst the international community to aspects such as gender equality as a cross cutting priority within national and regional education systems and strategies as well as to such neglected - and yet relevant - areas as Early Childhood Care and Education, adult literacy and other learning needs as well as skills development of youth and adults, within a new and more encompassing lifelong-learning perspective.
- UNESCO's coordination was focused on ensuring the quality, social equity and inclusiveness of education systems
- UNESCO's EFA coordination was particularly relevant in meeting the planning and – to a lesser extent- implementation needs of national policy-makers in developing countries, especially those with an interest in implementing the [EFA agenda](#) in its entirety.
- UNESCO's advocacy efforts have been successful in influencing the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda and garnered support among its partners to introduce otherwise neglected aspects of education in the global sustainable development agenda.

#### *Challenges*

- The lack of a clear division of in-house coordination tasks and responsibilities between UNESCO regional and national offices, along with the paucity of resources allocated by the Organization to the implementation of projects at the country level, undermined the relevance of UNESCO's coordination with other development partners on the ground.
- The lack of a streamlined communication strategy around EFA (beyond the annual launch of the GMR report) and the absence of dissemination of EFA-related information such as clear-cut messages on what it was set to achieve, resulted in limited knowledge and understanding of its main principles, also among UNESCO staff.
- Due to its own resources being limited, UNESCO's coordination role for mobilizing resources to sustain the holistic EFA was perceived as less relevant.

#### *Overall relevance of UNESCO's EFA coordination*

40. UNESCO is recognized as the organization that has most coherently promoted the [EFA agenda](#) and the entirety of its 6 Goals throughout the last fifteen years (2000-2015), despite the mushrooming of concurrent - if not competing- initiatives, which managed to gain greater visibility at country-level. Such is the case of [the EFA/Fast-Track Initiative](#) (whose Secretariat was based at the World Bank) and the [Millennium Development Goals Agenda](#) (coordinated and monitored by the [United Nations Development Programme](#)) which emphasized primary education enrolment outcomes to the detriment of the more holistic vision put forward by UNESCO.

41. The relevance of UNESCO's coordination was twofold. On the one hand, UNESCO strived to maintain the holistic nature of the EFA agenda and promoted a shared understanding of its goals and principles (e.g. quality, social equity and inclusiveness) among a large number of actors and across a variety of sectors: from pre-primary to post-secondary education, including skills

development and adult literacy. On the other hand, UNESCO provided technical support to its partners (e.g. the provision of ad hoc policy advice or the organization of capacity development programs).

42. As a standard-setting organization with a normative function at the global level, UNESCO has been cognizant of the significance of its coordination role assigned to it by the Dakar Framework for Action. Evidence shows that the Organization engaged itself in a number of global and regional coordination initiatives for education spanning across a variety of functions, such as, advocacy, capacity building and technical assistance, not only at the global and regional but also at the national level<sup>13</sup>.

43. UNESCO has often intervened in areas that, despite their relevance, were overlooked or neglected by other partners (i.e. education quality, adult literacy, Early Childhood Care and Education and skills development were often treated as secondary to the Dakar Goals focusing on primary enrolment and gender equality in schools which corresponded to MDGs 2 and 3 and received much more attention by UNESCO's EFA partners<sup>14</sup>, both co-conveners and others). In order to ensure that the more neglected EFA goals would remain visible and inspire other partners both at the regional and national levels, UNESCO implemented a series of advocacy and capacity building projects (see the report section on Effectiveness).

44. Global EFA coordination adjusted over time to the different sets of interlocutors or regionally established processes and that entailed the adaptation of the coordination strategy to the different regions' specific needs and interests. Although it took some time for this to happen, the adaptation of the EFA agenda to the specific needs of some regional contexts contributed to stronger ownership of the vision spelled out in the Dakar Framework for Action. Member States in the LAC region, for instance, did not relate to all the 6 EFA goals but only to those that they had not attained yet and that appeared the most relevant to the region, as spelled out in the [Regional Education Project for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean \(EFA/PRELAC\) Strategy](#), approved by the ministers of Education (Havana, November 2002)<sup>15</sup>.

#### *Challenges included:*

45. Given the priority assigned to the fulfilment of the six EFA Goals in countries with the world's lowest enrolment and literacy rates, a certain number of countries with slightly education records or more advanced education systems were often not adequately engaged in the EFA coordination mechanisms. As a result, the EFA coordination initiatives did not appear relevant to middle- or high-income countries.

46. The lack of a clear division of coordination tasks and responsibilities between UNESCO regional and field offices, along with the paucity of resources allocated to projects implemented by the Organization in countries, undermined the relevance of UNESCO's in-country coordination with other development partners. This is the case of the CapEFA project in Bangladesh which provided

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<sup>13</sup> A total of 23 initiatives in which UNESCO actively participated were identified in a study commissioned by the UNESCO EFA Global Partnership team (Little, 2012). Such initiatives included the following: the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI), the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education (GTF) and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Adolescent Girls (UNAGTF), the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education (IATT) and the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), the School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI) and the School Feeding Programmes (HGSF), Partnership for Education (Pfe); and the Network of Parliamentarians for EFA (Parliamentary Network).

<sup>14</sup> In their review of the global EFA architecture, Faul and Packer (2014) confirmed that the EFA-FTI "worked to the education MDGs rather than either the Jomtien or Dakar goals, albeit both its title and broader statements of intent embraced EFA" (p. 15).

<sup>15</sup> Conceived as a framework for action for the entire region, the EFA/PRELac Strategy emphasized the need for countries to intervene -at their own pace and in alignment with their own existing strategies and mechanisms-in five strategic priority areas of education: (i) contents and practices; (ii) teachers; (iii) school environment; (iv) management; and (v) social responsibility. Placed under the guidance of an Intergovernmental Committee (made up of all the Ministers of Education from the region) and equipped with a Bureau of seven members elected every four years, the EFA/PRELac benefited from the support of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago), which serves as its Executive Secretariat.

technical assistance to the country's Bureau of Non Formal Education <sup>16</sup> whereas most other partners operating in the country worked on primary education in collaboration with a different Ministry (the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education).

47. As acknowledged by the majority of respondents, a disconnect existed between the global coordination and the national implementation of the EFA Agenda. For instance, the excessive reliance on country's capacities to plan and execute National EFA Plans of Action during the first phase of EFA coordination (2000-2004) under the assumption that these would translate into concrete policy actions and structural changes in national education sectors, proved to be a bottleneck. This became apparent when governments started developing their National EFA Plans of Action <sup>17</sup> without having all the necessary data (or the sufficient capacity to generate it, analyse it and apply it) on the current status of their education system.

48. The absence of systematic guidelines on regional coordination processes and the absence of a detailed definition of field directors' roles and responsibilities in relation to the coordination of the EFA agenda (this is also true at the national level) did in many cases not allow the realization of the full potential of EFA coordination. With the aim to maintain the EFA agenda relevant at the regional and country levels, a number of UNESCO field offices (e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Guatemala) often engaged with one or few partners especially in those areas that, despite their relevance, were neglected by other donors. However, in doing so, the Organization has also prevented itself from coordinating effectively with most other partners on larger education initiatives as potential entry points for a more holistic discourse on education. This is the case of those countries (e.g. Bangladesh) where UNESCO does not participate (either as a funder or technical expert) in the working group set-up by some of the country's largest donors to assist the national Ministry of Education through the Sector Wide Support Project.

#### *Relevance of UNESCO's coordination: Key themes and mechanisms*

49. The relevance of UNESCO EFA coordination has been particularly strong in the area of political mobilization. The fact that programmatic areas such as TVET, adult literacy and education quality have been integrated in most countries' national education strategies and that related targets have been included in the Education Agenda 2030 is a confirmation of the relevant role played by UNESCO in influencing its Member States' policies and processes in these specific domains over the last 15 years.

50. EFA monitoring is another area where UNESCO's coordination has demonstrated to be highly relevant. Thanks to its Institute of Statistics (UIS), UNESCO has been able to collect internationally comparable data on education in all its Member States and has, along with the support of the GMR team (EFA-GMR, 2014; EFA-GMR, 2015), produced a series of publications and background papers that have served as the basis for evidence-based discussions in most of its coordination meetings, especially the ones focusing on knowledge dissemination and advocacy.

51. More in particular, the GMR Annual Report<sup>18</sup> has amply been acknowledged as the main monitoring report on EFA progress<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> As a result of this intervention, Non-Formal Education (NFE) was recognized as a sub-sector and the Non Formal Education Act was approved by the Prime Minister's Cabinet in 2013. It is a key instrument to institutionalize NFE that includes rules and regulations on equivalency education, delivery of NFE programmes and training of NFE teachers. The Act was formulated based on guidelines developed under the second phase of the CapEFA programme in Bangladesh.

<sup>17</sup> As reported in the 2014 World Bank education database, IIEP's Planipolis attested a total of 87 national EFA plans while GPE confirmed that 59 countries (half of which in low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa) had planning documents and appraisals of their education sector plans.

<sup>18</sup> Recently renamed Global Education Monitoring Report.

<sup>19</sup> In the introduction to the UNESCO 2004-2005 biennial Programme and Budget (32 C/5), the Organization's Director General amply recognized UNESCO's role in this area as follows: "UNESCO's undisputed leadership in the Education for All (EFA) process and its monitoring is best exemplified by its highly regarded annual EFA monitoring report, which has become an international benchmarking tool, by its successful coordination of all EFA partners and by the preparation of EFA plans in an increasing number of countries".

*Challenges included:*

52. Of the four areas of coordination assigned to UNESCO in the Dakar Framework for Action, the one in which the Organization played a less relevant role was resource mobilization<sup>20</sup> to sustain the overall EFA agenda.

53. In terms of knowledge generation and dissemination<sup>21</sup>, UNESCO coordination has been more ad hoc in nature and has revolved around the organization of occasional events. While this evaluation did not assess the impact that such coordination had on the adoption of national policies, a larger number of respondents reported that the proliferation of well-resourced global education initiatives (e.g. [the Global Partnership for Education](#) or the UN-Secretary General-sponsored [Global Education First Initiative](#)) and the increasingly claimed intellectual leadership in global education by a variety of non-UN organizations (e.g. the [Centre for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution](#), [Pearson](#)) undermined the relevance of UNESCO's coordination in this area. However, when it comes to planning (e.g. through IIEP work), teachers (through TTF) and Statistics (through UIS), the relevance of UNESCO's intellectual leadership is still amply recognized.

*The external perceptions of UNESCO's EFA coordination relevance*

54. The EFA Global Partnership Team based at the UNESCO Headquarter in Paris made an effort to coordinate and ensure coherence across all the different global and regional coordination mechanisms. In order to enhance the relevance of its work, the team has commissioned a number of critical reviews of their processes and practices (e.g. in 2004 and 2011). As of 2012, the Team has assumed a stronger and more visible coordination role both globally and regionally, thanks to its development, management and coordination work of the newly established Steering Committee and the organization of meetings to discuss the Post-2015 Agenda<sup>22</sup>.

55. UNESCO also made several efforts to work with other organizations to enhance the visibility and recognition of EFA values and principles, in order to minimize the risk of fragmentation of the global education agenda in the aftermath of the Dakar Conference. For example, through a partnership with the World Bank, UNESCO tried to facilitate the integration of EFA plans into PRSPs and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). Although a few PRSPs were making explicit reference to EFA, the values and principles heralded in the EFA agenda were duly taken into account (mainstreamed) and, as reported by a widely-disseminated [IIEP study](#), UNESCO's country-level technical assistance on EFA plans was especially critical for this to happen ([IIEP & GPE 2012](#)).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Steer, L., & Baudienville, G. (2010). What drives donor financing of basic education? Project Briefing. ODI, London. ; Burnett, N., (2010a). Strategies for financing of education: A global view. Results for Development Institute. Prepared for the meeting of the IIEP International Working Group on Education, Stockholm, June.; Burnett, N. (2010b); How to develop the UNESCO the world needs: The Challenges of Reform. Journal of International Cooperation in Education, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 89-99.

<sup>21</sup> Edward et al, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> In order to reflect the diversity of the EFA community, the EFA Steering committee membership includes the following: (i) One or two representatives from each one of the six UNESCO member states regional groups; (ii) a E-9 Initiative representative; (iii) one or two representatives from each one of the 5 EFA convening agencies; (iv) a Global Partnership for Education representative; (v) an OECD representative; (vi) two or three Civil society representatives; and (vii) one Private sector representative.

<sup>23</sup> That notwithstanding, nearly 20 countries in Africa were confronted with the need to develop multiple education strategies in response to the specific requirements of each individual donor. On one hand, this created some unnecessary confusion within governments, as in the case of Burkina Faso that had to deal with three education strategies at the same time (the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Plan or TYBEDP drafted and adopted in 1999, the EFA National Plan of Action developed but not validated in 2002 and the Outlined Strategy for Primary Education submitted to the Fast Track Initiative for funding. On the other hand, other countries were able to integrate the different frameworks or strategies as in the case of Namibia. Namibia, for instance, had a National EFA Plan of Action which different technical and financial partners had contribute to (e.g., UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA) both during the development phase (2002) and the implementation through the EFA Forum (2004). A few years later, the Namibian government launched in 2006 a sector-wide programme, known as ETSIP (Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme), and aimed at the fulfilment of most objectives set by EFA National Plan of Action (2001-2015).

### *Challenges included:*

56. As the level of predictability and clarity of UNESCO's coordination objectives and modalities (arguably, a reflection of the frequent turnover in the EFA coordination team leadership over the years) was not always clear among all other EFA partners, its perceived relevance was often uneven. While many respondents reported that engaging with UNESCO often resulted in productive meetings, especially when revolving around the finalization of a report (e.g. the EFA national plans in the early 2000s, the Mid-Decade Assessment in 2007 and the Progress Report to be presented at the Incheon preparatory regional meetings in 2014 and 2015), they also stated that a much longer period of silence or timid interactions between UNESCO (as well as the other EFA convening agencies) and other regional and national partners passed by in between these important meetings. Furthermore, UNESCO's requests made to national level stakeholders for providing inputs either to the meeting's agenda or some draft documents, were perceived as ad hoc and late.

57. The lack of a streamlined communication strategy around EFA (beyond the annual launch of the GMR report) and the absence of dissemination of EFA-related information such as clear-cut messages on what it was set to achieve resulted in limited knowledge and understanding of its main principles, also among UNESCO staff. Several UNESCO staff from outside the Education Sector interviewed, as part of this evaluation did not seem to be very knowledgeable about EFA except in relation to the World Education Forum 2015. Several respondents believed that EFA is a project. Others described it as a program and one person working with civil society spoke of EFA as a global movement, as stressed by the [UNESCO Director-General](#) at the closing of the NGO Forum in occasion of the World Education Forum 2015.

## **II.3. Coherence of EFA Coordination**

### **Key Messages**

#### *Achievements*

- The EFA agenda and the coordination of it remained consistently visible within the Education Sector at UNESCO, as attested by the continued references to it in UNESCO's key strategic documents and the Director-General's speeches between 2000 and 2015.
- UNESCO remained profoundly coherent in defending the breadth of the EFA agenda (always reminding its partners that education was not only about access but also about quality and equity).
- UNESCO was responsive to its main constituencies' needs and interests and was able to adapt its global coordination strategy accordingly over the last fifteen years. At the regional level, the Regional Bureaux for Education in Bangkok was the one that mostly succeeded in coordinating countries around EFA-related goals and strategies, in part due to greater staffing and financial capacity.
- UNESCO was increasingly seeking to enhance the formal representation and engagement of Civil Society in all its coordination mechanisms and thus was effective in enhancing the representativeness and credibility of the civil society voice in global and regional platforms as consistently stated in most of the Organization's EFA-related publications since 2000.

#### *Challenges*

- UNESCO's rather limited strategic planning and staffing capacity for EFA coordination hindered the coherence between the Organization's coordination work on the ground and the broad coordination mandate assigned to the Organization by the Dakar Framework for Action.
- Despite the acknowledgment of the fact that 'the heart of EFA lies at the country level', UNESCO mostly focused on coordination at the global and regional level. As a result,

UNESCO national staff did not always seem to have sufficient clarity on what their coordination role was. As a result, they implemented, communicated about and coordinated the EFA agenda at the local level, with a large degree of independence and variance.

- Lack of coherence was observed between the EFA global normative work and the allocation of education resources by the rest of the development partners: EFA advocated for a universal agenda but funding (e.g. FTI-GPE) and donors' interventions (programme- and sector-wide approaches) were primarily focused on primary education in developing countries.
- The uneven involvement of all the EFA Convening Agencies made it difficult to ensure greater coherence and complementarity within the United Nations system and effective support to national efforts to realize the EFA goals.

### *UNESCO's contribution to the creation (and review) of formal coordination mechanisms since 2000*

58. In line with its global mandate for education, UNESCO took up an enormous responsibility by assuming the role of coordinating the EFA agenda after the Dakar Conference in 2000. Consistent with the level of commitment that this new role entailed, the Organization was the driving force behind the set-up of EFA formal coordination mechanisms.

59. Despite the breadth of its mandate and the plethora of development partners with which it interacts on a continued basis, UNESCO was responsive to its main constituencies' changing positions and orientations on education-related matters and has been able to revise its global and regional EFA coordination strategy on several occasions over the last fifteen years.

60. As each of the three phases of the EFA Coordination over the last fifteen years has been characterized by a unique combination of coordination practices and processes, it is fair to recognize UNESCO's resilience and genuine interest in constantly enhancing the effectiveness of its EFA coordination as spelled out in the Dakar Framework for Action.

#### *Challenges included:*

61. Five EFA convening agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA and UNDP) contributed to the set-up of the formal EFA coordination mechanisms and were collectively responsible for the follow-up of the Dakar Framework for Action. Nevertheless, uneven involvement<sup>24</sup> of these agencies made it difficult to ensure greater coherence and complementarity within the United Nations system and effective support to national efforts to realize the EFA goals. The launch of the World Bank Education Strategy 2020 '[Learning for All](#)' in 2012 (the Strategy was not fully aligned with the EFA Agenda) as well as the increased focus of UNICEF work on equity and poverty eradication seem to suggest a certain degree of partners' disengagement from a shared EFA coordination strategy<sup>25</sup>.

62. Despite the acknowledgment of the fact that 'the heart of EFA lies at the country level', UNESCO national staff did not always seem to have sufficient clarity on what their coordination role (some reported none, others reported that they did not know, others claimed that they had a relevant role). As a result, UNESCO staff in the field as well as the other EFA Conveners were not provided with clear-cut EFA coordination tasks and responsibilities, despite the proliferation of national level coordination mechanisms. The relative autonomy granted to Regional and Country directors and the absence of detailed guidelines on coordination processes and responsibilities as

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<sup>24</sup> In a paper written for the EFA Global Monitoring Report in 2014, Faul and Packer stated that the "framing of the EFA at the global level has been driven primarily by the United Nations and its specialist agencies, notably UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank and to a lesser degree UNDP and UNFPA" (p. 1).

<sup>25</sup> Such uneven coordination among EFA co-conveners questions the principles of 'genuine co-ordination, consistency and coherence in the international response to education' mentioned in the 2000 Country guidelines for the development of EFA National Plans of Action (UNESCO, 2000; 16).

well as the lack of professional performance criteria related to EFA coordination contributed to uneven coordination styles, including often the transmission of EFA-related messages diverging from those promoted at Headquarters.

63. Many stakeholders confirmed that the level of participation in the national level education group is decisive for EFA implementation at national level. These are the cases of the Pakistan Field Office that successfully integrated a 'One UN' strategy in its day-to-day coordination work or of the Cambodia country office whose Director co-chairs and serves as Secretary of the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG). In Cambodia, UNESCO even serves as the Coordination and Supervising Entity of the GPE<sup>26</sup> Education Development Program Grant (EDPG). However, there are other countries where the role played by UNESCO in coordinating with other international partners in the national education sector seems to be less strong than in the past. The UNESCO office in Dhaka (Bangladesh), for instance, is no longer participating in the technical working group created by the country's largest education funders (e.g. Asian Development Bank, UNICEF and the World Bank) and its staff technical expertise seems to have been underestimated due to the limited financial contributions made by the Organization to the National Sector-Wide Support Project which most other influential partners support financially.

64. As argued by several respondents, the UNESCO broad mandate<sup>27</sup> provides the Organization with the capability to create a space where to merge ideas, data, thoughts and experience that are not directly related to implementation but that are equally relevant. Such ideas are to prevent fragmentation of the education discourse that often results from the creation of highly specialized technical working groups, and from the lack of reaching out to other line ministries (such as the Ministry of Welfare, Social Protection and Finance), in addition to working with the Ministry of Education. In particular, in view of the fulfilment of the holistic goals associated with the SDG 4 - Education 2030 Agenda, this specific UNESCO's role will become even more important for ensuring a coherent discourse.

65. The past fifteen years have shown the lack of coherence between the EFA global normative work and the allocation of education resources by development partners' funding: although EFA advocated for a universal agenda, funding (provided by FTI<sup>28</sup>-GPE<sup>29</sup>) and donors' interventions (e.g., programme- and sector-wide approaches) mainly focused on primary education<sup>30</sup> in developing countries (UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013; UNESCO, 2007b).

#### *UNESCO's staffing on EFA*

66. Despite the importance of the EFA agenda within the Organization's work in education, the related staffing level was not commensurate to the workload, as attested by the decreasing budget allocated within the Education Sector to cover the costs of the Organization's staff dedicated to the global EFA coordination (Table 6 and Figure 3). While more staff and financial resources for EFA

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<sup>26</sup> At the national level, the UNESCO EFA coordination has been confronted with the unexpected task to liaise with the [Local Education Group \(LEG\)](#), set up as part of the GPE programming in a number of countries. LEG are collaborative fora of stakeholders who develop, implement, monitor and evaluate education sector plans at country-level and that intervene in those very same areas in which UNESCO was expected to intervene, as per the Dakar Framework for Action, including: (i) Policy dialogue and harmonization of donor support in the education sector; (ii) Monitoring and promoting progress toward increased aid effectiveness; and (iii) Mobilizing financial support.

<sup>27</sup> As vividly described by one respondent in Cambodia, "EFA is a soup and the Education-related MDG is only one of its ingredients".

<sup>28</sup> The EFA-FTI was able to align bilateral and multilateral aid agency activities and encourage sector planning. This mechanism was able to link donors more closely to national governments education sectoral plans (in over 43 countries as of November 2010).

<sup>29</sup> This multilateral organization has gradually become one of the largest sources of external funding for basic education donors in low and lower middle income countries, from being ranked 13th in 2007 to 4th in 2011. As of 2013, 40% of GPE disbursements were going to fragile and conflict affected countries (Global Monitoring Report, p. 23)

<sup>30</sup> Similarly to aid disbursements to primary basic education, which doubled from US\$2.8 billion in 2002 to US\$6.2 billion in 2010, disbursements to secondary education (1/3 of the earlier ones) increased from US\$1.1 billion in 2002 to US\$ 2.2 billion in 2011 (UNESCO 2013). Brookings Institution and UNESCO 2013.

coordination were assigned to the two Regional Bureaux for Education in Dakar (Africa Region) and Bangkok (Asia-Pacific Region), it was not possible for the Organization to develop and implement a coherent EFA coordination staffing strategy across all Regional Bureaux during the three phases of EFA coordination (Table 4).

**Table 4. Evolution of Staffing in the UNESCO Education Sector/EFA (2000-2015)**<sup>31</sup>

30 C/5		31C/5		32 C/5		33 C/5		34 C/5		35 C/5		36 C/5		37 C/5	
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
D2	D2	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1
P5	P5	P3	P3	P4 UR	P5	P5	P5	P5	P5	P5 UR	P4	P4	P4	P5 UR	D1 F
P5	P5	P3	P3	P3	P3	P4	P4	P4 UR	P3	P3	P1/ P2	P3 F	P3 UR	P4	P5
P3	P3	P3	P3	P3 UR	P3	P4	P3	P3	P1/ P2	P1/ P2	P1/ P2	P1/ P2 OL	P1/ P2 OL	P4	P4
P1/P 2	P1/ P2			P1/ P2	P1/ P2	P3	P3	P1/ P2			P1/ P2	P1/ P2 OL	P1/ P2	P4	P4
P1/P 2	P1/ P2				P1/ P2		P1/ P2				P1/ P2 UR	P1/ P2 UR	P1/ P2 UR	P3	P3
P1/P 2 UR	P1/ P2													P3 F	P1/P 2
														P1/ P2	
														P1/ P2	
														P1/ P2 F	

Source: UNESCO 2016 (Education Sector Human Resources Officer as well as past members of the EFA coordination team at UNESCO HQ).

Legend: The first row (30 C/5 through 37 C/5) refers to the UNESCO biennial Program and Budget; UR = Under Recruitment; F = Frozen post; OL= On leave.

67. Similarly, the numerous changes in leadership within the EFA coordination team over the last fifteen years (including the lack of an EFA Director between 2012 and 2014) were not coherent with the need for a solid and continued stewardship of the EFA agenda (Figure 3).

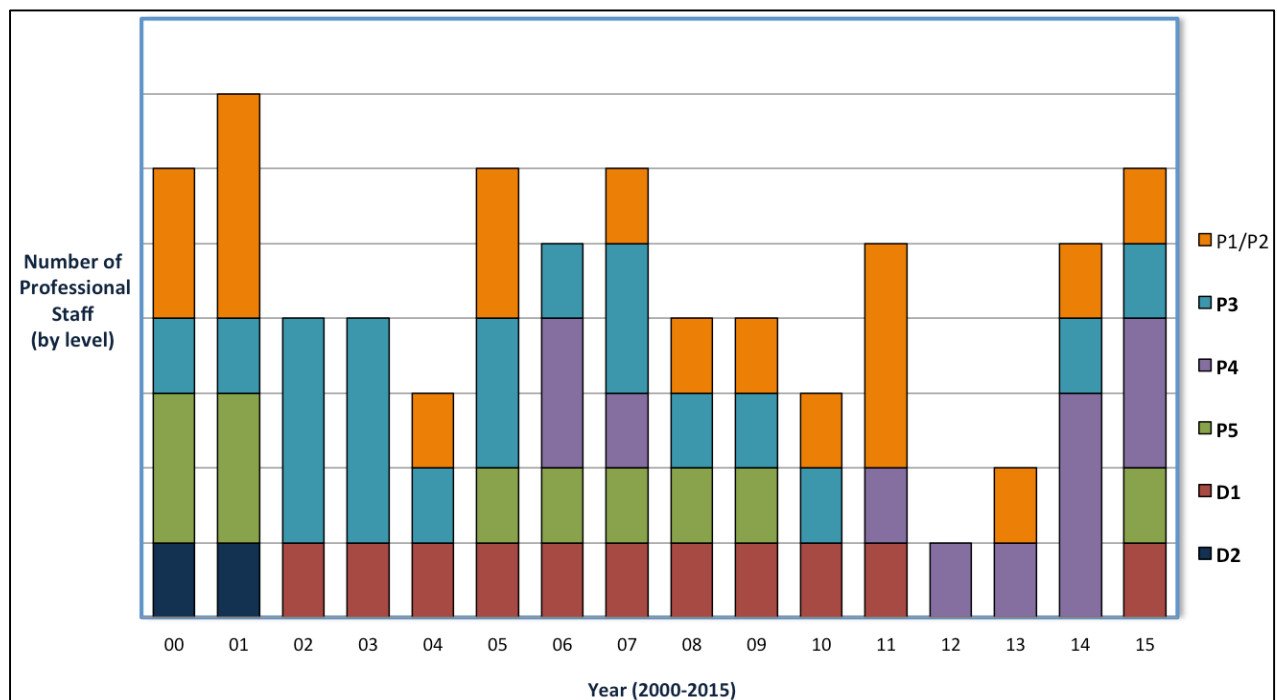
#### *UNESCO's coordination with Member States*

68. According to most respondents interviewed at the global, regional and national level, one of the reasons behind UNESCO's ability to coordinate effectively with Member States is its political legitimacy, mainly derived from the fact of being a multilateral Organization made up of some 195 countries. The majority of respondents stated that UNESCO's coordination practices are indeed coherent with the Member States' expectation that the Organization be impartial and transparent when convening actors to discuss and act upon global issues in education as well science and culture.

<sup>31</sup> Due to the frequent staff turnover, the table aims to represent the overall picture for every single year (e.g. if a staff person left in February and was not replaced for the remaining 10-11 months, that person would not be counted at all). In addition, other teams were "added" on to the EFA coordination staff (e.g. the Knowledge Management Service or Education Research and Foresight) but their work was not on EFA coordination per se.



**Figure 2. Evolution of Staffing in the UNESCO Education Sector/EFA (2000-2015)** <sup>32</sup>



Source: UNESCO Human Resources (2015)

*Challenges included:*

69. The very same highly political nature of UNESCO's governance structure exposes its programming and coordination to a unique combination of internal and external pressures (e.g., searching global consensus at all times on any given issue). As a result, and in spite of the attempts to improve coordination during the 2012-2015 period, UNESCO's EFA coordination efforts, especially vis-a-vis the international development partners, has come across as more reactive than pro-active since 2000.

70. According to most respondents, the absence of high-level officials at some of the international education meetings and other similar gatherings (e.g., those of the EFA coordination structures) organized by UNESCO over the years questioned the legitimacy of their deliberations. Likewise, the perceived overlap of function of two or three distinct coordination mechanisms affected the perception of their respective utility among partners.

*UNESCO coordination with other UN agencies at the regional and national level.*

71. UNESCO's ability to harmonize the EFA agenda within the scope of activities and strategies implemented through UN inter-agency coordination mechanisms seems to have varied. Often confined to dissemination of information related to the yearly formulation of a national EFA Plan or the organization of a regional EFA meeting, UNESCO's role mainly consisted in embedding the EFA agenda within the UN system discussions on education. This was particularly the case of the UNESCO Regional Bureaux for Education in Santiago and Bangkok.

72. In Africa, where no overarching EFA coordination mechanism existed between 2000 and 2012, numerous EFA-related initiatives were implemented across the continent by a multitude of actors, such as the African Union/COMEDAF, UNGEI, UNDG and UNCTs. That said, UNESCO offices in Africa, under the overall coordination of the Regional Bureau for Education in Africa

<sup>32</sup> Due to the frequent staff turnover, the table aims to represent the overall picture for every single year (e.g. if a staff person left in February and was not replaced for the remaining 10-11 months, that person would not be counted at all). In addition, other teams were "added" on to the EFA coordination staff (e.g. the Knowledge Management Service or Education Research and Foresight) but their work was not on EFA coordination per se.

(BREDA) engaged in coordination activities at three levels. First, at the country level, through UNCTs, UNESCO led the drafting of the UN-wide UNESS process. Second, at the sub-regional and regional levels, UNESCO organized large, sub-regional or regional consultations and advocacy campaigns on EFA (e.g. mid-term evaluation of LIFE and related information sharing conference) and coordinated regional publications on EFA themes (for instance a comparative study on TVET statistic systems).

73. Even in a country like Cambodia where UNESCO has been a strong leader of the national education agenda (serving as the spokesperson of all international development partners in front of the Minister of Education), the Organization has not always been able to collaborate effectively with the other UN actors as in the case of the 7.5 million EUR EU-funded Education Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF) implemented by UNICEF, which aims to support the Royal Government of Cambodia improve its capacity to plan, manage and monitor the education sector for an efficient and effective education sector.

#### *Changes in UNESCO's internal organizational structure and processes*

74. During the first phase of the EFA coordination (2000-2004), it became apparent that, for the EFA leadership to be more effective in this area, a clear definition of what coordination was and of what UNESCO staff was expected to at the global, regional and national levels, was necessary. In this vein, the process of internal rationalization initiated by UNESCO and resulting in the closure of 23 national field offices<sup>33</sup>, became an opportunity for the Education Sector to ensure stronger focus of its programs at the regional level.

75. The subsequent process of UNESCO's decentralization and clustering contributed to ensuring better UNESCO's coverage of the EFA-related issues in all its Member States. Consistent with the reform, the number of regional bureaux and cluster offices increased and more education professionals were redeployed. The staff establishment for the Education Sector (excluding Institutes) showed an increase in the ratio of field to Headquarters staff, from, from 35.2% in 2002-2003 to 38.2% in 2004-2005 – the highest of all sectors and higher than the house-wide ratio. During the same period, professional posts increased from 87 to 93 in the field, and decreased from 160 to 150 at HQ<sup>34</sup>.

76. During 2000-2004, around two thirds of the budget for education was decentralized to UNESCO's regional, cluster and field offices. The highest rate of decentralization (70%) was accorded to Sub-programme I.1.1 (Basic education for all: targeting key goals). However, the total funding for EFA-specific programmatic funding was rather limited: – \$3.1 million for 'Ensuring gender equality in EFA', and \$5.1 million for 'Making the right to education a reality for all children'.

77. Coherent with its commitment to the E-9 Initiative, UNESCO offices in all E-9 countries were retained with the primary purpose of promoting EFA-related work. Education Institutes placed EFA at the heart of their activities and redefined their programmes to fit closely with the Education Sector<sup>35</sup>.

#### *The link between UNESCO's medium-term strategies and the EFA vision*

78. Since the year 200, UNESCO fully aligned its Medium-Term Strategies (31 C/4, 32 C/4 and 33 C/4) with the Dakar Framework for Action and the Dakar Goals, as attested by the clear reference made by the Strategy to the close link existing between the Dakar specific goals and the Organization's education programme strategic objectives<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Report by the Director-General on the strategic review of UNESCO's Post-Dakar role in Education For All (EFA) (p.8).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Proposals on an overall strategy for UNESCO institutes and centers, and their governing bodies", presented to the Executive Board at its 162nd session in 2001 (document 162 EX/18 and Decision 4.2).

<sup>36</sup> According to Strategic Objective 1: "Promoting education as a fundamental right in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". This is of paramount importance as it informed UNESCO's advocacy of education as a human right and equity-related constructs besides its effort to mobilize international effort to

79. Likewise, all the UNESCO's Programmes and Budget documents between the years 2000 and 2015 approved during the respective sessions of the General Conference (Table 7) recognized 'Basic education for all' and the support for EFA strategies as top priorities of the Organization's Education Programme (Major Programme I). Overall, an average of \$21 million per biennium was allocated to EFA-related programming between 2000 and 2015. Extra-budgetary resources accounted for a significant share of such biennial budget for EFA coordination, especially between 2000 and 2007 as well as during the 2010-2011 biennium. While it was not possible for the evaluation to identify the exact amount of resources directly allocated to EFA coordination, the aforementioned volatility of regular budget allocation (from which resources were drawn to hire staff dedicated to EFA coordination within the Education sector) could be used as a proxy for the evolution of UNESCO's budget for EFA coordination over the last fifteen years, as also confirmed by some additional data provided by the Education Sector Human Resources Officers (Table 7).

**Table 5. Evolution of UNESCO's Education Budget including EFA Programming (2000-2015) (in US\$ million)**

	30 C/5 2000/0 1	31 C/5 2002/0 3	32 C/5 2004/05	33 C/5 2006/0 7	34 C/5 2008/0 9	35 C/5 2010/1 1	36 C/5 2012/1 3	37 C/5 2014/1 5
Regular Budget Activities for Education	117	46.7	61	107	108	118	115	118
Extra-Budgetary Resources for Education	126	130	103	123	69	62	117	63
Total Budget Resources for Education	243	176.7	164	230	177	180	232	181
<b>Total amount of Resources Allocated to EFA Programming (Absolute Value and % share of total budget for Education)</b>	5.9 (2%)	35.6 (20%)	32.8 (20%)	19.6 (8%)	29.2 (16%)	38.7 (22%)	21 (9%)	26 (14%)

Source: Review of UNESCO's approved Programme and Budget documents (from 30 C/5 to 37 C/5).

#### *Alignment of the EFA agenda within other international, regional and national initiatives and processes*

80. Starting during the second phase of EFA coordination, UNESCO made a specific effort to better define the linkages between the EFA Goals and the education-related MDGs, as well as the need for ensuring proper follow-up of EFA within United Nations-wide planning processes, be either regional or national. This strategy translated into the joint preparation and/or revision of a several UN documents: the Common Country Assessments (CCAs), the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), UNESCO Education Sector Strategies (UNESS) at the national level. Likewise, UNESCO made sure to mainstream the EFA holistic vision and its key principles (e.g. education quality) in the regional UN coordination mechanisms, such as the periodic undg meetings (both virtual and residential) or, as in the case of the UNESCO staff in the LAC Regional Bureau for Education, in the UN regional Peer-support Group meetings (more technical in nature). The UNESCO Global Action Plan built on these efforts and promoted EFA advocacy within such existing fora (rather than creating parallel processes or divides), especially in the two key areas of coordination: 'Resource Mobilization' and 'Aid Effectiveness'.

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support country commitment. (31 C/4, paragraphs 57-66). According to Strategic Objective 2: "Improving the quality of education through the diversification of contents and methods and the promotion of universally shared values". Cognizant of the lack in quality of teaching and learning globally, this objective translated in UNESCO's ongoing mobilization of partners around the improvement of education quality. According to Strategic Objective 3: "Promoting experimentation, innovation and the diffusion and sharing of information and best practices as well as policy dialogue in education". This drove UNESCO to engage a wide range of partners in policy dialogues in education and to mainstream EFA goals in a numerous venue, also through innovative methods, including ICTs (31 C/4, paras. 75-81).

81. With respect to coordination in the Asia-Pacific region, UNESCO was particularly active through its involvement with the activities of the EFA Technical Working Group (TWG) established under the UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and expected to report regularly to the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). The UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (Bangkok) serves as the Chair and also provides the Secretariat of the TWG. A Coordinating Committee composed of UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and UNESCAP steers the TWG on EFA. The TWG typically meets three times a year. By 31 December 2010, over 28 meetings of the TWG had been held. TWG main tasks at the regional level include the following: (i) Holding of annual Regional meetings of National EFA Coordinators which bring together country representatives (EFA coordinators, education planners, education statisticians, etc.), TWG members and other EFA partners; ii) engaging with the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)<sup>37</sup> which has direct links to ministries of education in its Member States; iii) Disseminating information on regional and global EFA activities and other developments to countries in the region through the Regional EFA website, the quarterly regional EFA e-newsletter and the mailing list of EFA coordinators; iv) Joint coordination efforts with development partners' representatives attending the various EFA meetings organized by UNESCO Bangkok often jointly with TWG members (e.g. UNICEF, Save the Children, etc.).

82. In Africa, UNESCO made a specific effort, too, to liaise with the Regional Economic communities (RECs) during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Decade for Education in Africa (1997-2006). Besides contributing to the organization of two conferences of African Education Ministers (Dakar in 2002 and Accra in 2004), which eventually led to the integration of the EFA holistic vision in the ECOWAS Protocol on education and training, UNESCO engaged in a variety of coordination initiatives. These included: the provision of support to RECs for harmonization of HIV/AIDS and sexuality education policy and curricula for the Central African Region (6 countries of ECCAS, the Economic Community of Central African States during 2007-2008); and the set-up of information and partnering network on TVET for UN Agencies (Inter-Agency Task Team, IATT since 2008) in the ECOWAS region. This set of programmes and activities was consolidated within a five-year strategic action plan also aimed at harmonizing the objectives of NEPAD, the Education Decade in Africa and those of the MDG in terms of the region's educational policies. Despite all these efforts, coordination at the regional level (exception made for the two regional conferences organized by the UNESCO African Regional Office for Education in Dakar) remained scattered during the first two phases of EFA coordination, and even more so at the sub-regional level (UNESCO 2007b).

*Challenges included:*

83. UNESCO coordination with some regional communities was not always able to yield the expected results. Despite its coordination efforts, for instance, UNESCO could not avoid that [ESCAP](#) (the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) would fail to mention education as strategic key pillar of the SDG Agenda 2030 in the Final Report issued at the end of the [ESCAP Forum on Sustainable Development 2015](#).

84. With the exception of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office (where a dedicated EFA team, known as APPEAL<sup>38</sup>, was established) and the Dakar Office (where a Regional EFA Coordinator was appointed between 2011 and 2014), UNESCO staff working on EFA coordination in the other regional bureaux (e.g. for the organization of meetings and initiatives at the regional level) was less institutionalized and rotated quite frequently.

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<sup>37</sup> UNESCO has stipulated a Memorandum of Understanding with Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). Often contributing to the SEAMEO High Official Meeting and the Ministerial Meeting, UNESCO has been making policy recommendations to its members with the SEAMEO benefiting from a more direct access to Ministers in 22 countries of the region as well as the right to act upon the Ministerial Directives. Together with SEAMEO, UNESCO also organized a meeting in Bangkok in September 2008 (Reaching the Unreached: Meeting of South-East Asian Countries to Achieve the EFA Goals Together by 2015) to exchange lessons on the integration and monitoring of equity and inclusion in their respective education sectors.

<sup>38</sup> Asia-Pacific Program for Education for All.

85. Unlike what was stated in the *Global Action Plan: improving support to countries in achieving the EFA goals (GAP)* in 2008, neither UNESCO nor the other four EFA convening agencies succeeded in developing a reference framework to structure coordination action among EFA partners, in order to ensure that 'support to national leadership and implementation in EFA be relevant, effective and efficient, building on the specific comparative advantages of each agency in a given country'<sup>39</sup>. While it was understood that the peculiarities of each country's education system made it challenging for a global coordination mechanism like EFA to provide tailored and timely technical assistance to all ministries of education, the seemingly low level of interest among EFA Co-conveners to participate in this effort was harder to justify.

#### *Coordination with Regional Communities: the case of the African Union*

86. In Africa, UNESCO made an effort to harmonize the EFA Goals with some of the continental education strategies adopted in the early 2000's. On the one hand, UNESCO tried to bring the core EFA vision and principles (e.g., quality, inclusiveness, skills development, adult literacy) into the making of the First Education Decade in Africa<sup>40</sup> (2006-2015), which was adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Education within the Framework of OAU (COMEDAF I) in Algiers in 2005. On the other hand, UNESCO made an effort to establish closer links with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) created by African Heads of State, with the objective of tackling four areas of priority: poverty reduction, education, reversing the brain-drain trend and health. As a result of UNESCO's interest in better EFA coordination at the regional level, the Organization signed a strategic AU/NEPAD Framework.

87. UNESCO's Education Sector Coordination with the African Union focused principally on the logistics and often short-term cooperation towards the organization of a number of meetings involving African authorities on education related matters (e.g. [the 9<sup>th</sup> High Level Group Meeting organized in Addis in 2010](#) or [the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015 organized in Kigali in 2015](#)) as well as on the implementation of specific activities, such as the ones conducted by the [International Centre for Girls and Women in Africa \(AU/CIEFFA\)](#)<sup>41</sup>, the [UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa \(IICBA\)](#) and the [Informal Working Group on the Implementation of the 2014 Addis Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States](#).

88. During the last two phases of EFA coordination, UNESCO provided technical support to the AU in the implementation and evaluation of the action plan for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) and seconded a Consultant Expert to the AU Commission to support the related implementation. In addition, UNESCO served as the coordinator of the sub-cluster for education and human resource within the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) of the UN agencies working in Africa. UNESCO also supported the Pan-African University (one of the main projects of the African Union), a post-graduate training and research network of university nodes in the five African regions. Furthermore, UNESCO was responsible for launching the 'Big Push' - initiative, to accelerate educational progress in the 45 sub-Saharan countries.

89. In order to enhance coordination with the African Union, UNESCO has decided to host no more separate meetings with the African Ministers of Education, which are already convened by the AU on a regular basis.

#### *Challenges included:*

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<sup>39</sup> UNESCO Draft Note for Discussion on the EFA Global Action Plan for EFA Convening Agencies Meeting (November 13, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> The related monitoring mechanism was made up of several coordination structures: a Decade Steering Committee; five sub-regional coordinators based in Banjul, Libreville, Nairobi, Maputo and Tripoli; a secretariat at AU headquarters; and focal points in countries.

<sup>41</sup> Formerly a UNESCO Category Institute II, CIEFFA had passed under direct AU management.

90. Several respondents in the African Region generally stated that the fact of UNESCO's own geographical classification of countries (according to UNESCO, Egypt and Maghreb are part of the Arab States region and not of the Africa region as per the African Union classification), prevented many collaborative efforts from fully serving the African Union's mission<sup>42</sup>.

91. Furthermore, the dismantlement of the Bureau of Field Coordination at UNESCO in Paris back in 2010 and the creation of several regional hubs across Africa in 2014 (whereas prior to that the Regional Bureau for Education in Dakar had the specific mandate to coordinate the education sector across the whole continent) aggravated the fluidity of communication between the AU and UNESCO<sup>43</sup>. Neither the Dakar office nor the Nairobi office, for instance, were aware exactly of whose responsibility it would be to organize the Kigali EFA Regional Meeting in February 2015). Likewise, AU staff stated that African delegations to UNESCO and the AU did not necessarily exchange with each other on respective subjects, with the risk of fragmenting further the link between the African policy-makers and the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda in the future.

#### *Diversity and representativeness of the global and regional coordination mechanisms.*

92. Identified in the Dakar Framework for Action as one of the 12 strategies (Strategy 3) to achieve the six EFA goals (UNESCO, 2000, p.19), the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development, represented one of UNESCO key areas of EFA coordination. By addressing the issue of civil society underrepresentation in global education coordination mechanisms and regional fora highlighted by specialized literature (Watkins, 2007), UNESCO was able to integrate civil society in all its coordination mechanisms (e.g. Steering Committee, E-9 countries, EFA progress review regional meetings). In doing so, and by establishing closer links with coalitions (the [African Network Campaign for Education for All](#), the [Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education](#)<sup>44</sup>, the [Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education](#), [Global Campaign for Education](#)) and highly specialized NGOs, such as [Education International](#), UNESCO was effective, too, in enhancing the representativeness and credibility of the civil society voice in global and regional platforms (GMR, 2015). The inclusion of a day and half NGO Forum<sup>45</sup> in the World Education Forum 2015 agenda is an indication of the more prominent role developed for civil society.<sup>46</sup>

93. Thanks to the close coordination with the CCNGO that gathered over 270 NGOs in 2011, civil society participation in EFA became more active and visible than it had been before Dakar. During the last EFA coordination phase, UNESCO also contributed to the regionalization of the CCNGO/EFA (UNESCO, 2012a) and to the formation of civil society networks and alliances in the South, including NGOs and teachers' unions.

#### *Challenges included:*

94. Civil Society stakeholders in a variety of countries stated that the NGOs more directly involved in the EFA processes were the ones most closely affiliated with the national governments and that therefore they did not always adequately represent civil society interest and needs at large.

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<sup>42</sup> That said, the relationship between UNESCO and the African Union has been characterized by a number of milestones, such as the organization of the second meeting of the Joint UNESCO-AUC Commission at UNESCO Headquarter in 2009 or the establishment of the Forum of African Regional and Sub-regional Organizations to Support Cooperation between UNESCO and NEPAD (FOSRASUN). UNESCO also provided technical support towards the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) as well as support to set up an Observatory for Education and a network of pan-African universities.

<sup>43</sup> An African Union officer reported that, despite the AU's interest in working with the UNESCO liaison office in Addis on Higher Education, AU officials were at times unclear regarding the division of roles and responsibilities between the UNESCO liaison office and UNESCO HQ, as well as regarding the distinctive features of the activities of the Teacher's Task Force and other Teachers Programmes.

<sup>44</sup> ASPBAE (national education campaign coalitions from the Asia and Pacific region) and other international NGOs, for instance, participated in the drafting of the EFA mid-decade assessment, which aimed to foster closer collaboration between CSO and national governments on EFA-related policy issues.

<sup>45</sup> The Forum was attended by 250 Civil Society participants, 13 from the teaching profession and 12 observers.

<sup>46</sup> This has been a dramatic change if compared with the 2000 Dakar conference where civil society, originally excluded from the plenary session, were admitted to participate after they had requested it.

## II.4. Effectiveness of Coordination

95. This section describes the extent to which UNESCO coordination has attained its envisaged objectives across the four areas originally assigned to it by the Dakar Framework for Action: knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization, advocacy, and monitoring.

### *EFA Knowledge Generation and Dissemination*

#### **Key Messages**

##### *Achievements*

- In order to coordinate in the area of EFA knowledge generation and dissemination, UNESCO pursued four main strategies: (i) liaising with Category I Institutes; (ii) organizing global and regional meetings to facilitate the development or dissemination of UNESCO knowledge products in a number of EFA-related areas; (iii) fostering regional exchanges on EFA-related good practices; and (iv) coordinating the development of technical publications. All four were effective in promoting the generation and dissemination of EFA-related knowledge.
- The in-house production and wide dissemination of cutting-edge research work (especially published as part of thematic series) and specialized literature on education topics, although contingent on the volatility of funding observed over the last fifteen years, enhanced the credibility of the Organization's intellectual leadership.
- UNESCO's intellectual leadership was amply recognized in such fields as planning (e.g. through IIEP), teachers (through the Teachers Task Force), basic and adult literacy (through UIL) as well as statistics (through UIS).

##### *Challenges*

- The proliferation of well-resourced global education initiatives as well the strengthening of analytical research capacity on education-related issues within universities and private foundations gradually undermined UNESCO's effectiveness in generating and disseminating EFA-related knowledge.
- Limited follow-up was provided to the regional and international workshops and fora participants.
- The modalities through which UNESCO coordinated in this area in the past started appearing a bit out-dated over the last five years: the focus on the dissemination of long, printed normative reports, which were often perceived by stakeholders as not being operationally relevant, did not always favour coordination with partners who increasingly expressed interest in new outlets for knowledge generation and dissemination (e.g. Twitter, webinars and Massive Open Online Courses).

96. In its efforts to promote the generation and dissemination of EFA-related knowledge, UNESCO has used four main coordination modalities: (i) liaising with Category Institutes I, such as IIEP and UIL, to ensure the delivery of capacity development activities and programs around the world (e.g. the organization of training programs in education policy and planning or information management primarily aimed at Ministry of Education officials in a number of countries); (ii) organizing global and regional meetings to facilitate the development or dissemination of UNESCO knowledge products in a number of EFA-related areas (e.g. the annual launch of the GMR in each country and region; and the organization of consultations leading to the drafting of policy and guidelines on education for sustainable development, global citizenship, youth and adult literacy,

non-formal education, inclusive and multilingual education, and teacher training)<sup>47</sup>; (iii) fostering regional exchanges on EFA-related good practices (e.g. the regional meetings of National EFA Coordinators where participants would share the results of their own countries' EFA Mid-Decade and End-of-Decade progress reports); and (iv) coordinating the production of technical publications across several levels (e.g. the regional synthesis of national EFA reports or the [Asia-Pacific Education System Review Series](#)).

#### *Liaising with Category I Institutes*

97. According to most respondents at the regional and country level, coordination with UNESCO Category I Institutes has been particularly relevant to the dissemination of policy-relevant information. Category I Institutes, such as, the International Institute for Educational and Planning (IIEP)<sup>48</sup>, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and the UNESCO [Institute for Lifelong Learning \(UIL\)](#) have coordinated with UNESCO Headquarters in Paris as well as with regional and national offices. The Institutes Directors, for instance, were regularly invited to present their work at EFA meetings. In a number of instances, UNESCO also successfully mobilized its networks and programmes, such as [UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair Programmes](#) and Prizes, to engage partners for knowledge generation and dissemination.

98. Despite the existing levels of coordination, the Institutes and the rest of the Education Sector (including Field Offices) were not always able to establish a clear division of roles and responsibilities (Table 8).

**Table 6. Quality of Coordination with Category I Institutes**

	IIEP	UIL	IBE	IICBA	IESALC	IITE
Collaboration at programme / activity level between the Institute and Headquarters has been strong	considerable	moderate	moderate	low	low	low
The division of labour between the Institute and Headquarters has been clear	mostly / improving	mostly	no	no	partly	no
There has been a strong collaboration with other Institutes	considerable	moderate	moderate	low	low	low
There has been a strong collaboration with Field Offices	considerable	moderate / increasing	moderate / increasing	moderate	low	moderate
The division of labour between Institutes and Field Offices has been clear	unclear	unclear	unclear	unclear / attempts to clarify	unclear	unclear
UNESCO has been visible and has clear positioned itself among external stakeholders in the area of work in which the Institute operates	clear	mostly clear	unclear	unclear	at regional level clear	at regional level clear
The Institute has a clear partnership strategy / approach	yes	yes	no	partly	no	yes

Source: UNESCO, IOS 2013. [Review of the Education Sector's Category I Institutes](#).

99. In addition, due to the fact that Institutes have their own Board to report to and that they therefore pursue strategies that would not always be fully aligned with those at HQ, there have been cases of information asymmetries, and a lack of clarity among UNESCO's partners and stakeholders, as also concluded by the UNESCO Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Review of the Education Sector's Category I Institutes (UNESCO, 2013)<sup>49</sup>. That affected the exchange of coordination-related information, as well.

<sup>47</sup> Despite their distinct focus, such initiatives were putting forward a coherent vision of what makes education a driver of inclusive and sustainable development. It is also because of this coordination work (e.g. by making some of such publications available to partners) that the Education Agenda 2030 fully embraced the notion of quality and lifelong education. The opportunity is there for following up the over 8,000 individuals capacitated by IIEP and using them as agents of change and UNESCO "ambassadors" in their own respective country.

<sup>48</sup> Besides the organization of the International Working Group on Education (IWGE) annual meetings, UNESCO-IIEP was responsible for running some well-known capacity development programmes, such as the Advanced Training Programme (ATP), visiting trainees program, distant Education Sector Planning (ESP) blended program, as well as specific tailored short term training courses offered by the IIEP Buenos Aires Regional Training Course (RTC). The Institute also provided long-term technical support to countries as Afghanistan, Cambodia and Egypt.

<sup>49</sup> A similar conclusion was reached during the Review of the Education Sector's Category I Institutes, UNESCO IOS (2013), p.2



## *Development and/or dissemination of UNESCO knowledge products*

100. Being a multilateral Member States organization comprising some 195 countries, UNESCO benefited from its political legitimacy and, especially during the first two phases of the EFA coordination, it made sure that most of its global and regional knowledge sharing and dissemination coordination efforts would benefit national government officials (including National Commissions and Permanent Delegations). However, this does not mean that coordination in this area was exclusively aimed at Member States, as attested by the involvement of civil society and other international development partners during regional meetings (e.g. those organized to share the findings from the various national [EFA Mid-Decade](#) and [End-of-Decade Assessments, in 2006-2007 and 2010-2011 respectively](#)) and global meetings (e.g. the [World Education Forum 2015](#)).

101. Some of the most recent knowledge products that confirm UNESCO's added value to the contemporary evaluation discourse include the following: the two reports published in 2009 by the UNESCO LAC Regional Bureau of Education on '[Cultural diversity in education](#)' and '[Remedial education for marginalized youth](#)'; the 2009 [regional synthesis report outlining the state and development of adult learning and education in the Arab States](#) and the most recent [Report on 'Teaching children with disabilities in inclusive settings'](#) published by the UNESCO Arab Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Beirut); the series of monthly '[Education Policy Matters](#)' bulletin as well as the [Asia-Pacific Education System Review Series](#) published by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Office for Education (UNESCO Bangkok).

102. The efforts in coordinating knowledge-creation and -dissemination activities were complementary to one of UNESCO's most well appreciated capacity development program: the [Capacity Development Program for EFA \(CapEFA\)](#)<sup>50</sup>. This program was pivotal in terms of coordination. On the one hand, it enhanced the development of National EFA Plans of Action in a number of countries, mainly through the provision of technical assistance aimed to build individual, organizational and institutional capacities<sup>51</sup>. On the other hand, as stated in the [2013 CapEFA evaluation](#), the Program was able 'to facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships with national NGO's, service providers and the private sector, thereby reinforcing government capacities to manage such partnerships and build organizational/ institutional capacity in the sector/thematic area to deliver on the EFA agenda', especially in four thematic areas: Sector-wide Policies and Planning (SWPP), literacy, teacher training and TVET. In Niger, the CapEFA programme, for instance, was the entry point for coordinating a variety of actors around a national program promoting better access to education: from donors (the ministers of foreign affairs of Azerbaijan, Norway, and Finland, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) to in-house UNESCO entities (IICBA, ED/TLC/LTR and the UNESCO Regional Bureau at Dakar), other UN agencies (WHO, UNFPA, etc.) and the World Bank. In Benin, the CapEFA program succeeded in involving all the key actors in the construction sector in national consultations on the TVET reform process as well as the piloting of TVET-related (e.g. professional associations, agencies in charge of project management, small companies, state-supported structures, and organizations involved in private and public trainings). (ICON, 2015).

### *Challenges included:*

103. UNESCO has not always been consistent in guaranteeing a regular follow-up with participants after and in between meetings and events as attested by the interviews with the participants of the High-Level Group (HLG) or the Working Group (WG) at the global level as well as those of the annual regional meetings organized by the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok.

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<sup>50</sup> The CapEFA programme was launched in 2003 as an extra-budgetary funding mechanism created with the objective of 'translating global advocacy for Education for All (EFA) into concrete action.

<sup>51</sup> The activities implemented as part of this Program included the following: workshops, conferences, coaching, monitoring and field trips. In addition, the Program contributed to the development of hands-on educational policy products and tools, such as, implementation reviews, sectoral education plans, action research pieces, working papers, and the development and testing of curricula, handbooks, and standards.

104. While workshops and meetings organized by UNESCO have been particularly appreciated by a large variety of participants over the years, UNESCO technical publications have not been considered equally relevant by all the stakeholders the Organization has been working with. UNESCO publications have been particularly appreciated by ministry officials and university researchers. However, some UNESCO publications, despite being perceived as politically relevant and inspirational, were not always found as operationally relevant or oriented to action or decision-making among civil society, teaching professionals, and other development partners particularly those working at the regional and national levels (i.e. they lacked an how-to-guide or the indication of where to find the financial and technical resources to put to use the theoretical knowledge and principles discussed in the publications themselves).

#### *Dissemination of EFA-related good practices*

105. The majority of stakeholders confirmed that UNESCO's coordination in the area of dissemination of EFA good practices was relevant, especially in proximity or in the aftermath of EFA milestone events (e.g. a global conference<sup>52</sup>, or a mid-Decade assessment).

106. The majority of respondents at the global, regional and national levels, indicated that the dissemination of EFA-related good practices is one of the areas where UNESCO's coordination had a comparative advantage over other partners and which the Organization should devote more attention to, due to the need among field practitioners and policy makers for more accurate and experience-based information that could help improve their respective practices. Such is the case of the [Education Innovation virtual Network \(INNOVEMOS\)](#) put in place in the LAC region by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education (OREALC/UNESCO) to disseminate examples of innovative education practices among teachers as well as national education planners policy-makers across the region. Other two good examples are the series of case studies on promising EFA practices in Asia-Pacific published by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok as well as the annual organization of the [Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education \(AMFIE\)](#) from 2010 to 2015. Similarly, the UNESCO Arab Bureau for Education sponsored three Regional Conferences that mobilized policy-makers and development partners in the region around three main education-related topics: Inclusion (Beirut, 2008); Literacy (Tunis April, 2009) and Early Childhood Development (Damascus, 20-22 September/2010)

#### *Challenges included:*

107. According to some partners, UNESCO's coordination has often consisted in the organization of ad hoc events and conferences. While the large turnout at such happenings attests to UNESCO's unique convening power, several respondents identified the lack of a systematic follow-up among participants – even more so during the 2000-2012 period – as an area where the Organization might need to improve further in the future.

#### *Coordinating the development of technical publications*

108. International thematic conferences organized by UNESCO have often been accompanied by the launch of UNESCO technical publications with the aim of introducing new topics into the global discourse on education. Regional meetings as well as publications coordinated by UNESCO regional offices<sup>53</sup> required translating those very same global concepts into strategies and concepts that were most relevant, both at the regional and national level. Relevant publications<sup>54</sup> were

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<sup>52</sup> The UNESCO/UNICEF global meeting on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda (18 -20 March 2013, Dakar, Senegal).

<sup>53</sup> Such practice is in line with that of other agencies (both from within and outside of the UN system) producing valuable publications not only on primary but also secondary and tertiary education, as in the case of the World Bank's *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* in 2002, and *The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities* in 2009.

<sup>54</sup> These included: *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution* (2009), UIL's "Global Report on Adult Learning and Education" (2009), *Revisiting Global Trends in TVET* as well as other peer reviewed publications being part of the Education on the move series.

created by UNESCO's Education Sector to provide education specialists around the world with in-depth analyses and original thinking that could improve the relevance and efficiency of policies and programmes. In 2015, publications were produced as a follow-up to earlier conferences such as on TVET (Shanghai, 2011) and on ECCE (2008) to keep the momentum alive. Other meetings gathering technical specialists were also used to launch technical publications<sup>55</sup>. Such is the case of the 4<sup>th</sup> General Conference on Language and Education organized by UNESCO in Bangkok and at the end of which, a publication on '[Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education \(MTB/MTE\)](#)' was disseminated in several languages (e.g. in Thai and Punjabi) across the Asia-Pacific region.

109. Furthermore, special innovation labs were organized to foster technical exchanges among education professional at the regional level and that could serve as the basis for influential publications: it is the case of the three-year Lab on Education Quality and the professionalization of the education system sponsored by UNESCO in the LAC Region. Some of such initiatives also fostered the development of joint publications, such as the one on child labour and education (co-authored by UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF).

110. The Global Monitoring Report (discussed more exhaustively in the section on EFA monitoring) has been recognized by most respondents as UNESCO's most significant example of knowledge generation and dissemination. Despite the fact that the [GMR](#) is based on data collected from countries by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) as well as OECD/DAC but that the content is developed by an independent team housed at UNESCO, it is widely considered as a UNESCO knowledge product.

*Challenges included:*

111. While UNESCO's coordination efforts for knowledge generation and dissemination have clearly contributed to the development of an evolving knowledge base in various forms, (such as publications, databases and portals) UNESCO's intellectual and political leadership on EFA-related matters has not always come out a strong as it could have, especially in view of the challenges in an ever evolving global landscape. While publications and the Global Monitoring Report in particular, have been recognized for providing intellectual inputs, there are unmet expectations towards UNESCO's coordination role.

112. Until a new publication policy was introduced in 2013<sup>56</sup>, UNESCO lacked a house-wide strategic, systematic and coordinated approach in knowledge management, including among the Specialized Institutes and the field offices. This was also true for EFA related publications that at times appeared disconnected from each other (e.g. publications produced at the country or regional level and whose content was not necessarily coordinated with that of the corresponding global reference publication).

113. The modalities, through which knowledge was generated, managed and disseminated by UNESCO, were particularly appreciated by respondents in low- and middle-income countries. However, respondents from 'donor' countries recognized far less the relevance and effectiveness of UNESCO publications and confirmed their preference for those produced by the [EU](#), [OECD](#) or World Bank. Given the more holistic and universal vision of education endorsed by SDG4-Education 2030, the operational relevance of UNESCO's written work was identified as a key area that UNESCO would need to work on in the near future.

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<sup>55</sup> For instance, UIS's publications such as "[Children Out of School: Measuring Exclusion from Primary Education](#)", "[Teachers and Educational Quality: Monitoring Global Needs for 2015](#)" (2006), "A View Inside Primary Schools: A World Education Indicators (WEI) Cross-National Study" (2008), "Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All : Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children" (2015).

<sup>56</sup> Such new policy established that each Sector have its own publication committee. Although, the provision was complied with at Headquarter, this is not always the case for Regional Bureaux and National Offices.

## Key Messages

### *Achievements*

- UNESCO's effort to coordinate the mobilization of resources to support the implementation of the EFA agenda since the year 2000 translated into the implementation of a double strategy: advocating for increased funding for education and promoting a more effective use of the existing education funds.
- With respect to UNESCO's efforts to generate more funding for education at the global level, UNESCO successfully pushed for public-private partnerships and an increase in extra-budgetary support for EFA-related programming and coordination towards the end of the second phase of EFA coordination.
- With respect to its call for a more effective allocation of existing resources for education purposes, UNESCO effectively used the GMR and other technical publications to provide funders and national policy-makers' with the strongest evidence available on what education areas and topics needed to be addressed the most.
- Overall, despite not being a funding agency and not having been able to fully mobilize adequate financial resources to implement the EFA agenda as expected based on the Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO's advocacy was able to influence indirectly the allocation of resources at the national level.

### *Challenges*

- Despite UNESCO's efforts to mobilize additional funding of the EFA holistic agenda, the major international funding mechanisms for education established outside UNESCO (i.e. the [FTI](#) earlier, followed by the [GPE](#)) mainly supported primary education.
- While the Dakar Framework for Action stated that 'no countries seriously committed to education for all would be thwarted in their fulfilment of the Agenda by a lack of resources ' (UNESCO 2000, p.3), it was due to the very lack of sufficient financial resources (both national resources and those provided by foreign development agencies) along with the lack of adequate capacity among the EFA National Coordinators to either plan and execute EFA National Plans of Action or get them validated by the Parliament, that many countries were either not able or unsuccessful in achieving the EFA Goals.
- The shortage of adequate financial resources to implement the EFA agenda over the last 15 years could not be solely linked to the extent of UNESCO's coordination. Many others actors impacted on the EFA resource mobilization: [the national governments whose education budget either stagnated or decreased over the years as well as those international and bilateral donors that, partly as a result of the global financial crisis, could not fulfil their promises](#)

114. According to the Dakar Framework for Action, no countries seriously committed to education for all would be thwarted in their fulfilment of the Agenda by a lack of resources (UNESCO 2000, p.3). However, it was due to the very lack of sufficient financial resources - either generated nationally or provided by foreign development agencies - along with the lack of adequate capacity to plan and execute EFA national plans, that many countries could not achieve the EFA Goals.

115. For instance, Uganda's spending on education, when compared to total government expenditures, dropped by nearly 25% since 2000 and so did the percentage of GDP allocated to education in other countries, such as Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Fiji, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka (UIS, 2015). Investment in education yet remained unaltered in other countries such as

Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar, Morocco, the Philippines, Togo and Zimbabwe (UIS, 2015). Even in those countries where domestic expenditures for education (and their effective execution) increased (on average, by 0.8% of GNP in low income countries and by 0.5% in lower middle income countries between 1999 and 2012), the reason behind it were higher tax-to-GDP ratios rather than countries prioritizing education in their national budgets (Benavot, 2015).

116. The need for better coordination of resource mobilization appears all the more apparent today given the gradual shift from the worlds' largest donors from supporting education budget supports and pooled funds to bilateral aid to education (Fredricksen, 2011), as attested by the drop of the share of total aid to education from 42% to 36% (UNESCO, 2013)

#### *Coordination of resource mobilization in support of the EFA agenda.*

117. At the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, UNESCO was among the participants who most vigorously recommended that all countries in need for external support to attain the EFA Goals should receive all the necessary and adequate assistance. More precisely, the final text of the [Dakar Framework for Action](#), also under the pressure by UNESCO representatives, asserted that 'no countries seriously committed to Education for All' would 'be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources' (Dakar Framework for Action, para. 10).

118. UNESCO made an effort to coordinate the mobilization of resources to support the implementation of the EFA agenda since the year 2000. In particular, UNESCO pushed for public-private partnerships and strived to get more donors' support for the EFA agenda towards the end of the second phase of EFA coordination. For instance, it was after the signing of the [Joint Letter with the other EFA convening agencies on April 15, 2009](#) that coordination of EFA funding seemed to improve in response to the worldwide economic slowdown (especially in the most EFA-challenged countries) and to the benefit of the most disadvantaged groups within countries.

119. In addition, UNESCO organized periodic high-level meetings to attract donors' investments in the education sector of those countries that lagged behind the most in terms of EFA goals attainment (e.g. countries in conflict, post-conflict and post-disaster situations). The side meeting on Financing Education to Achieve the EFA Goals, organized by UNESCO and hosted by the Government of Qatar during the [Doha Conference on Financing for Development](#) (November 29-December 2, 2008), was an illustration of that.

120. Despite UNESCO's perseverance to promote the EFA holistic agenda (e.g. EFA goals included the promotion of non-formal education and adult literacy), the major international funding mechanisms for education established outside of UNESCO (the [FTI](#) earlier on and the [GPE](#)) mainly supported primary education.

121. More recently, the UNESCO Director-General reported on the establishment of a [high-level International Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunities](#)<sup>57</sup>, following the announcement in the speech given by the Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg at the [Oslo Summit on Education for Development on 7 July, 2015](#). Chaired by the Special UN Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, this new entity was convened by the UNESCO Director General as well as the governments of Chile, Indonesia, Malawi and Norway<sup>58</sup>. Such platform would build upon past and current international efforts made to streamline funding for international education (GPE

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<sup>57</sup> The UNESCO Director-General announced the establishment of a high-level International Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunities, following the speech given by the Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg at the Oslo Summit on Education for Development on July 7, 2015. Chaired by the Special UN Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, this new entity was convened by the UNESCO Director General as well as the governments of Chile, Indonesia, Malawi and Norway. According to the World Bank, the Commission will focus on how to finance girls' education, education quality, and education in emergencies. It will submit its report to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in September 2016.

<sup>58</sup> According to the World Bank, the Commission will focus on how to finance girls' education, education quality, and education in emergencies. It will submit its report to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in September 2016

as well as the new [World Bank Results in Education for All Children Trust Fund](#)<sup>59</sup>, a possible new special fund for education in emergencies and protracted crisis) and would enhance that funding allocation be aligned with the strategies and vision of the Agenda 2030 announced by the SC.

*Challenges included :*

122. The Dakar Framework for Action's call for more adequate global funding for education was not fully heard. During the first two to three years after the Dakar conference, National EFA Coordinators that had developed National EFA Plans of Action did either not get them validated by their countries' parliaments or did not receive any funding to implement them.

123. Not being a funding agency, the resource mobilization which the Organization was initially expected to coordinate, or at least to promote more effectively than other development partners, was not sufficient to ensure funding for the National EFA Plans of Action (which it asked countries to produce in the aftermath of the Dakar conference). As a result, the national governments' expectations that more resources would be made available to them to support these specific planning efforts remained unmet and finally led to disappointment and/or discontent.

124. Advocating and successfully raising funds for EFA became even more challenging with the agreement on the MDG agenda, with its focus on primary education narrowing the global evaluation discourse to the detriment of the holistic vision spelled out in the Dakar Framework for Action<sup>60</sup>. This was also attested by one of the most recent estimates, according to which the financing gap for basic education is equivalent to \$26 billion annually today. Furthermore, UNESCO's credibility and bargaining power vis-à-vis international donors got compromised by the transfer of the EFA resource coordination responsibility to the World Bank, and the subsequent creation of new financing mechanisms for education (e.g. the Fast Track Initiative first, and, more recently, the Global Partnership for Education).

*Promotion of equity-focused, holistic and coherent funding*

125. Since the early years of the EFA-Fast Track Initiative, UNESCO advocated for broadening its scope to include all low-income countries, to cover all the EFA goals and to be more inclusive. Over the years, EFA-FTI operations, and especially after the FTI mid-term review<sup>61</sup>, started placing more emphasis on EFA goals, other than those related to access and gender equality. The systematic adoption of an Equity and Inclusion Tool in all EFA-FTI applications is a good illustration of that.

126. UNESCO consistently supported the principle of aid effectiveness, ensuring its application in practice. The development of the [Global Action Plan](#) as well the consistent referral to the principles of the [Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Plan of Action](#) in many of the UNESCO documents is an illustration of that.

127. UNESCO also introduced a number of initiatives aimed to strengthen the resource mobilization capacity of actors participating in national EFA fora (e.g. by diversifying funding sources). As part of this strategy, seminars and workshops were organized on various topics, such as how to build private-public partnerships, how to pursue innovative financing opportunities, how to initiate contacts with emerging donors and how to conduct budget tracking.

128. Interestingly, one of the areas where UNESCO was particularly successful in securing EFA-related funding was capacity building. As stated in a recent evaluation of the Capacity Development

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<sup>59</sup> Supported by the Government of Norway and USAID, this new funding mechanism aims at supporting improvements in national education systems through the implementation of innovative incentive schemes, the disbursement of performance-based resources and the conduct of knowledge and learning activities.

<sup>60</sup> According to the GEM Final statement (The Muscat Agreement) in May 2014, "the inadequacy of financial resources has seriously undermined progress towards providing quality education for all" (p.1).

<sup>61</sup> Cambridge Education, Mokoro and OPM. 2010. Mid-term Evaluation of the EFA Fast Track Initiative. Final Synthesis Report. Volume 1 – Main Report. Cambridge/Oxford, UK, Cambridge Education/Mokoro Ltd/Oxford Policy Management.

Program for EFA (CapEFA)<sup>62</sup>, an average of \$6.5 million a year was allocated between 2006 and 2014, with the objective to strengthen individual, institutional and organizational capacities and systems in those countries that were lagging behind the most in reaching the 6 EFA goals<sup>63</sup>. The evaluation recognized that ‘the main added value of the CapEFA programme was not its financial volume, but more the human resources and in-house expertise available within UNESCO that could be easily mobilized with the help of the programme for country specific work’. More specifically, through the CapEFA programme, UNESCO was able to provide inputs on legislation, draw up policy scenarios, perform cost modelling, and set up education management information systems, as attested by the recent evaluation conducted in 2015 (Ikon & KG Consulting Gruppe; 2015).

129. Furthermore, UNESCO (and in particular IIEP) was instrumental in providing governments not so much with direct funding but rather with online [capacity development programs](#) and [technical assistance](#) aimed at strengthening national governments’ capacity to conduct evidence-based research as well as to manage education outcomes (including, quality, cost and governance) as was the case of Laos (where UNESCO does no longer have a field office) and Cambodia.

#### *Resource mobilization coordination and the role of evidence*

130. Through the GMR and other technical publications, UNESCO was able to provide funders with all the necessary evidence to inform their resource allocation decisions. Such was the case of the GMR 2009 whose theme of ‘Reaching the Unreached’ drove the whole End-of-Decade Assessment efforts in the Asia-Pacific Region. In this vein, it is relevant to mention the work conducted by the Working Group on Debt Swaps for Education convened in 2006 and 2007 (and mandated by the 33rd UNESCO General Conference) to discuss key concepts and models, lessons learned from various experiences and guidelines on best resource mobilization practices. Based on this Group work, the 35th General Conference of UNESCO asked the Director-General to establish the Advisory Panel of Experts on Debt Swaps and Innovative Approaches to Education Financing to explore new financing models for education and to strengthen technical knowledge in this area (Benete, 2011; Genevois & Benete, 2011).

131. Compared to the year 2000 when the Dakar Framework for Action was launched, resource mobilization evolved over time. In particular, the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) decreased after 2007 (Figure 4) and a variety of other funding resources (domestic resources, blended finance, etc.) started accounting for a larger share of national education systems’ budgets (Steer & Smith, 2015).

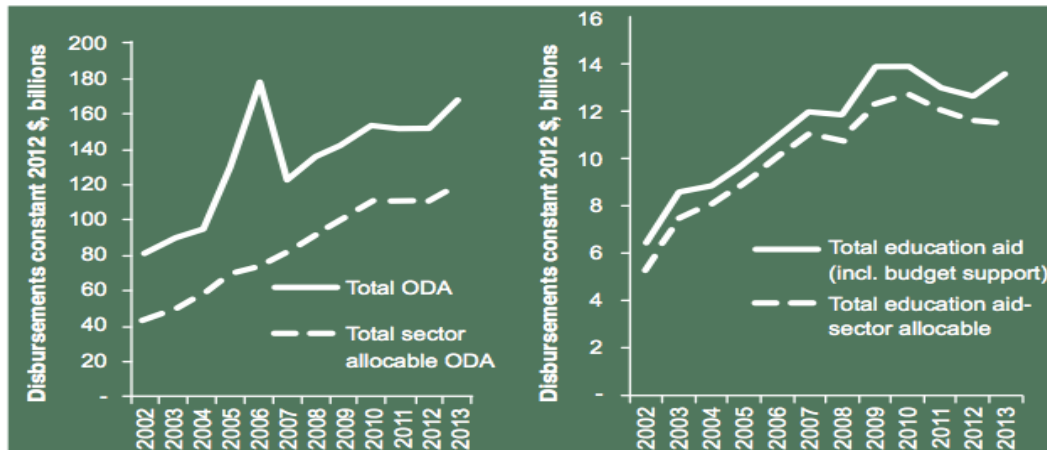
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<sup>62</sup> Figures are based on CapEFA Progress Reports.

<sup>63</sup> Ikon & KG Consulting Gruppe; 2015: ‘Although Denmark completely withdrew from the donor group in 2014, all the remaining donors increased their contributions: There was an increase of about \$600,000 from Norway CapEFA’s largest contributor to date – while Finland and Sweden approximately doubled and tripled their support, respectively.

The programme also welcomed a new partnership with Azerbaijan, which joined the donor group in 2014, providing a \$400,000 contribution to the CapEFA special account. CapEFA’s largest contributor to date – while Finland and Sweden approximately doubled and tripled their support, respectively.

**Figure 3. Total ODA vs. Total Education Aid (2002-2013)**



Source: Steer & Smith (2015) based on OECD-DAC CRS database

*Challenges included:*

132. UNESCO's efforts to mobilize resources for EFA were not widely publicized. Therefore, the perception among the majority of the respondents (both in the field and at HQ) was that UNESCO's coordination in this area was particularly weak. The scattered data available on the EFA coordination of EFA funding might have led to further undermining the perception of UNESCO's added value.

133. According to many education programme specialists at UNESCO, motivating and supporting governments in allocating increased domestic resources for education was a key challenge for years. Equally, supporting national efforts for fund-raising from non-state actors, while also ensuring that the principle of education as a public good was respected, was not an easy task either.

134. UNESCO definitely contributed to the adoption of new laws and new education sectoral plans, with immediate repercussions on national funding for education. While some development partners, especially civil society organizations, assert that UNESCO missed opportunities to put forward binding measures or to propose minimum levels of investment in education<sup>64</sup>, the Organization advocated for spending targets during the Open Working Group (OWG) work and during the third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis, July 2015). UNESCO also encouraged countries to consider setting nationally appropriate spending targets for quality investments in essential public services for all, including health, education, energy, water and sanitation, consistent with national sustainable development strategies (UNESCO 2016).

135. As attested by several funding agencies and private sector representatives, it was challenging to support UNESCO towards the implementation of specific programs, considering it could take over a year to allow grants for sums as low as \$250,000 to be processed. The same administrative challenge was observed with the timing of regular budget allocations, where in some cases it took up to ten months for EFA-related resources to get to the field offices.

<sup>64</sup> Education International, 2015, p. 39.



## Key Messages

### *Achievements*

- Advocacy is among the areas where UNESCO EFA coordination was acknowledged as particularly strong. Often identified as a neutral broker by many stakeholders, UNESCO was able to influence the education agenda in a number of regions and countries through several modalities, including the strengthening of its relations with Ministries of Education or the establishment of [EFA-centred partnerships](#) with civil society.
- Overall, EFA contributed to raise the awareness of the importance of education as a human right as well as a driver for social and economic development.
- Aligned with the EFA's holistic vision, UNESCO's advocacy efforts contributed to bringing greater attention amongst the international community to such neglected areas as Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), skills development, adult literacy and education quality, within a new and more encompassing lifelong-learning perspective.

### *Challenges*

- In the absence of a coherent strategy, not all UNESCO entities were equally aware all the time of what they should advocate and how they should do it.
- UNESCO did not always enter into structured partnerships with those organizations whose advocacy efforts at times overlapped with its own.
- In advocating for issues that, despite their relevance, most of the other development partners neglected, UNESCO's field offices often set themselves further apart from the rest of the donor community, rather than coordinating more closely with it.

136. Many respondents identified advocacy as one area where UNESCO EFA coordination was particularly strong. Thanks to its recognition as a neutral broker, UNESCO was able to influence the education agenda in a number of regions and countries. That was especially possible through three main coordination strategies: strengthening its historical ties with the Ministries of Education in all its Member States (e.g. through information sharing and capacity development programs) and, to a certain extent, with a number of regional economic communities; establishing [EFA-centred partnership](#) with a variety of partners (including civil society) both at the regional and nation levels (e.g. Flagship Initiatives); and ensuring the widest possible outreach through closer coordination with its networks ([Field Offices](#); national UNESCO commissions, Category I and Category II Institutes).

### *Mobilization of audiences around EFA-related topics:*

137. UNESCO put in place a number of initiatives that contributed to the advancement of the EFA agenda in a number of specific areas (or sub-sectors) in Education, such as:

138. UNESCO coordinated CCNGO/EFA, which was instrumental in advocating for literacy, and collaborated with the Global Campaign for Education, especially for EFA Global Action Weeks. It also contributed to advocacy efforts of the Global Initiatives for EFA and education-specific MDGs (e.g. the [United Nations Girls' Education Initiative](#), [Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies](#); the [Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development](#)) as a member or coordinator. This mainly consisted in the inclusion of such themes in global and regional coordination meetings' agenda.

139. Further, UNESCO initiated two Decades - one on [Literacy \(UNLD\)](#) from 2003 to 2012<sup>65</sup> and one on [Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\)](#) from 2005 to 2014, which contributed to raise the profile of literacy and ESD respectively. Within the scope of the UNLD, UNESCO also developed the [Literacy Initiative for Empowerment \(LIFE\)](#) initiative, a mechanism that allowed thirty-five poorest countries (with a literacy rate lower than 50% and over 10 million illiterate people) to access UNESCO's technical support services in the areas of policy, advocacy, partnership building and capacity-building, in order to boost learning opportunities among illiterate adults (especially women).

140. The EFA GMR and other key publications/reports allowed UNESCO to make evidence-based advocacy efforts. UNESCO also used different Days (e.g. International Literacy Day, International Teacher's Day, AIDS Day) and its networks such as good will ambassadors. for advocacy.

141. As of 2010, a major shift occurred in the UNESCO's coordination of EFA advocacy. Building on its traditional 'Right to education' approach, UNESCO started convening partners around the theme of 'Education as a means to reach all MDGs'. In doing so, UNESCO fully capitalized on the key message conveyed by the [2010 Human Development Report](#), according to which seven of the ten countries who had made the most significant progress in human development over the previous 40 years were those who had massively invested in education (UNESCO, 2013, p.3). The same message 'no human development without education' was amply used for lobbying in favour of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda. Likewise, UNESCO started stressing that there was too much focus on primary education (due to the priorities aligned with MDGs and FTI) to the detriment of all other neglected EFA goals. As a result, the EFA holistic approach started being advocated more assiduously (e.g. among civil society and other development partners) during the last coordination phase.

#### *Realization of Joint and inter-sectoral Advocacy activities and programs*

142. The heads of the five EFA convening agencies signed a joint pledge on April 15, 2009, stating that each of them would intensify efforts to ensure that there is continued momentum to achieve the EFA goals.

143. UNESCO also promoted the development of partnerships when these would strengthen the advocacy on specific EFA-related themes as well as improve inter-sectoral policy coordination and joint initiatives in a variety of contexts. Such was the case of the [UNAIDS Inter-agency Task Team on Education, the Global Task Force on Child Labour and EFA, and the Task Force on Teachers for EFA](#).

144. Overall, the advocacy agenda pursued by the EFA coordination team at UNESCO resulted in the implementation of multiple activities influenced the global agenda setting. On the one hand, the HLG meetings served as the entry point for the set-up of entities promoting and working on emerging education-related issues. In 2005 the HLG in Beijing discussed the establishment of a Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education. In 2008, the HLG in Oslo fostered discussion on teachers and quality of teaching, which led to the creation of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA<sup>66</sup>. Such Task Force, which represented the first dedicated international alliance of stakeholders, including national governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, CSOs, international development agencies and private sector organizations working together to address the teacher gap to meet EFA goals; helped UNESCO gain much visibility and appreciation in the education sector at the global level.

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<sup>65</sup> Global advocacy would often influence national-level coordination too. The organization of the National Literacy Campaign organized in Cambodia involving 3,000 teachers and nearly 100,000 citizens represent an example of a successful advocacy initiative.

<sup>66</sup> The Task Force advocates for, and facilitates the coordination of international efforts to provide sufficient numbers of well-qualified teachers to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals. The website for the Task Force features a number of tools and resources including: a Library; an E-Atlas on Teachers; and a GAPMAP, as well as teaching resources.

145. On the other hand, the conduct of ad hoc studies (e.g. the MDG review), the production of promotional material (e.g. [a brochure created by UNESCO on the central role of education within the scope of the MDG agenda](#)) and the WG discussions, all aimed to influence the content of international summits, stressed the critical role that education played indeed towards the MDG attainment. That notwithstanding, linking the global, regional and national advocacy efforts remained a challenging task.

146. The EFA coordination mechanisms provided a stronger platform for advocacy among other existing development partners. UNESCO, for instance, mobilized other partners, networks and platforms in the promotion of the EFA goals at the global level. Such was the case of the CCNGO/EFA and the Global Campaign for Education, which organized an annual advocacy campaign 'Global Action Week for EFA' (focused on a different theme every year) for which UNESCO provided support. UNESCO also mobilized parliamentarians through regional forums developed by UNESCO, while exploring the potential of the private sector (e.g. the UNESCO Pakistan Office signed a Partnership Agreement in 2009 with the country's market leader in cellular services to develop a distance post-literacy programme catering to adolescent girls using mobile phones).

#### *UNESCO's coordination of evidence-based advocacy*

147. As of 2013, UNESCO started commissioning cutting-edge studies including forward-looking research focusing on issues and challenges. During the last coordination phase, UNESCO also started planning to mobilize extra-budgetary resources to improve its coordination in this area in the future. The rationale behind UNESCO's interest in pursuing further coordination in this area was the willingness to strengthen the analytical evidence base for reaching the EFA goals, as a complement to the GMR and the regional reports mentioned earlier. UNESCO was also interested in using the evidence produced by these analytical studies to mobilize more interest and support from outside of the education sector, for example from the private sector (e.g. Intel) and philanthropy (foundations) (Ball, 2012).

#### *Challenges included:*

148. UNESCO did not always enter into structured partnerships with those organizations whose advocacy efforts at times overlapped with its own (e.g. no specific mechanisms were created whereby the systematic exchange of monitoring and evaluation data would serve as the basis for joint advocacy campaigns between UNESCO and the other Co-conveners; no delegation of the EFA advocacy coordination occurred in areas where UNESCO partners' had stronger presence than its field offices). In the area of TVET, for instance, UNESCO lacked a clear synergy with GIZ (the German Government Agency for International Cooperation). This prevented UNESCO from partnering with other organizations so as to be able to scale up their interventions or provide countries with a prompter and continued longer term follow-up.

149. As internal communication around advocacy was not always consistent, not all UNESCO entities were equally aware all the time of the advocacy efforts coordinated by UNESCO. Likewise, the corresponding messages and strategies were not well known by UNESCO staff either. As a result, field offices, UNESCO National Commissions and other UNESCO staff did not always share the same definitions or a common understanding of the specific EFA-related issues, which they were advocating for.

150. The high turnover of national government officials committed to the EFA cause and serving as reliable interlocutors for the Organization over the last decade was identified by respondents as a key factor undermining the visibility of the EFA cause as well as the effectiveness of the advocacy efforts made within the scope of UNESCO coordination in a number of countries. One exception is Cambodia where the same government official (Secretary General for Education), who served as the national EFA Coordinator since 2000, favoured the uptake of the EFA cause at the national level and conferred UNESCO a more prominent coordination role than in other countries in the region

## Key Messages

### *Achievements*

- UNESCO ensured systematic and data-rich monitoring of the EFA progress at the global level through the production of the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) and at the regional level through statistical capacity-building conducted in close cooperation with UIS regional advisers.
- The Global Monitoring Report, which was produced annually by an independent team housed at UNESCO and was primarily based on the analysis of national data collected by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), was recognized over the years as the most comprehensive statistical publication on national education systems' progress in relation to the six EFA goals.
- As a result, UNESCO could claim a leadership role in the tracking of EFA goals at the global and, partly, at the regional level, as confirmed by its pivotal role in establishing the SDG4-Education 2030 targets.
- UNESCO's coordination of EFA monitoring at the regional level mostly revolved around the organization of regional training programs on data collection and analysis, which helped to enhance countries' capacity to successfully complete periodic EFA reviews (e.g. EFA Mid-Decade and End-of-Decade assessments).

### *Challenges*

- While the progress of the EFA agenda coordinated by UNESCO was the object of periodic reviews, EFA Coordination itself was neither monitored nor evaluated on a continued basis, mainly due to the absence of a theory of change or a results-based coordination strategy.
- In particular, in the early years, the GMR did not entirely meet national policy-makers' demand for more solid evidence on what works and what does not in education for policy making at the national and sub-national level.
- The collection and analysis of national level data by UIS not leave much space for the review and dissemination of other evidence produced at the national and regional levels, such as education-related data collected by civil society organizations, local research institutions, sub-national government organizations and the private sector.

151. EFA Coordination itself was not monitored nor evaluated on a continued and systematic basis, as it should have and relevant indicators were absent. As, reported by UNESCO in 2011, only a few EFA-related efforts underwent a formal evaluation between 2000 and 2015.<sup>67</sup>

152. On the contrary, the progress of the EFA agenda being coordinated by UNESCO was the object of periodic reviews (Table 9). In the aftermath of the Dakar World Education Forum, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) established an EFA observatory to monitor and report on progress towards EFA which resulted in the production of the first EFA monitoring report in 2001,

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<sup>67</sup> These included two evaluations of the EFA Global Monitoring Report, a UN Inspection Team report on UPE (2003), regular progress reports of EFA-FTI and an evaluation in 2010, the GMR's regular monitoring of EFA mechanisms, notably HLG and EFA-FTI, and other evaluations made by individual organizations, including a report by UNESCO's Director-General on the strategic review of EFA coordination and UNESCO's role (2004), the World Bank's report "An evaluation of World Bank Support to Primary Education - From Schooling to Access to Learning Outcomes: An unfinished Agenda" (2006), UNGEI evaluation of its girls' initiative programme in Africa (2004) and an external evaluation of EDUCAIDS (2008).

also in response to the specific request by the first HLG meeting in Paris<sup>68</sup>. Thanks to the collection of first-hand data from the ministry of education in all of the UNESCO Member States, such publication, renamed as the Global Monitoring Report (GMR)<sup>69</sup>, rapidly became the world’s key reference on education statistics. This was mainly due to the rigorous research and analytical work carried out by a group of researchers housed at UNESCO but independent from it (i.e. the GMR team).

**Why was EFA monitoring necessary and why it continues to be necessary?**

Jomtien Plan	Changes in education (as per the 6 EFA Goals) required soft targets and national diversity; reflected in the low-level, low-key architectures established.
Dakar Framework for Action and SDG-4 Education 2030 Framework for Action	Changes in education (as per the 6 EFA Goals) required specific objectives and targets against which countries would be monitored.

Adapted from Faula & Packer (2014), p. 9

153. While the GMR and UIS were consistently recognized for the quality and credibility of their data, respondents have consistently recognized the policy relevance of UNESCO publications but not always their operational usefulness (that is, in the implementation of their day-to-day work).

154. The GMR’s increasing relevance over the years led some of the UNESCO Regional bureaux to reduce some of their regional-level monitoring work. The African Regional Bureau for Education in Dakar, for instance, suspended the publication of its countries’ monitoring report (also known as ‘Dakar+ Report’) but continued to profile countries on a regular basis, as demonstrated by presentations delivered by UNESCO staff during the ECOWAS conference and the biannual meetings organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). To the contrary, the LAC Regional Bureau for Education in Santiago kept playing an influential role in the monitoring of education results across the region, as attested by its direct support to the largest assessment of education achievements and education quality in the region the region (SERCE in 2006 and [TERCE](#) in 2013) as well as its assiduous participation in the meetings of the Peer Support Group, a coordination structure made up of technical staff from the different development partners offices in the LAC region.

155. Thanks to UNESCO’s coordination in this specific area, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) of the United Nations system and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) integrated EFA into their agenda. UNESCO inscribed the monitoring of progress towards the six Dakar goals on the agenda of the CEB and the plenary of the UNDG. Based on a UNESCO action note, prepared on the occasion of the publication of the second GMR in 2003, the executive heads of all United Nations system organizations and programmes, meeting at UNESCO Headquarters, discussed the importance of consistent and effective follow-up of the Dakar Framework for Action and agreed to review progress on an annual basis. However, as such review would be undertaken in the context of a review of the overall implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the risk was that the MDG reporting (on only two out of six Dakar goals) would overshadow the focus on and pursuit of the entire range of EFA objectives.

<sup>68</sup> The practice of checking on the state of attainment of global education goals started before 2000: in preparation of the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000, for instance, global, regional and national education sector reports had been developed

<sup>69</sup> During the First Meeting of the HLG in Paris in 2001 it was decided that: “An authoritative, analytical, annual EFA Monitoring Report should be produced drawing upon national data - quantitative and qualitative – and assessing the extent to which both countries and the international community are meeting their Dakar commitments”. First Communiqué of the HLG Meeting in 2001.

### *The influence of the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) on global EFA advocacy and resource mobilization.*

156. The GMR was more widely read than all other UNESCO publications and the different themes promoted by the yearly GMR issues influenced advocacy among donors and academics and resource mobilization efforts globally. The critical role played by the GMR on the international scene was such that some authors (Edward et al, 2015, p. 3) argued that UNESCO's ability to gain some of its legitimacy back since 2000s was due to this very same publication. Other publications monitoring the progress of education came to fruition during the same period (from the OECD/DAC publication reporting on PISA or Program of International Students Assessments, to UNICEF and World Bank reports containing national and regional data on primary education).

157. A specific effort was made to address the request for adapting the GMR format and content to national context: the 2015 GMR edition was translated into twelve different languages and regional report syntheses are since available so that countries could access and supposedly use data that are more pertinent to their levels of interests and needs.

#### *Challenges included:*

158. The link between the GMR (often regarded as an exhaustive and academic publication) and policy-making was not always clear. As already attested by Kenneth King in his preface to a special Norrag News Issue on the Global Development Reports (2010. p.8): *'We suspect that the translation from global to local is very weak. This is partly because the global reports themselves don't and can't represent the situation at the local level in any detailed way; so national policy makers need to deduce from global reports what are the implications for themselves. This may not be easy since the global reports may not focus on the whole sector, but rather on the dimensions of basic education, or of the MDGs, but not on education or development as a whole. The debate about whether the global gets lost in translation when transferred to the local will continue'*. Aligned with King's statement, the majority of the national policy-makers interviewed during the fieldwork acknowledged that the GMR allowed them to understand where they stand comparatively on a number of EFA goals, especially vis-à-vis other countries in their same region. However, they also admitted that such information was not easily to be translated or usable for their policy-making purposes.

### *UNESCO's coordination of EFA Mid-Decade and End-of-Decade assessments and statistical capacity building among partners*

159. Two UNESCO Regional Bureaux for Education in particular (Dakar and Bangkok) have successfully coordinated the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment in 2005-2006. In October 2005, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education organized a meeting in Bangkok with EFA national coordinators from across the region to start planning the regional Mid-Decade Assessment. As a result of their participation in the event, most countries in the region assessed the state of their respective education systems, by also highlighting their achievements and challenges in "reaching the unreached" through education. In June 2005, the UNESCO Africa Regional Bureau for Education convened a regional Forum (known as 'Dakar+5 Forum') with over 160 participants. The publication 'Education for All in Africa: Paving the way for action' distributed to all participants and including the results of the regional assessment, provided the basis for very thoughtful discussions on regional coordination, especially in the area of progress monitoring.

160. Almost ten years later, all of the Regional Bureaux for Education (exception made for Africa where one only Regional Bureau for Education no longer existed as of 2014<sup>70</sup>) were able to coordinate the EFA End-of-Decade assessment between 2013 and 2015.

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<sup>70</sup> In the framework of the field network reform in Africa, 5 Multi-sectoral Regional Office (MROs) were established in the 5 sub regions of the African region, with the Dakar Office becoming one of them and consequently losing its former function as a Regional Bureau for Education for the entire African Region.

161. In most cases, such exercises provided the opportunity for UNESCO to collaborate with UIS regional advisers to offer capacity-building to countries' officials mainly in the area of monitoring data collection and analysis. The former UNESCO Africa Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Dakar), for instance, in collaboration with UIS and the Pôle de Dakar, produced yearly publications on the monitoring of the state of education in the whole region (the so-called 'Dakar+' reports) and facilitated a number of technical training programs. The UNESCO LAC Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Santiago), too, played a similar capacity-building role: as the implementation of the EFA/PRELaC strategy pursued at the regional level revolved around the principle of quality, UNESCO created the [Latin American Lab for Assessment of Educational Quality \(LLECE\)](#), a network of national directors of educational evaluation from the entire region. Similarly, the UNESCO Arab Regional Bureau for Education organized a series of events on EFA monitoring between 2007 and 2008<sup>71</sup> to convene countries from the region and let them share with each other lesson learned and good practices on EFA-related monitoring practices.

162. On an experimental basis, regional reports providing an overview of progress over the last two decades and identifying major challenges in every region, were prepared and presented at the 2011 WG. Based on these reports, a synthesis report was developed for the 2011 HLG. These reports and presentations added value and depth to the discussion at the meetings and were welcomed by all participants. In case of Africa, the profiling of countries (countries were ranked based on their level of attainment of EFA-related parameters) provided the (former) UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Dakar the basis for determining those countries that needed technical assistance the most.

*Challenges included:*

163. Many of the EFA regional stakeholders found that the national level data collected by UIS did not leave much space for the review and dissemination of all other evidence produced at the national and regional levels. This was the case of education-related data collected by civil society organizations, local research institutions, sub-national government, teacher-parents' organizations and the private sector. With respect to some specific themes (e.g. literacy), the quality of the existing data available could also be questionable (Wagner et al, 2012).

*UNESCO's coordination and development of the SDG4 definition and monitoring*

164. As of 2013, UNESCO coordinated the development of a framework to monitor the education targets beyond 2015. Based on an initial proposal set of 42 indicators, such document was developed by the Technical Advisory Group on Education indicators (TAG), chaired by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and made up of experts from different international agencies. The indicators included in the draft circulated during the World Education Forum 2015<sup>72</sup> resulted from a series of public consultations held with Member States and a vast array of education stakeholders, in which UNESCO played a relevant role.

165. More specifically, UNESCO's decision to contribute to the development and endorse the seven targets and three means of implementation identified by the Open Working Document on Post-2015 rather than developing a separate framework is clearly a sign of foresight and eagerness to foster a more shared vision and effective collaboration than in the past. In this vein, the UNESCO Secretariat and the EFA Steering Committee have been particularly instrumental to promote a coherent and holistic vision of the future global education agenda, also based on the outcomes agreed upon at the end of a several global and regional events organized and coordinated by UNESCO. The global events included the Global Thematic Consultation on Education, the [Muscat](#)

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<sup>71</sup> These events included: the Regional Workshop on EFA Mid-term Review, Beirut, 2-4 April, 2007; the Sub-regional meeting on the National EFA MTR Reports of Gulf Countries, Amman, 12-14 June 2007; the EFA Mid-Term Review Lead Consultants Meeting, Beirut, 24-25 August 2007; the Second Arab Parliamentarians meeting on Education, Beirut, 21-22 July 2008; and the Regional Conference for the Arab States on Mid-Term Review of Education for All, (Doha, 19-21 February 2008).

<sup>72</sup> Endorsed by national statistical offices at the global level, such education-specific indicators were ranked the third best among all those produced in relation to the 17 SDG.

[Global EFA Meeting 2014 and the World Education Forum 2015](#). The regional events included the [regional ministerial conferences on Post-2015](#) organized in the following cities: Bangkok (August 2014), Lima (October 2014), Sharm el Sheik (January 2015), Kigali (February 2015), and Paris (February 2015).

166. These efforts successfully informed the work of the Open Working Group on SDGs and intergovernmental negotiations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, resulting in the SDG 4, as a strong goal on education.

*Challenges included:*

167. Both the ambitious nature of the SDG targets and the lack of capacity to track their level of achievement at the national level, highlighted the need for more statistical capacity building and more innovative methods that could measure such non-traditional education variables (e.g. learning outcomes and quality of processes in non-formal settings and TVET). Likewise, the iterative process that led to the identification of the SDG 4 indicators and the discussions still going on how to finalize them (the UN Statistical Commission will have until mid-2016 to provide its feedback on the final list) makes the related costing and, therefore, advocacy more challenging. Despite the dispatch of UIS advisors at the regional level, the supply capacity over the last few years – similar to the situation in the early 2000's - was not able to fully meet the ever-increasing demand for technical assistance, both at the regional and national lev



### III. KEY CONCLUSIONS

#### III.1. Relevance of EFA Coordination

168. UNESCO was the strongest supporter of the holistic EFA agenda on the international scene between 2000 and 2015, and its multiple efforts to coordinate it at the global and regional level led to greater awareness of the extra benefits that one could derive from incorporating such principles as quality, social equity, gender equality and inclusiveness, into the planning and implementation of education programmes.

UNESCO's EFA coordination was particularly relevant to countries, in that it provided the Member States' delegations in Paris (especially those representing low-income countries) as well as the key ministries and all other stakeholders' organizations at the national level, with pertinent guidance in educational planning and policy-making. UNESCO's coordination was also relevant to all other development partners in that it provided them with data that they could use to better target and focus their respective education strategies and programs.

169. UNESCO ensured the introduction of fundamental concepts (e.g. global citizenship education and education for sustainable development) with a new and more encompassing lifelong learning perspective as well as the dissemination of information on best practices in education-related areas that were equally important but often neglected by the other development partners, such as: early childhood care, adult literacy, inclusive education, skills development of youth and adults and non-formal education, multi-lingual education and education for persons with disabilities.

170. UNESCO's advocacy efforts have been successful in influencing the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda and garnered support among its partners to introduce otherwise neglected aspects of education in the global sustainable development agenda.

171. Despite several challenges, UNESCO's coordination of the global education agenda is likely to continue to be relevant in the future: the Organization's effort to defend and promote the breath of the education discourse will be all the more critical in view not only of the holistic vision promoted by SDG4-Education 2030 but also of the potential risks associated with the proliferation of actors (both at the global and national level) with a vested interest in education.

172. UNESCO's coordination was most relevant when the three following conditions were met: coordination had a clear set of objectives (as in the case of the Flagship Initiatives for education); its purpose was aligned with the Organization's vision and its overall strategy; and its structures and implementation processes were fully endorsed by the Organization's top management and promoted across sections and divisions (within and outside of the Education Sector).

173. As illustrated by the overview of the three EFA Coordination phases (2000-2004, 2005-2011, 2012-2015), the relevance of the Organization in leading and coordinating the EFA agenda was uneven over the years, for a variety of reasons, both at the global and regional levels. These included the uneven engagement of co-conveners (e.g. UNDP<sup>73</sup>, UNFPA, UNICEF and World Bank) and the emergence of parallel global education agendas (e.g. MDG) and alternative funding mechanism modalities (e.g. programme and sector-wide budget support). All of that impacted UNESCO's capacity to ensure a common EFA vision among the EFA co-convening agencies and the other national and international partners, and hindered the Organization's effort to link the global EFA vision with the implementation at the national level.

174. UNESCO's efforts to coordinate the education agenda did not always prove to fully translate into the development of more effective national educational strategies, policies and goals, not least due to the lack of adequate financial resources<sup>74</sup> which had a negative impact on country-level

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<sup>73</sup> UNDP has been following the progress of the MDGs around the world and presenting the related data in its annual publication: the MDG Review Annual Report.

<sup>74</sup> The fragmentation of funding (34% in 2011 and 38% for the 10 countries with the largest out of school population) is not an exclusive feature of the relationship between national government and multilateral

(and partly regional-level) implementation. However, this did not prevent either the advocacy of EFA-related issues or the uptake (and funding to a certain extent) of the related values, principles and strategies.

175. The internal restructuring, which the Organization (including the Education Sector) went through over the years, not least as a result of the drastic decrease in its budget resources and later the field network reform<sup>75</sup> had a greater adverse impact on the coordination relevance than expected (e.g., in Africa).

### III.2. Coherence of EFA Coordination

176. The lack of regular communication on EFA coordination between UNESCO HQ and both the Regional Bureaux and National Offices, especially during the first two coordination phases (2000-2011) led to many Field Offices becoming independent in implementing, communicating about and coordinating the EFA agenda. Often this undermined the overall Organization's effort to defend and promote the holistic orientation of the EFA agenda. While some of the activities implemented by the Field Offices were intended to adapt the EFA Agenda to their respective local context, their focus on a few selected EFA Goals (e.g., non-formal education, adult literacy, inclusive education), which could have been partly justified based on an efficiency analysis, often created a gap between UNESCO and the rest of the donor community working in the same country but on a separate set of EFA Goals.

177. A consensual definition of what coordination was and a wide dissemination of the criteria to select the coordination meetings participants were very effective to attract high-political level participation from both the national governments and development partners (e.g. during the GEM in 2012 and 2014, Member States' representatives were selected by their respective regional groups; CCNGO/EFA was represented in SC meetings by elected members of its Coordination Group). Such transparent and predictable process was all the more beneficial as a more structured and purposeful representation of constituencies increased the ownership of the related processes and facilitates more balanced and enriched discussions and deliberations.

178. Lack of field presence and limited resources at country level weakened coordination at national level. The limited number of UNESCO Field Offices around the world and the few regular budget resources available to implement in-country programs led UNESCO's Education Sector Staff undermined the coordination role that the Organization could have played at the national level.

179. Similarly, the EFA Coordination team uneven staffing level and numerous changes in leadership within the EFA coordination team were not coherent with the need for a solid and continued stewardship of the EFA agenda. Staff working at UNESCO Category I Institutes as well as UNESCO's partner around the world promoting education within wider education networks could often compensate for the Organization's lack of field presence at country level. In many cases where UNESCO did not have a Field Office in a country (e.g. Laos), the policy advice and capacity

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organizations (Rose, Steer, Smith & Zubairi, 2013), but also of non-traditional funders who are growing in number – in OECD countries only, there has been a 51 per cent increase in number of non-traditional funders (private sector, foundations, etc.) between 2006 and 2011- and yet they do not seem to make a significant contribution to education systems improvements not least due to the lack of a coordinated mechanism to deploy the resources. From 2008 to 2013, the number of donor relationships in LICs and LMICs increased by 12 percent—from 1,016 to 1,141. However, based on a methodology developed by the OECD-DAC to measure the added value of private sector funding to national education sectors, over a third of such financial support has shown minimal or no improvements over the past 5 years. In Steer & Smith (2015) p. 6

<sup>75</sup> The uneven quality of UNESCO coordination in the education sector across the African continent is exemplified by the different level of in-country partners' response to UNESCO's invitation to produce a 2015 EFA Review Report. On the one hand, the Dakar Office (former BREDa) organized a series of workshop to prepare the 2015 EFA Review Reports (as of February 2015, it managed to receive 38 reports) and encouraged all other multisectoral regional offices to do the same. However, as of April 2015, only the Yaoundé Office had organized a regional workshop in January 2015 to prepare these reports (the 10 country reports that it submitted to HQ were all drafted according to a different format). The remaining three multisectoral regional offices in Africa opted for collecting the reports individually from each country.

building provided by IIEP or UIS were a key driver of EFA coordination among national governments, civil society and the private sector.

180. In the absence of adequate staffing and resources for successful programme implementation at several levels, the credibility and reputation of UNESCO's coordination and leadership were often adversely impacted. Furthermore, coordination activities implemented at the country-level were often not as effective as expected, from both an equity and quality perspective, due to their being punctual or scarcely resourced.

### III.3. Effectiveness of EFA Coordination

#### *EFA Knowledge Generation and Dissemination*

181. Four main strategies were effective in promoting the generation and dissemination of EFA-related knowledge: (i) liaising with Category I Institutes; (ii) organizing global and regional meetings to facilitate the development or dissemination of UNESCO knowledge products in a number of EFA-related areas; (iii) fostering regional exchanges on EFA-related good practices; and (iv) coordinating the development of technical publications. The in-house production and wide dissemination of cutting-edge research work (especially published as part of thematic series) and specialized literature on education topics, although contingent on the volatility of funding observed over the last fifteen years, enhanced the credibility of the Organization's intellectual leadership, which was amply recognized in such fields as youth and adult literacy (e.g., UIL), planning (e.g. through IIEP), teachers (through the Teachers Task Force) and statistics (through UIS).

#### *EFA Resource Mobilization*

182. Despite its coordination efforts in this area, UNESCO could not mobilize all the necessary financial resources that were needed to implement the encompassing EFA agenda over the last 15 years. However, many others actors are to be held responsible for the lack of adequate EFA funding: the national governments whose education budgets either stagnated or decreased<sup>76</sup> over the years as well as those international and bilateral donors that, predominantly interested in funding primary education (in line with the MDG), and partly as a result of the global financial crisis, could not fulfil their promises with respect to the attainment of all six EFA Goals (GMR, 2015)<sup>77</sup>.

183. Given UNESCO's limited access to resources, the most effective strategy that the Organization pursued to support the implementation of the EFA agenda consisted in advocating for increased funding for education and promoting a more effective use of the existing education funds. To generate more funding for education at the global level, UNESCO successfully pushed for public-private partnerships and for an increase in extra-budgetary support for EFA-related programming and coordination, especially towards the end of the second phase of EFA coordination. To support UNESCO's call for a more effective allocation of existing resources for education purposes, the Organization promoted the dissemination of the GMR and other technical publications, so as to provide funders and national policy-makers' with the strongest evidence available on what education areas and topics needed to be addressed the most.

184. Consistent with its rights-based approach, UNESCO promoted education as a public good (e.g., during the EFA Steering Committee Meetings). However, that in and of itself was not always a sufficiently convincing argument to countries about why they should have invested more in education. When coordinating the mobilization of resources for EFA-related purposes, the Organization often lagged behind other agencies (e.g. The World Bank and GPE) in defending funding for education as a strategic investment with significant economic return at all levels.

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<sup>76</sup> Fifty-nine percent of the 13,500 teachers in 129 countries who responded to the Education International's Global Survey in 2015 states that governments had performed poorly or very poorly in terms of increasing funding and resources for education.

<sup>77</sup> Aid flows for education had more than doubled from US\$6.7 billion in 2002 to US\$14.4 billion in 2010 but then dropped to US\$13.4 billion between 2010 and 2011. EFA Global Monitoring Report. Policy Paper 11. Dec.2013.

185. Nonetheless, by acting as the ‘conscience’ of the United Nations, UNESCO was able to provide some direction to its Members States’ funding for education. Despite not being a funding agency and not having been able to mobilize adequate resources as was expected according to the Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO was able to influence indirectly the allocation of resources at the national level. In this vein, UNESCO’s (often not widely advertised) technical publications proved particularly relevant for investing in areas such as monitoring, capacity building in education sectoral planning, data collection and analysis, and standard setting.

#### *EFA Advocacy*

186. UNESCO’s advocacy was useful and needed, especially on issues that other development partners did not seem to promote as actively (e.g. the right to education, the promotion of local languages in education, the importance of adult literacy and skills development, especially in post-conflict and emergency situations). Furthermore, in promoting the EFA agenda through its advocacy efforts, UNESCO created opportunities not only to bring a large number of constituencies together but also to foster an enabling environment where policy dialogue could take place.

187. The credibility of EFA advocacy was greater when the related processes and structures were informed by the evidence on what worked and what did not work in global education. In this vein, the analytical work conducted by the Education and Foresight Unit within the UNESCO Education Sector as well as the position papers published by UNESCO Specialized Institutes contributed to the work of the EFA Steering Committee (SC). However, more demand exists for such type of work on a larger number of topics (e.g. privatization of primary education, gender equality in education, quality assurance standards for madrasas schools).

188. Aligned with UNESCO’s vision, the Organization’s collective advocacy efforts contributed to bringing greater attention to such neglected but equally important goals as Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), skills development, adult literacy and education quality, within a holistic view of education and a lifelong-learning perspective.

189. Overall, through its sustained advocacy efforts, UNESCO succeeded in influencing the SDG-4 Education 2030 Agenda and garnered support among its partners to introduce otherwise neglected aspects of education in the global sustainable development agenda. Over the years, countries acknowledged what UNESCO defended since the beginning of the EFA agenda: the importance of focusing more on the quality and relevance of education and on marginalized groups. UNESCO, informed by GMR and others such as the Aid Effectiveness process, also advocated for increased, sustained and predictable funding for education.

#### *EFA Progress Monitoring*

190. The ample recognition of UNESCO’s leadership in coordinating EFA progress monitoring at the global level was the result of the Organization’s efforts to coordinate the periodic collection, analysis and dissemination of evidence on the level of countries’ attainment of the six EFA Goals. However, in-house monitoring was not always conducted in an integrated manner: different sections within the UNESCO Education Sector (e.g. Non-Formal Education and TVET) collected their own data independently of each other.

191. UNESCO’s coordination of EFA monitoring became an entry point for statistical capacity building at regional and national levels. As a result of their close collaboration with UIS and other UNESCO Specialized Institutes, Regional Bureaux and Field Offices were able to organize a series of training programmes on data collection, analysis and utilization, often in preparation for periodic EFA reviews (e.g., the EFA Mid-Decade and End-of-Decade assessments).

192. Annual regional reports prepared in collaboration with countries and disseminated in regional events proved to be essential to better communicate global education developments at the field level and ensure that they inform policy-making.

## IV. LESSONS LEARNED

### IV.1. Relevance of global/regional Coordination

193. The relevance of global coordination in education largely depends on the extent to which its partners accept the coordinating entity as predictable, coherent and effective. For that to happen, two of the most important conditions are that the staffing level within the coordination entity be commensurate to the workload and that the related leadership be consistent over time.

194. Mutually agreed and accepted accountability mechanisms among all partners are critical for the success of global initiatives like EFA, and now the SDG-4 Education 2030 Agenda. A clear accountability framework is particularly relevant, as it enhances the predictability of coordination and, as a result thereof, partners' sense of trust in the coordinating entity by its partners. Furthermore, such tool helps to prevent overlap and duplication of coordination efforts and can guarantee a more coherent communication both within the Organization and between the Organization and the other development partners.

195. A clear and transparent system of representation in coordination meetings is a precondition for institutionalizing clear lines of accountability. The lack of an adequate level of representation (e.g. of clearly established and disseminated participants list) represents an obstacle for the monitoring and follow-up of commitments (regarding institutional practices and decision-making).

### IV.2. Coherence of global /regional Coordination

196. A coordination strategy that spells out specific coordination roles and responsibilities<sup>78</sup> across all coordination levels (not only global and regional but also national) is critical for the success of global/regional coordination. On the one hand, it enhances coherence between global/regional coordination mechanisms and national systems (e.g., existing policies, amount of funding available for education, specific requests for technical assistance), also based on a realistic assessment of country's capacity to translate international policies and guidelines into contextually relevant activities and programs. On the other hand, such strategy fosters greater coherence within the Organization (e.g. among the different Education Sector's divisions as well as between the Education Sector and the different Category I Institutes and field offices), by also allowing UNESCO as a whole to transmit clear and consistent messages about coordination modalities when dealing with national governments and other development partners at the global/regional level.

197. Coordination that entails new ways of working together through the development of joint initiatives and creative collaborative efforts (though joint programming or subcontracting of a specific education subcomponent, service or product) ensures better coherence than traditional coordination. Experience shows that, despite providing partners with a common framework (e.g. the Dakar Framework for Action) and an overall direction to fulfil the EFA agenda, UNESCO could not prevent other development partners from pursuing their own programmatic interests and implementing specific projects independently of each other.

198. For global/regional coordination to remain coherent, it is critical that its structures and processes not only provide a safe and adequate space for holding discussions and forging partnership but also inform all the related exchanges and dialogues with credible technical content and inspiring principles. Therefore, it is critical to strike a balance between the two functions, i.e. convening aspects and the more technical functions.

199. Coordination is not only about ensuring a continued dialogue and exchange of information among the global, regional and national levels (vertical coordination). What is also needed is the sharing of a common space for continued dialogue and collaboration within each one of the three levels (horizontal coordination), starting from within the Paris-based Education Sector.

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<sup>78</sup> This conclusion also builds on the lesson drawn from a prior evaluation of EFA coordination mechanisms during 1990-2000, that is, that "any discussion of optimal mechanisms of international coordination in the future must flow from consensus about functions (Little and Miller, 2000).

### IV.3. Effectiveness of EFA Coordination

200. The set-up of coordination structures (e.g., the EFA coordination team, the EFA High-Level Group and the Working Group on EFA) in and of itself does not guarantee effective coordination unless the related processes (e.g., related to governance, accountability and decision-making) are well defined.

201. Adequate planning and staffing capacity are a precondition for effective Coordination. The scarce resources assigned by donors to some of the EFA coordination initiatives (e.g. E-9 Initiative<sup>79</sup>) was, among others, the result of the lack of clear and measurable targets, and a solid work plan, as well as the reliance on the few highly committed UNESCO HQ-based staff for dealing with day-to-day coordination.

202. Focusing coordination efforts in multiple education-related areas is more effective than implementing a generic and decontextualized coordination strategy. However, for a coordination strategy to be focused, the following elements need to be identified: i) the key stakeholders whom it is necessary to coordinate in order to attain the strategy's envisaged objectives; ii) the key areas where coordination is expected to take place; and iii) a coherent set of key messages to be communicated (both within and outside of the coordinating entity). In order for education advocacy efforts to be successful, it is necessary that existing funding mechanisms integrate the issues being advocated into their own list of priorities.

203. Coordination-related meetings organized in conjunction with other relevant events are often more cost-effective, productive and inductive to cooperation than stand-alone meetings on specific issues associated with a particular agenda. In many instances, such meetings provide not only excellent networking opportunities but also the basis for a more integrated global education agenda (e.g. the creation of joint initiatives in education among development partners).

204. For UNESCO to be able to maintain and strengthen its intellectual leadership, the publication of cutting-edge research work and specialized literature on education topics are of paramount importance. While the set-up of an independent research unit on SDG4-Education 2030 (similar to the GMR team) may not be a financially viable option for UNESCO, the implementation of other coordination strategies in areas such as 'Intellectual Coordination' and 'Knowledge Capital Promotion', could be beneficial to gain partners' trust in UNESCO's intellectual leadership<sup>80</sup>.

205. Evidence shows that large printed publications and yearly gatherings to support upstream policy advice and capacity building are no longer the only way to remain influential and to mobilize partners in education. Despite the efforts to keep exercising its technical advisory role in a conventional and slightly academic-oriented manner, the use of new communication outlets and strategies is a particularly effective strategy.

206. The effectiveness of UNESCO's EFA coordination is a result of the level of quality and progress attained by the Organization in several areas (e.g. staffing, communication, fund-raising, inter-agency collaboration at field level, decentralization of new management tools, results-based management) at any point in time. Likewise, the more coordination processes are aligned with the Organizations' internal set-up, the more effective coordination will be.

207. Adapting coordination mechanisms based on lessons learned from the past and on evidence of what works in partnering is critical for enhancing the effectiveness of UNESCO's role both internationally and regionally. As the global education community and its agenda are in continuing evolution, the conduct of regular assessments of coordination quality, based on agreed indicators and the timely follow-up on conclusions and recommendations, is a precondition for adapting coordination mechanisms to the evolving requirements.

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<sup>79</sup> Bibeau, J-R., Kester-McNees, Reddy, V. (2003). Report on the evaluation of UNESCO's E-9 Initiative.

<sup>80</sup> It is encouraging that a 'Research and Foresight' unit recently became part of the EFA Team. The last publication is 'Rethinking Education'.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This chapter includes a number of recommendations that are intended to support UNESCO in its current efforts to best define and exercise its coordinating role of the Global Education Agenda (SDG4-Education 2030). Building on the lessons learned, the evaluation offers UNESCO suggestions of strategic actions for consideration that are aimed at strengthening the Organization's coordination capacity at the regional and global levels. The recommendations are also geared towards the refinement and improved implementation of new coordination mechanisms developed by UNESCO in collaboration with its Member States and a number of other development partners on the basis of the Incheon Declaration, signed at the World Education Forum in 2015.
2. A summary of the recommendations put forward by this evaluation is provided in the table below (Table 10) followed by a more detailed discussion of the recommendations.

### Summary of recommendations

**Recommendation 1: Develop a detailed and results-oriented Coordination Strategy and Theory of Change.** In doing so, the ED sector should clearly communicate that coordination is the Organization's corporate responsibility and not the agenda item of a few divisions or sections within the Organization.

**Recommendation 2: Shift from a 'Traditional Coordination' model to a more cohesive 'Shared Coordination' strategy towards the attainment of the SDG-4 Education 2030 targets.** On the one hand, UNESCO should acknowledge its partners' capacity (and resources) to contribute to the SDG-4 Education 2030 coordination, in line with the principles of universality, harmonization and mutual accountability spelled out in the SDG-4 Education 2030 Framework for Action. On the other hand, UNESCO should endorse and provide technical expertise to partners offering to contribute to the Coordination of the SDG-4 Education 2030 (e.g. through the implementation of initiatives and campaigns aimed at the attainment SDG4-Education 2030 targets). This renewed coordination strategy ('shared coordination' or 'coordination by delegation') is aiming to enhance both partners' recognition of UNESCO's leadership role and mutual trust among its partners.

**Recommendation 3: Strike a balance between UNESCO's global mandate and the need for a more focused and responsive coordination strategy at the regional and national level.** In refining its coordination role over the next fifteen years, the ED sector should strike a balance between the Organization's global mandate for education and the aspirations manifested by the Organization's field offices and regional bureaux to contribute to coordination at their respective level. In doing so and for the sake of coherence and efficiency, the Organization should make sure to play a stronger regional and national coordination role in those areas where equity considerations and past achievements justify its comparative advantage, namely, the generation and dissemination of knowledge (including best practices) on adult literacy, teachers' training, non-formal education and skills development for both youth and adults.

**Recommendation 4: Monitor the effectiveness of the SDG4-Education 2030 coordination structures as well as the quality of the corresponding processes on a regular basis.** The ED sector should map the global education coordination landscape and provide other partners with tools and guidelines to contribute to such exercise. In collecting monitoring data, UNESCO should cater to the aspirations of many regional and national actors to gain more ownership over education data collection, analysis and dissemination processes.

**Recommendation 5: Ensure stronger coherence of UNESCO in-house coordination.**

The ED Sector should develop a 'One UNESCO' communication strategy and all UNESCO staff should be trained to be able integrate it effectively in their day-to-day work. In addition, UNESCO should strengthen further the links between its regional coordination mechanisms and the other regional bodies, as well as define a clearer coordination accountability framework for senior management. In addition, a periodic information-exchange mechanism within the Education Sector should be put in place whereby each Division's Director could compile a list of ongoing activities within their Section in support of the implementation of SDG4-Education and collaboration/cooperation with partners in these areas.

**Recommendation 6: Strengthen the coordination role of the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC).**

Recognising that the SC tasks are outlined in the SDG-4 Education 2030 Framework for Action, the SC should develop a multi-year work plan that explicitly contributes to the following: (i) Fostering and maintaining the global consensus around the SDG 4-Agenda 2030's holistic and universalistic vision; (ii) Enhancing the use and dissemination of timely data on global and regional education trends during SC discussions in order to make all SC members' advocacy efforts more evidence-based.

**Recommendation 7: Advocate to ensure that the allocation of funding of education in Member State be aligned as much as possible with all the SDG4-Agenda 2030 targets over the next fifteen years.**

UNESCO should strive to ensure coherence between the holistic vision heralded by the SDG4-Education 2030 and the funding made available by national governments as well as all the other interested parties (e.g. national and international funders – public and private) to implement it over the next fifteen years. In this vein, UNESCO should coordinate closely with the Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunities as well as the Global Partnership for Education.

**Recommendation 8: Strengthen UNESCO's role in generating and disseminating knowledge on good practices in education at the global and regional levels.**

In doing so, UNESCO should become more selective in producing publications and make sure that the existing ones are more integrated with each other. Likewise, it would be advisable for UNESCO to explore the level of interest among the different partners in producing joint publications on specific topics of interest identified in the course of the Steering Committee Meeting discussion. Effective coordination in this area would also require UNESCO to maximize the use of social media.

**Recommendation 1:**

**Develop a detailed and results-oriented Coordination Strategy and Theory of Change**

208. The existence of formal coordination mechanisms set up in support of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda will not guarantee their own effectiveness. Acknowledging the centrality of coordination to the successful implementation of UNESCO's agenda is all the more critical as both the recognition and credibility of the Organization's contribution to the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda will mainly depend on its ability to guide and inspire as well as to influence the work of all other partners working on education at the global, regional and national levels. Therefore, all UNESCO Education Sector staff should have an in-depth understanding of how this can be operationalized when working within or in collaboration with such mechanisms. In particular, the ED sector should clearly communicate that coordination is everyone's specific responsibility and not the agenda item of a few divisions or sections within the Organization, as it might have been the case in the past.



*Strategic Actions for Consideration:*

209. The UNESCO Education Sector should develop a detailed and results-oriented Coordination Strategy that would guide staff during the planning, implementation and monitoring of the Organization's planned efforts over the next fifteen years. Such Strategy would help operationalizing further the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action and would provide an overview of coordination tasks and responsibilities, both within and outside the Education Sector. The envisaged strategy should spell out the activities and processes to be established in order to attain a series of short-, medium- and long-term coordination outcomes for the next fifteen years. A coordination mechanism to conduct periodic monitoring will also need to be established.

210. In order to define the objectives of this Coordination Strategy, UNESCO should first develop a Theory of Change of its coordination efforts, which could also clarify the different risks, assumptions, drivers and processes underlying its coordination work at all levels<sup>81</sup> and considering the opportunities, risks and assumptions.

211. It is critical that UNESCO develop right away an 'SDG4-Education 2030 Roadmap', including a calendar and a work plan. Such document could first be developed by the Education Sector and shared with the other four sectors within the Organization, in order to identify the extent to which the whole Organization (in line with the 'One UNESCO' principle) could contribute to the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda. Once the Roadmap is finalized and a corresponding organizational strategy is clearly defined, UNESCO might want to hold consultations as soon as possible with the other SDG4-Education 2030 Co-conveners and relevant stakeholders: this will be particularly useful to define everyone's tasks and responsibilities in line with the roadmap and calendar to be prepared by UNESCO.

212. UNESCO might also want to develop a detailed EFA coordination accountability framework. This tool would first help determine the different in-house coordination roles and responsibilities as well as lines of communication across the Organization's sectors, divisions, sections and bureaux/offices. Second, such an accountability framework would clarify the division of coordination tasks and responsibilities between UNESCO and all other relevant development partners invested in the SDG4-Education 2030 at the global, regional and national level.

**Recommendation 2:**  
**Shift from a 'traditional Coordination' model to a more cohesive 'shared coordination' strategy, which it will manage and monitor.**

213. UNESCO should follow a new vision guiding its coordination work at all levels. According to such 'shared coordination' model, UNESCO should not aim to be the only organization coordinating the SDG4-Education 2030 by itself. To the contrary, UNESCO should acknowledge and promote the contribution of each of its partners (e.g. Co-Conveners but not only) in the coordination of activities and processes geared towards the attainment of the SDG4-Education 2030 targets. This is likely to have four positive effects on UNESCO's ability to coordinate both at the global and regional levels.

214. First and foremost, UNESCO would maintain an overall guidance role and, therefore, a position of leadership and influence (rather than power), in the coordination of the Agenda 2030. In this vein, keeping in-house a section fully devoted to partnership and with the ability to monitor the progress of coordination over time would greatly help. Second, UNESCO would carry on a more synergetic dialogue on education and other related themes among a variety of actors with different perspectives and goals, in line with the cross-sectoral and holistic vision of the Sustainable Development Agenda. Third, UNESCO's efficiency would increase and the Organization would avoid the risk of spreading its resources too thinly, by sharing role and responsibilities (and funding)

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<sup>81</sup> The Education Sector might want to consider using the theory of change developed as part of this evaluation as the basis for such an exercise.

with other partners on a number of education initiatives. Fourth, UNESCO would narrow the gap that its partners perceive as existing between themselves and the Paris-based Organization.

215. In order for UNESCO to better coordinate and share coordination responsibilities with other partners, the Organization will need to clarify responsibilities in-house of who is doing what with respect to SDG4-Education 2030. In this vein, UNESCO should inform all partners of the recent structural changes made its Education Sector, as presented in the Ivory Note (DG 15/36 from December 21, 2015) and reconfirmed in the memo date January 4, 2016.

*Strategic Actions for Consideration:*

216. By clarifying the coordination objectives and the corresponding processes in specific areas, UNESCO should start implementing its 'shared coordination' vision by delegating some of its coordination roles and responsibilities to other partners. However, UNESCO should first understand how to best use its in-house resources (e.g. Category I and Category II Institutes, UNESCO Chairs, etc.). Once that is clear, UNESCO could delegate some of its traditional responsibilities to other development partners. This is likely to free up intellectual capital and resources to work on initiatives that aim at boosting its technical leadership and credibility both at the global and regional levels. This would include the production of technical position papers and the creation of knowledge products in specific subject areas (e.g. global citizenship and education for sustainable development which, despite their inclusion in SDG-4 Education 2030, have not been researched on, implemented and/or monitored adequately by other partners yet). This recommendation applies not only to UNESCO's in-house coordination with external partners but also to UNESCO's internal coordination (e.g. during the earlier phases of the EFA coordination, the EFA coordination team and the thematic education teams within the Education sector did not always work together on the coordination of flagship initiatives or on the agenda setting of the global coordination mechanisms, as they should have done). This would also entail the need for closer coordination with other UNESCO Programme sectors and the UNESCO's Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP)<sup>82</sup>.

217. Given the holistic vision that UNESCO has always promoted in its education work and the SDG4-Education 2030 universalistic ambitions, UNESCO should keep playing an overall guidance role of all existing coordination mechanisms vis-à-vis of all countries, regardless of their state of development. Therefore, rather than playing a direct role in all the existing coordination mechanisms. UNESCO should ensure that the partnerships being established reflect the diversity of the overall global education community. As a result, while UNESCO has tried in the past not to take individual positions on education-related topics which might compromise its neutral broker status and its standing vis-à-vis all its Member States, the Organization should strive further to stimulate the debate around contemporary education topics – controversial at they may be- and provide a firm and forward-looking direction that could assist countries and development partners to adequately deal with them.

**Recommendation 3:**

**UNESCO should strike a balance between UNESCO's global mandate and the need for a more focused and responsive coordination strategy at the regional and national level**

218. The design of UNESCO's education programme is inspired by the need to respond coherently and holistically to the education needs of many population groups and countries and regions around the world, as reflected by its global and regional coordination strategy. However, it is important for UNESCO to further prioritizing areas where to concentrate its coordination efforts.

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<sup>82</sup> The Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) plays an important role when it comes to enhancing the consistency of strategic planning among UNESCO's different programme sectors within the Organization, The success in implementing the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda will among other depend on the ability of the Education Sector to better liaise with all other Sectors and partners outside of the organization.

*Strategic Actions for Consideration:*

219. UNESCO should focus its coordination by creating new Flagship Initiatives and/or by strengthening the existing ones, also but not exclusively in those areas where very few partners are already intervening. In doing so, UNESCO will also need to take a truly global coordination approach and ensure that the interests and needs of the most developed countries, too, be taken into account.

220. Despite the implementation of a more effective 'shared coordination' strategy, it remains important for UNESCO to keep coordinating all relevant partners' work in those areas that, despite their relevance, have often been neglected by the international community, such as literacy and non-formal education among youth and adults; as well as capacity-building for education planning, management and monitoring.

221. The UNESCO Education Sector should make an effort to explore strategic ways to make sure that its global and regional coordination responds as much as possible to Member States' needs and interests in the future.

**Recommendation 4:  
Monitor the effectiveness of the SDG4-Education 2030 coordination structures as well as the quality of the corresponding processes on a regular basis.**

*Strategic Actions for Consideration :*

222. The Education sector should map the global education coordination landscape, especially within the scope of the flagships initiatives that it either leads (e.g. the special partnership on education and disability) or supports (e.g. such as the UNICEF-led UNGEI). For that to happen, it is important, that UNESCO advocate to other partners for undertaking similar mapping exercises, too. In this vein, the provision of a mapping tool and guidelines will be especially useful as well the inclusion of such mapping in the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee Work Plan. This will allow identifying common objectives and entail a clearer division and sharing of coordination tasks in the future. Such exercise could also become in and of itself an opportunity for all actors with a vested interest in Education both within and outside UNESCO to engage with each other in exchanges on the operationalization of the SDG4- Education 20939 Agenda

223. It is of utmost importance for UNESCO to commission periodic reviews that focus on assessing not only the coordination landscape (e.g. who are the most relevant actors to coordinate, what are their needs and interests and their respective added values as well as how they relate to each other) but also the role that UNESCO could play in order to better fulfil its coordination mandate. In this vein, UNESCO might want to disseminate regular notes on the progress in coordination among its partners (more frequently during an initial period and e.g. quarterly or every since six months). Such notes, which would assess the degree to which all partners are coordinating with each other to comply with the SDG4-Education 2030 Roadmap, would allow UNESCO not to lose the momentum and it is likely to instil a stronger sense of engagement among partners. Similarly, all ED sector sections could start reporting on a coordination-related qualitative indicator into SISTER (UNESCO's System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results).

224. UNESCO should strike a balance between data rigor and inclusion that is, between the need for international comparable statistical data in education (as reflected in UIS work) and the aspiration by a large variety of regional and national actors to gain more ownership over education data collection, analysis and dissemination processes.

225. In order to better guide other development partners' and countries' work in education, UNESCO might want to strengthen its capacity, especially at the regional level. That is especially relevant as regions will need to increase their capacity to track progress against those SDG4-Education 2030 targets (e.g. related to early childhood development, quality and lifelong learning,

quality, global citizenship, education for sustainable development) for which little or no in-country data exists as of today<sup>83</sup>. One possibility to better coordinate the monitoring of SDG4-Education 2030 in the future would be the creation of a technical committee (e.g. chaired by UIS and made up of National Statistical offices representatives) and the development of a SDG4-Education 2030 monitoring framework in each one of UNESCO's regions.

226. UIS might also want to make an effort to develop stronger linkages with a selected number of universities and research centres in each of the UNESCO regions so as to promote better synergy and cross-pollination between the collection and interpretation of data at all levels: global, regional and national. This would be all the more useful as there is a great demand for more solid evidence on what works and what does not at the national and regional level which could inform national policies and contribute to "localizing" the education discourse promoted by the GMR (Schweisfurth, 2010)<sup>84</sup>. The use of data from such broader variety of actors might also allow making up for the gap in knowledge on educational programs not captured by national statistics (e.g. the number and quality of non-public community-level Early Childhood Development services in Cambodia). This could also contribute to better-targeted statistical capacity development, especially in light of two upcoming UIS initiatives (the Interagency Group on Disaggregated Indicators and the Observatory on Education Equity).

**Recommendation 5:  
Ensure stronger coherence of In-house coordination in the future**

*Strategic Actions for Consideration :*

227. As part of its Education coordination strategy, the UNESCO Education Sector should develop a 'One UNESCO' coordination communication strategy and all UNESCO staff should be trained to be able to integrate it effectively in their day-to-day work. This would prevent different UNESCO-related entities in one country from adopting different coordination strategies and disseminating discordant messages related to the same education issue. This would also entail for UNESCO staff to learn how to deal with journalists and how to use visuals in public to promote the Organization's mission. While the development of an SDG4-Education 2030 communication strategy would greatly benefit from the involvement of in-house communication specialists, it is important that all education specialists get to contribute to the development of the new strategy's key messages.

228. A periodic information-exchange mechanism within the Education Sector should be put in place whereby each Division's Director could compile a list of on-going activities within their Section in support of the implementation of SDG4-Education and collaboration/cooperation with partners in these areas and then share it (e.g. on a quarterly basis) by e-mail (via the Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination) to all the Education Sector Staff. Besides enhancing greater transparency and mutual accountability within the Organization, such practice would allow staff in different sections to identify possibly synergies for collaboration within the scope of in-house existing coordination efforts.

229. As part of its new branding (or re-branding) strategy at the global, regional and national levels, UNESCO should ensure that any document discussing the operationalization of the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action (e.g. speech, meeting documents) explicitly acknowledges the need for more coherence across coordination mechanisms in education at the global, regional and national level. In order for that to happen and as a way to provide an incentive for all co-conveners and other Steering Committee members to disseminate consistent messages and

<sup>83</sup> This is the case, for instance, of the SDG Target 4.7: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (UNDESA, 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Schweisfurth, M. (2010). "Global Monitoring Reports: Reflections on Real Potential and Realpolitik". Norag news 43.

information on education developed at the global level, UNESCO might want to consider the adoption of a Chart of ‘Good principles for effective coordination’ and a periodic referral to it in all the UNESCO Secretariat’s communication and publications. Likewise, it would be critical that all the UNESCO Specialized Institutes engaging with partners at the national and regional levels make their link with Education Sector at HQ more explicit so as to avoid the perception that they represent a separate organization.

230. UNESCO should strengthen further the links between its regional coordination mechanisms and the other regional bodies, such as economic communities in which national policy-makers are actively participating. This is likely to address the perceived disconnect between the global and regional coordination and the national implementation of the EFA Agenda. In doing so, UNESCO should also make a specific effort to engage its Africa-based staff in this endeavour consistent with the Organization’s Priority Africa Strategy. In particular, UNESCO might want to explore the opportunity for revitalizing the coordination role of the former Regional Education Bureau in Dakar across the whole continent, based on the provisions included in the 2014 Ivory Note on UNESCO Reformed Field Network in Africa<sup>85</sup>. However, before doing that, UNESCO should assess to what extent its Dakar-based education staff (downsized from 13 to 8 since 2011)<sup>86</sup> could still play such a coordination role at the continental level.

231. UNESCO should define a clear accountability framework for senior management, based on the observation that the management function has proven to be a crucial variable in the overall success of a coordination mechanism, especially at the regional and national level. The need for better accountability is all the greater as staff turnover and the inexistence of performance targets for coordination for Division’s Directors often proved to hinder the success and reputation of UNESCO’s coordination work.

232. UNESCO might want to liaise closely with the Pan-African Coalition for Education (possibly through the organization of a Third ‘Joint-Commission AU-UNESCO meeting’). This effort should especially focus on those areas highlighted in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025) for which UNESCO played an advisory role in the past: the harmonization of quality assurance mechanisms for education, TVET, and Global management and monitoring for Education

233. UNESCO should develop a cohesive coordination strategy at the national level, too. Although carrying out coordination responsibilities at national level is often neither feasible nor cost-effective, UNESCO country offices should make sure not only to maintain a certain visibility within the existing in-country coordination mechanisms but also to actively promote the holistic vision of the SDG 4 – Education 2030 Agenda among those who participate in such fora<sup>87</sup>. In this vein, the UNESCO Education Sector should provide clearer guidance to both regional and field offices on what their respective coordination role should be. However, for that to happen, it would be beneficial for UNESCO to first engage with regional and field offices in the participatory development of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda coordination strategy (see Recommendation 1).

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<sup>85</sup> In discussing the newly established multisectoral regional offices, the Ivory Note (paragraph 15) suggests that former regional bureaux could still play a relevant role in a number of areas in the future: “An adjusted decentralization framework will apply for the Education Sector, which has advanced most in its decentralization efforts. While consistent with the broader criteria and constraints of accountability within the Secretariat as well as the main tenets and concepts of the new decentralization strategy, this adjusted framework seeks to make optimal use of the considerable asset constituted by the former regional education bureaux, by delegating to them certain types of authority vested in the ADG, namely a lead supervisory function on behalf of ADG/ED in regional planning, budgeting, management and reporting”. (DG/note/14/2; 3 January 2014, Paragraph 15, p. 5-6)

<sup>86</sup> Data on Staffing in the UNESCO’s regional multisectoral offices. Audit Synthesis Report on the Reform of the UNESCO Field Network (199 EX/18 INF.5; Annex II).

<sup>87</sup> This recommendation is also aligned with the Report of the global thematic consultation on education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which recognized “the need for global frameworks that are responsive to and reflect regional and national priorities and contexts. A future global framework must achieve a fine balance between international commitments and national priorities, allowing countries to determine specific targets. This is likely to result in greater national ownership of the post-2015 education agenda” (UNESCO-UNICEF, 2013; p.12).

**Recommendation 6:  
Strengthen the Steering Committee's coordination role**

*Strategic Actions for Consideration:*

234. The role of the Steering Committee (SC), which has undergone a series of organizational changes since 2000, should be enhanced so as to become a coordination structure with a real decisional power<sup>88</sup> likely to influence both the vision and funding of the Agenda 2030. Well aware of the specific tasks and responsibilities assigned to SC by the SDG-4 Education 2030 Framework for Action, the SC might want to consider concentrating its efforts in three main areas during its first few years of activity: (i) Global Consensus-Building around the Agenda 2030 holistic vision; (ii) Evidence-based High-level Advocacy<sup>89</sup> on global priority issues in education among Member States<sup>90</sup> as well as other SC members' decentralized staff and partners (both at the regional and national levels); and (iii) Agenda-setting in global education.

235. It will be important for UNESCO to clarify the tasks and responsibilities of the SC and any other future coordination entity. Defining its membership is key but, in the absence of a clear description of what the Steering Committee is expected to achieve, it remains difficult to justify who from the Agenda 's direct stakeholders as well as the general public should be represented.

236. Consistent with the principles of results-based management (RBM) and development effectiveness, the SC should have a clearly defined strategy (e. g, a biannual Work Plan) and a tool that would allow measuring the SC progress over time (results monitoring framework). Besides making sure that the SC achievements are in line with the envisaged results, it will also be appropriate, to provide for the monitoring of the SC coordination quality (degree of conformity between SC internal practices and the 'good principles of effective coordination).

**Recommendation 7:  
Advocate to ensure that the allocation of funding of education in Member State be aligned as much as possible with all the SDG4-Agenda 2030 targets over the next fifteen years.**

*Strategic Actions for Consideration:*

237. In order to enhance coordination between the holistic vision heralded by the SDG4 - Education 2030 Agenda and the funding made available to implement the related programs and activities over the next fifteen years, UNESCO should advocate to all Member States that the allocation of funding for education over the next fifteen years be aligned as much as possible with all the SDG4 Education 2030 targets<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>88</sup> According to the analysis of autonomy of all UNESCO governing bodies, EFA had the least autonomous governing body out of all of them (2010 UNESCO Independent Evaluation Annex 5 in 185 Ex.18 Add. p.11)

<sup>89</sup> Such advocacy would not simply call for more aid to education but it would rather focus on the promotion of better aid for education, that is, for a more effective allocation and timely use of resources aimed at the improvement of quality and inclusion in the education sector of all countries.

<sup>90</sup> It is worth remembering that, despite the average increase in public spending for education between 2000 and 2015 (due to an average increase in tax revenue collection from 14% to 16% of the national GDP), the share of revenues going to education has actually declined during this period: only 15 per cent of the lowest income countries and 40 percent of lower and middle income are actually allocating at least 5.5 percent of their GDP to education programs, as requested by the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action (Stiebber & Smith, 2015, p.4).

<sup>91</sup> Such platform would build upon past and current international efforts made to streamline funding for international education (GPE, International Commission on Financing of Global Education Opportunities, the new World Bank Results in Education for All Children Trust Fund, a possible new special fund for education in emergencies and protracted crisis) and would enhance that funding allocation be aligned with the strategies and vision of the Agenda 2030 heralded by the SC.

238. This will also entail for the Organization the need to better position itself in front of the Member States Ministers of Finance and Education as well as those other international development partners who are likely to influence the allocation of resources for education in the future<sup>92</sup>.

239. For UNESCO to advocate for a more coherent mobilization of resources for education is all the more critical for a Member States organization like UNESCO for two reasons First, governments' spending in education is expected to increase: the Incheon Declaration (para.14) urges that countries allocate efficiently at least 4-6% of their GNP to education, in line with international and regional benchmarks). Second, donors are expected to increase their support to the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance)<sup>93</sup>. In this vein, the integration of financial planning for the education sector in the planning exercises conducted by UNESCO (e.g. IIEP) as part of its technical assistance and county support program will be particularly relevant.

240. In particular, UNESCO should coordinate closely with the Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunities as well as the Global Partnership for Education (EFA-FTI) that evolved from being a funding mechanism to functioning an entity, which also serves as a technical advisor.

**Recommendation 8: Strengthen UNESCO's coordination activities and processes geared towards the generation and dissemination of knowledge on good practices in education at the global and regional levels.**

241. In addition to its role as a convener and acting as the executive secretary<sup>94</sup>, UNESCO has the unique responsibility to co-lead the SDG4 –Education 2030 Agenda , in collaboration with other partners. That will involve the strengthening of the Agency's function to generate and disseminate knowledge on education around the world.

*Strategic actions for consideration:*

242. UNESCO should work on a re-branding strategy. Such strategy, aiming at highlighting the in-house technical expertise (information on the products and services of Specialized Institutes will need to more widely disseminated), will also need to build on the production of high-quality publications with far greater relevance than today to both technical specialists and policy-makers.

243. UNESCO should become more selective in producing publications and make sure that the existing ones are more integrated with each other (e.g. through the creation of coordinated series). Such publication also should focus on comparative and synthetic analyses of existing research with the explicit aim of influencing policy. Likewise, the Education Sector should ensure a constant visibility in the academic debate or technical international fora through the presentation of cutting-edge research and the publication of a limited number of journal articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals

244. Building upon the wealth of knowledge among the different partners of EFA Steering Committee, it would be advisable for UNESCO to scope the level of interest among the different partners in producing joint publications on specific topics of interest identified in the course of the Steering Committee Meeting discussion. The overall guidance of this work (maybe consisting in a quarterly publication co-funded by UNESCO and the other partners with a common research interest) might re-award 'thought leadership' and credibility to UNESCO. Another option could be to closely collaborate with representatives of a different Steering Committee co-convener on a rotational basis in order to strategize on the production and dissemination of shorter briefs on

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<sup>93</sup> Agenda 2030 Framework for Action.

<sup>94</sup> Some critics acknowledged that one of the faulty assumptions underlying the EFA coordination mechanisms was that the UN approach of a big set-piece conference would change the world, based also on the other faulty assumption that all five EFA convening agencies would collaborate effectively under UNESCO leadership (Faul & Packer, 2014, p.12).

education-related topics in which the respective co-convening agency has specialised expertise. The secondment of other co-conveners' staff to UNESCO's Education Sector could also be a viable strategy to consider. In doing so, UNESCO should make specific efforts to emphasize that education is not only a prerogative of the education community but that it is a cross-cutting theme in a variety of other sectors (e.g. the quality of skills development program for health officers or the principles of inclusiveness and equity in non-formal education programs catering to farmers).

245. UNESCO should be able to coordinate with its co-partners in regard to their intellectual work. That does not mean that UNESCO will become a clearinghouse of everybody else's publications but rather a virtual repository of all this education-related knowledge being created globally. While a comprehensive mapping of the key knowledge generators in education might be needed<sup>95</sup>, a specific UNESCO web page providing an overview of all such literature (including links pointing to organizations and researchers whose work is contributing to the development of the current education discourse) could be a starting point. In addition, while in-house coordination on publications has significantly improved, further efforts could be made to gather resources to produce a reasonable number of influential publications, based on the needs assessments and trend analysis.

246. Effective coordination in this area would also require UNESCO to maximize the use of social media. Such media include those new virtual platforms and tools (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, webinars) which an increasing number of government officials as well as development partners look at in order to learn more about specific issues and discuss them with other peers. All UNESCO staff in the Education sector should become familiar with how to make the best use of such media, by also ensuring that their individual contributions are aligned with their respective section's and division's communication and coordination strategy.

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<sup>95</sup> Some of these actors include the multiyear RISE program, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) program.



## **ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **EVALUATION OF THE UNESCO EFA (Education for All) GLOBAL and REGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS**

#### **BACKGROUND**

After fifteen years since the launch of the Framework for Action adopted by the World Education Forum in Dakar, many of the global education targets and goals agreed upon by the international community at the beginning of the Millennium, still remain unattained. Remarkable progress has certainly been made in a number of areas falling under what is usually referred to as the Education for All (EFA) agenda: the 50 million additional children enrolled in primary school between 2000 and 2010 are a good illustration of that. Likewise, the fact that EFA has maintained a certain profile and visibility within the global education agenda, despite the proliferation of competing international education initiatives over the last fifteen years, clearly attests to the considerable efforts made by UNESCO, the UN Agency mandated to lead and coordinate the overall EFA endeavours at the global, regional and national levels.

However, UNESCO's tasks to ensure a common EFA vision among international donors, regional organizations and national actors, and to coordinate national government's efforts to implement the Dakar Framework of Action, have proved quite challenging, due to some unprecedented trends emerging in the aftermath of the Dakar conference. On the one hand, the increasing fragmentation of the educational strategies and objectives pursued by international donors (e.g., the coexistence of distinct EFA and Millennium Development Goals). On the other hand, the set-up of parallel funding mechanisms for education (e.g., the Fast Track Initiative and Direct Budget Support Programs for Education). The repercussions of such evolving international scenario on the achievement of the EFA goals have been inevitably taxing and, in order to make up for what is nowadays referred to as the EFA "unfinished business", a variety of international organizations, government agencies, civil society and private sector representatives, are making a collective effort today to formulate a more inclusive international Education Framework of Action as part of the Post -2015 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda.

This is not the first time that the international community is confronted with the pressing charge to review and innovate the global education agenda (the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar itself aimed to revamp the strategies and principles adopted with the Jomtien Declaration in 1990). However, the number of actors involved in the formulation of the future education agenda this time is larger than before. The increasing number of stakeholders with a vested interest in education at the global level is definitely welcome as it is expected to enhance the inclusiveness of the ongoing discussions on the Post-2015 agenda. However, at a time of fervent mobilization and in response to the possible lack of clarity or ambiguity over the role and responsibility that each of the interested agencies and organizations should claim in the future, the need for innovative and effective global, regional and national coordinating mechanisms within the education community becomes apparent. What is needed, too, is a responsible and visionary leadership, capable of ensuring coherence of intent and action among such a variety of stakeholders at all levels. Aware of the need for adapting the existing global education architecture to the continuously evolving scenario, the UNESCO Education Sector is calling for an evaluation of the EFA coordination and leadership mechanisms put in place under the aegis of UNESCO at the global and regional levels since 2000.

#### **EVALUATION PURPOSE**

In response to the UNESCO Education Sector's request for evidence-based guidance on how to best define the Organization's leading and coordinating roles of the Post-2015 Global Education Agenda, this evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of the UNESCO Education for All (EFA) global and regional coordination mechanisms implemented since the launch of the Dakar Framework of Action at the World Education Forum in 2000. To the extent possible, the evaluation will also assess how the EFA global and regional coordination mechanisms have been translated into national-level EFA institutional arrangements.

## EVALUATION SCOPE

This evaluation will gauge the coherence, effectiveness and relevance of the processes put in place by UNESCO and its partners to coordinate and lead the EFA Agenda, mainly at the global and regional levels since 2000. The evaluation will unpack the two constructs of coordination and leadership and will decline them across four main EFA-related areas of interest: (i) Advocacy; (ii) Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination; (iii) Resource Mobilization; and (iv) Monitoring EFA progress. By looking at the EFA coordination and leadership mechanisms across these various domains, the evaluation will attempt to clarify what worked, and what did not, at three different levels:

- **Global:** this is the level where UNESCO has traditionally been mandated to coordinate - and lead according to the current draft of the Post-2015 Framework for Action Education- the global education agenda, first through the High-Level Forum and the Working Group and, more recently, through the EFA Steering Committee and the Global EFA Meeting;
- **Regional:** this is the level where UNESCO regional bureaus have been tasked with providing some comprehensive guidance on how to spell out the global EFA vision in a way that is adequate to the educational interest and needs of the different regions; this is also the level where UNESCO has recently developed a series of new innovative partnerships with regional coordination mechanisms (e.g. ArabEFA in the Arab States region and PRELAC in the Latin America and the Caribbean region) as well as regional bodies – such as the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) or the African Union (AU) in the African region, as well as networks, development banks, and other international agencies within the scope of UN regional coordinating mechanisms (e.g., UNDAF);
- **National:** this is where the Dakar Framework of Action indicates that the “heart of EFA activity lies” and where it is critical to ensure a stable connection between the national EFA fora and the global and regional EFA coordination bodies and processes in order to translate and implement the EFA agenda into national policies. Areas of investigation at this level will include coordination mechanisms to enhance capacity development and promote policy advice on EFA-related matters.

For a more exhaustive presentation of the coordination activities and processes that will be assessed by this evaluation, please see the first column in Table I. This assessment will be supported by a number of in-depth context specific case studies that are allocated across the different implementation levels and across the different regions (see Table I):

Table I. Proposed list of case studies (by coordinating mechanism type, level of Implementation and region)

UNESCO REGION	Global (G)	Africa (AF)	Arab States (AR)	Asia and the Pacific (PAC)	Europe and North America (ENA)	Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)
<b>COORDINATION MECHANISM TYPE AND LEVEL</b>						
<b>1. Global Coordination Mechanism</b>						
<b>1.a</b> EFA Steering Committee (formerly International Advisory Panel)	✓					
<b>1.b</b> Annual Global EFA Meetings (formerly EFA High-Level Group and EFA Working Group)	✓					
<b>1.c</b> Coordination of E-9 work along with E-9 Secretariat to promote dialogue and exchange of information among educational leaders and stakeholders within the scope of South-South cooperation	✓					
<b>1.d</b> Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) aimed to foster reflection, dialogue and joint action between UNESCO and NGOs through during the	✓					

formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development						
<b>1.e</b> Thematic Partnerships* around EFA objectives established among a variety of relevant actors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Global Task Force on Child Labour and EFA,</li> <li>• the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies,</li> <li>• the Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education,</li> <li>• the UN Girls' Education Initiative,</li> <li>• the HIV &amp; AIDS and Education Partnership</li> </ul>	✓					
<b>1.f</b> High-level Advocacy to keep education on the top of policy agendas (e.g., G8)	✓					
<b>1.g</b> Coordination of data collection for planning and monitoring of EFA strategies on a regular basis (this includes the periodic identification of EFA progress and challenges through the annual EFA Global Monitoring Report and Global Report Syntheses conducted every 5 years)	✓					
<b>2. Regional Coordination Mechanism</b>						
<b>2.a</b> Facilitating knowledge-sharing between countries about successful education practices, policies and relevant EFA documentation (e.g., through meetings, databases and websites)				✓	✓	✓
<b>2.b</b> Establishment of Strategic Partnerships with regional development banks, economic unions and other continental regional bodies to promote EFA strategies and goals		???	✓	✓		
<b>2.c</b> Coordination of mid-term and final reviews of EFA progress and processes associated with them in each one of UNESCO's 5 regions			✓			
<b>2.d</b> Strategic Partnerships on EFA-related matters within existing donors mechanisms (both UN and non UN)		✓	✓	✓		
<b>2.e</b> Coordination of mid-term and final reviews of EFA progress conducted at the national level		✓	✓	✓		
<b>3. National Coordination Mechanism</b>						
<b>The extent to which Global and Regional coordinating mechanisms translated into effective EFA-related policies and processes will be assessed through the national level case studies assessing the dynamics associated with the following activities</b>						
<b>3.a</b> Coordination of National EFA Forums with the regional EFA Forum, a local donor coordinating group, a government donor coordination unit and a UN Country Team.		✓		✓		
<b>3.b</b> Conduct of advocacy on EFA-related topics with relevant national actors					✓	✓
<b>3.c</b> Provision of Education Policy Advice, Technical Assistance and capacity development for education planning and management (e.g., development of EFA Action Plans and development of EFA acceleration frameworks) to relevant in-country stakeholders		✓	✓			
<b>3.d.</b> Strategic Partnerships on EFA-related matters within existing donors mechanisms (both UN and non UN)		✓	✓	✓		
<b>3.e</b> IUS Data collection of EFA monitoring data, IIEP Knowledge sharing on EFA monitoring good practices, Set-up of Education Management Information System (EMIS)			✓	✓		

For each of the three levels, the evaluation will map EFA-related interactions between UNESCO and a variety of key stakeholders, such as the other EFA Convening Agencies and the National Ministries of Education in UNESCO Member States, in a certain number of purposefully selected

countries and regions (see the selected boxes in the Table above). Although the EFA Agenda started in 1990, the plethora of EFA-related assessments and evaluation already conducted for the 1990-2000 timeframe would make a wider scope of the evaluation redundant. That said, in order for the evaluation to highlight the similarities and differences between EFA coordinating and leadership mechanisms before and after the launch of the Dakar Framework for Action, a summary of the findings yielded by the earlier EFA evaluations and assessments (that is, those that were conducted before 2000) will be added to the final evaluation report.

## QUESTIONS

The evaluation will address a variety of questions grouped according to 3 major evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence and effectiveness. Below is a preliminary list of questions (questions will be refined once the theory of change has been developed and the Reference Group members have provided their feedback). A large number of the following questions will be addressed by a dozen case studies: the codes showing under each one of the evaluation questions will indicate which specific EFA coordination mechanism activity/process the question refers to (for an exhaustive list of EFA coordination mechanisms activities and processes, see Table 1) and in which of the UNESCO regions the corresponding case study will be conducted. Example: Question 5.11 (2a PAC, ENA & LAC) means that the question 5.1.1. refers to the Coordination Mechanism activity 2.a (Knowledge-sharing between countries about successful education practices, policies and relevant EFA documentation) and that the three UNESCO regions where the corresponding case studies will be developed are the Pacific, Europe/North America and the Latin America & the Caribbean.

### *. RELEVANCE*

- To what extent has UNESCO's coordination of other EFA convening partners at the global and regional levels remained relevant over time in maintaining the collective commitment in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action? (1.a G; 1b G; 2a PAC, ENA & LAC; 2.b AF & PAC; 2.c AR)
- To what extent has UNESCO's coordination of Thematic Partnerships around EFA objectives with actors other than the EFA convening partners at the global and regional levels been adequate over time in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action? (1.e G; 2.b AF & PAC)
- To what extent have the UNESCO's coordination modalities of the E-9 work and the Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) remained pertinent over time in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action? (1.c G; 1.d G)
- To what extent has the hypothesis held true over time that UNESCO's global and regional efforts would translate in the development of more effective educational strategies, policies and goals put in place at the national level to attain the six EFA goals? (3.a AF & PAC; 3.b ENA & LAC; 3.c AF & AR)

### *COHERENCE*

- To what extent has UNESCO been able to carry out its mandated EFA coordination tasks and responsibilities (in the four areas of advocacy, knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization and monitoring) according to what was agreed upon in the Dakar Framework of Action in 2000? (Document Review + findings from the comparative review of all case studies)
- In case UNESCO's EFA coordination tasks and responsibilities changed over time, did UNESCO role remain predictable to all other EFA partners at all times? (findings will emerge from the comparative review of all case studies)
- To what extent has UNESCO been able to harmonize the EFA agenda within the scope of activities and strategies implemented through UN inter-agency coordinating mechanisms

(e.g., within the scope of UNDAF and “Deliver as One” pilots) put in place at the regional and national levels? 2d. AF, AR & PAC; 3d AF, AR & PAC)

- To what extent has UNESCO been able to harmonize the EFA agenda with the activities and strategies implemented by other non-UN organizations at the regional level (African Development Bank, ADB, IDB, ECOWAS)? (2b AF & PAC)
- To what extent have the human, technical and financial resources made available to UNESCO for carrying out its EFA coordination mandate at the global, regional and national levels been commensurate with the scope of the corresponding tasks and activities? (Program Document review as well as finding from the comparative review of all case studies)
- To what extent has UNESCO been able to mainstream the EFA agenda within its broader organizational programming (within and outside of the Education sector) at HQ, regional and country offices? (2a PAC, ENA & LAC; 2d AF, AR & PAC; 3 D AF, AR & PAC)

## *EFFECTIVENESS*

### Effectiveness of Coordination Mechanisms

- To what extent has UNESCO EFA coordination contributed to the strengthening of global, regional and national partnerships in the four domain (advocacy, knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization and monitoring) spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action? (1.a G; 1b G; 1g G; 2a PAC, ENA & LAC; 2.b AF & PAC; 2.c AR; 2.e AF, AR, & PAC; 3.e AF, AR, & PAC)
- How well has UNESCO coordinated EFA Thematic Partnerships around EFA objectives with actors other than the EFA convening partners at the global and regional levels? (1.e G; 2.b AF & PAC)
- How well has UNESCO coordinated the E-9 work and the Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action? (1.c G; 1.d G)
- What are the main lessons learned regarding UNESCO's ability to use its coordination role as a way to increase EFA advocacy, knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization and monitoring at the global and regional levels? (1.a through 1.e G; 2.b AF & PAC; 2.d AF, AR & PAC; 2e AF, AR & PAC)
- What are the factors that either enhanced or hampered UNESCO's capacity to coordinate the EFA agenda at the global, regional and national levels? (the response will be based on the findings emerging from the comparative review of all case studies)
- What are some of the most important unintended dynamics associated with the UNESCO EFA coordination - at the global, regional and national levels? (the response will be based on the findings emerging from the comparative review of all case studies)
- What are some innovative coordination tasks and responsibilities that UNESCO could take up in order to increase its leverage at the global, regional and national levels in response to the changing political, social and economic scenario?

### Effectiveness of EFA Leadership

- To what extent did UNESCO provide a vision for the EFA Agenda within the scope of global and regional and national partnerships in the four domain (advocacy, knowledge sharing and dissemination, resource mobilization and monitoring) spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action? (1.a G; 1b G; 2a PAC, ENA & LAC; 2.b AF & PAC; 2.c AR; 2.e AF, AR & PAC; 3.e AF, AR & PAC)
- To what extent did UNESCO provide a vision for the EFA Agenda within the scope of EFA Thematic Partnerships with actors other than the EFA convening partners at the global and regional levels? (1.e G; 2.b AF & PAC)

- To what extent did UNESCO provide a vision for the EFA Agenda within the scope the E-9 work and the Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA) in order to accelerate progress towards the six EFA goals spelled out in the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action? (1.c G; 1.d G)
- What are the factors that either enhanced or hampered UNESCO's capacity to lead the EFA agenda at the global, regional and national levels? (the response will be based on the findings emerging from the comparative review of all case studies)
- What are some of the most important unintended dynamics associated with the UNESCO EFA leadership both at the global, regional and national and levels? (the response will be based on the findings emerging from the comparative review of all case studies)
- What are some innovative leadership tasks and responsibilities that UNESCO could take up in order to increase its leverage both at the global, regional and national levels in response to the changing national education priorities and the evolving international aid architecture for education? (the response will be based on the findings emerging from the comparative review of all case studies).

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The proposed evaluation will be a case-study design evaluation, combining the use of several quantitative and qualitative methods (mixed methods) at multiple levels. The evaluation methodology consists of five main phases:

### Hypothesis Development (first phase):

- Document Review (in-depth analysis of all prior EFA assessments and evaluations since 1990 as well in depth review of specialized literature on management and coordination of global, regional and national collaborative partnerships) and semi-structured interviews with EFA stakeholders within and outside of HQ. Such qualitative findings will contribute the following step (QUALITATIVE);
- Reconstruction of the UNESCO EFA Coordination and Leadership theory of change (that is, the visual representation of the logic – drivers and processes- underlying the UNESCO EFA coordination and leadership activities, mechanisms and processes) with the aim of making the assumptions around UNESCO EFA coordination and leadership roles more explicit and clarifying more in depth how it has envisaged to attain its objectives, this will inform the following step (QUANTITATIVE);

### Data Collection (Survey and online Focus Groups) (second phase):

- Online survey among UNESCO HQ, regional and national offices' staff, other EFA convening agencies as well as international organizations civil society and private sector organizations with a vested interest in the EFA agenda) (QUANTITATIVE);
- Focus groups (both in person and online) among the members of both the Evaluation Advisory Group and the Continued and Collective Dialogue Evaluation Group (for more details on the group, see section 7). Such focus groups will facilitate a timely reflection on the survey findings (QUALITATIVE)

### Data Collection (Field) (third phase):

As part of the case study design featured by the proposed evaluation, an in-depth analysis of EFA coordinating and leadership mechanisms will be conducted at the global, regional levels and to the best possible extent at the national level;

- Global Level Case Studies: semi-structured interviews will be conducted with current and former staff from the EFA convening agencies, as well as with UNESCO Member States representatives and other key stakeholder organizations who have been interacting with UNESCO on EFA-related matters during the 2000-2015 timeframe. A number of semi-structured interviews as well as direct observations will also take place during a number of upcoming EFA-related events, such as, the EFA Steering Committee meeting in Paris (mid-

April 2015) and the World Education Forum in South Korea (19-22 May 2015); Analysis of Outcome documents (HLG and WG) and follow-up actions over time; Analysis of meetings reports/agendas to assess the evolution of the profile and level of participation in these meetings, topics discussed and decisions made

- Regional and National Level Case studies: a dozen case studies of specific EFA coordination and leadership mechanisms will be conducted by a senior evaluation specialist across all five UNESCO regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Europe)<sup>96\*</sup>. The development of the case studies by the same consultant will enhance consistency in both the data collection and qualitative data analysis; likewise, the periodic progress reports and sharing of preliminary findings with the Reference Group and IOS will ensure quality assurance and oversight throughout the evaluation process. To this end, a senior education specialist with in-depth knowledge of EFA might be recruited to provide further technical oversight on the draft evaluation report. Furthermore, the greatest effort will be made to maximize the available resources and combine more case studies (e.g., covering the regional and national coordination mechanisms in the same country) in the same country. To gain a better understanding of what questions will be addressed by each of the proposed case study, please see Table 1 as well as the codes showing under each one of the evaluation questions. Comparative analysis of strategic and programme documents of UNESCO and the other EFA convening agencies since 2000,
- Semi-structured interviews among global and in-country education experts and practitioners as well as follow-up among a selected number of survey respondents (QUALITATIVE);

#### Data analysis (fourth phase)

The analysis of the qualitative data (e.g., identification of recurrent patterns among responses to open-ended questions and identification of lessons learned based on the comparison of multiple studies) will be conducted through the use of an advanced qualitative data analysis software package.

#### Dissemination (fifth phase)

Consistent with UNESCO's mandate to play a coordination and leadership role in a variety of areas, the findings of this evaluation are likely to be of interest not only to the UNESCO Education Sector but to the whole Organization (namely, senior management, BSP and other programme sectors). Likewise, the lessons learned and good practices identified by this evaluation in the areas of coordination and leadership are likely to be applicable to a variety of organizations and agencies involved in international partnerships and collaboration initiatives. With that in mind, both the evaluation findings and methodology will be disseminated and discussed within and outside the Organization through a series of learning events (both on site and virtual) before and after finalization of the evaluation report. The sharing of experiences and critical reflections on UNESCO's EFA coordinating and leadership roles (possibly not only at the end of but throughout the evaluation process) is all the more critical as it is likely to enhance UNESCO's internal capacity to manage and evaluate partnerships at the global and regional levels during the Post-2015 and will increase the level of acceptance and implementation of the evaluation findings and recommendations within and outside UNESCO.

## EVALUATION TEAM AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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<sup>96</sup> The Asia and Pacific UNESCO Regional Office is currently embarking on an evaluation of the Asia Pacific regional EFA coordination mechanism. The IOS evaluation will build upon and include the results of this exercise into the analysis in order to ensure complementarity. Likewise, the IOS will be providing technical backstopping to the Bangkok office to ensure harmonization of planning, data collection and analysis between the two upcoming evaluations.

The evaluation will be conducted by IOS with the support of a senior evaluation specialist who reports to the head of the IOS evaluation office; the specialist should have a thorough background and understanding of the evolving global education agenda, as well as senior expertise in conducting evaluations in a variety of international education-and policy related areas for several UN agencies and other international bodies, and field experience. Additional expertise/support will be brought in should this be required.

In order to enhance the evaluation oversight and quality assurance, an Evaluation Reference Group will be set up. The group will include members from IOS, the UNESCO Education Sector, the UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning and one or two external senior education specialists. In addition, a larger group of EFA stakeholders<sup>97</sup> (including representatives of EFA Convening Agencies and other senior specialists in education partnerships from all UNESCO five regions) will contribute to the discussion on the evaluation preliminary findings and the elaboration of possible scenarios for the future of UNESCO's coordination and leadership of the Global Education Agenda and of harnessing UNESCO's added value to the Post-2015 Agenda.

To this end, both groups will receive regular evaluation progress updates and, based on the topics for discussion, will contribute to (online) discussions moderated by the IOS evaluation consultant.

## DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

The indicative timeframe and deliverables for the evaluation are as follows.

Activities	Timing
Document review, preliminary meetings with key EFA stakeholders, Development of evaluation ToR	February 2015
Development of an Evaluation Communication Strategy; Set-up of an Evaluation Reference Group and CCDE; Participatory Development of a Theory of Change; Finalization of the evaluation scope and questions based on feedback provided by the Reference Group.	March 2015
Finalization of the Evaluation strategy and development of data collection tools, Start of field data collection (global case studies)	April 2015
Inception report; conducting case studies in two regions (this would include direct observation at the World Education Forum in Incheon as well as two case studies in the Arab States Region and Latin America and the Caribbean Region)	May 2015
Field work: Conducting of case studies in one other region (Africa and Europe/North America) and Sharing of first round of preliminary findings with the Reference Group and the CCDE	June 2015
Start of data Analysis; Development of one/two additional case studies (based on emerging findings and state of online discussions); Sharing of second round of preliminary findings with the Reference Group and the CCDE	July-August 2015
Follow-up Analysis and Sharing of third round of preliminary findings (this will include a one-day feedback workshop)	September 2015
Submission and presentation of draft report + Revision of the draft report based on feedback	October 2015

<sup>97</sup> The group will be named the Continued and Collective Dialogue Evaluation Group or CCDEG.



Submission and presentation of final report Dissemination of findings (possibly within the scope of Evaluation Capacity Development events)	November-December 2015
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The Draft and Final evaluation report shall be written in English, and be of no more than 50 pages excluding annexes and should be structured as follows:

- Executive summary
- Programme description
- Evaluation purpose
- Evaluation methodology
- Findings
- Lessons learned
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Annexes (including interview list, data collection instruments, key documents consulted, Terms of Reference)

The annexes should provide an adequate level of documentation to sustain the findings and recommendations.

#### EVALUATION USE

UNESCO's senior management will use the results and lessons learned from this evaluation as a basis for further discussion and for seeking agreement with the other actors in the education arena on defining a future global education architecture for coordinating and leading the post-2015 Education agenda. As some of the discussions on UNESCO's future engagement on EFA-related issues are already underway, evaluation preliminary findings will be discussed with all the relevant stakeholders on a regular basis before the final report will be ready for dissemination. The timely availability of the emerging evaluation findings is expected to inform UNESCO's global and regional coordinating mechanisms strategy in time for the finalization of the Organization's Post-2015 Education agenda. In line with the utilization-focused of this evaluation, the draft report will also be presented for discussion to relevant stakeholders within UNESCO and their feedback will be duly incorporated into the final evaluation report. Furthermore, as the lessons learned and good practices identified by this evaluation in the areas of global and regional coordination and leadership are likely to be applicable to a variety of organizations and agencies involved in international partnerships and collaboration initiatives, the findings of this evaluation are also expected to be presented at one or two of the upcoming international education conferences.

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS (INTERVIEWS)

### UNESCO Staff - Headquarters

Name	Title	Division/ Office
<b>Qian Tang</b>	UNESCO Associate Director General	Education Sector (EO)
<b>Jordan Naidoo</b>	Director	Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination (ED/ESC)
<b>Svein Osttveit</b>	Director	Unit for Strategic Planning, Monitoring, Institute and Field Coordination (ED/EO/SPM)
<b>David Atchoarena</b>	Director	Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems (ED/PLS)
<b>Firmin Matoko</b>	Director	UNESCO Liaison Office to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and National Office for Ethiopia
<b>Sabine Detzel</b>	Programme Specialist	EFA and Global Agenda Coordination Team
<b>Margarete Sachs-Israel</b>	Programme Specialist	EFA and Global Partnership
<b>Francesc Pedro</b>	Chief of Section	Education Policy (ED/PLS/EDP)
<b>Sobhi Tawil</b>	Chief of Section	Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research (ED/ESC/PCR)
<b>Anne Muller</b>	Chief of Unit	Knowledge Management Services (ED/EO/KMS)
<b>Aaron Benavot</b>	Director	Global Education Monitoring Report Team (ED/GEM)
<b>Manos Antoninis</b>	Senior Policy Analyst	Global Education Monitoring Report Team (ED/GEM)
<b>Sergei Novikov</b>	Chief	Knowledge Sharing & Open Access Unit, Division of Knowledge Management & Information Systems
<b>Rossella Salvia</b>	Focal Point YPP and JPO Programme/Staffing, policy, Learning & Development Section	Bureau of Human Resources Management
<b>Sylvia Montoya</b>	Director	UNESCO Institute of Statistics

<b>Mary Yasunaga</b>	Programme Specialist/Education	Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems of the UNESCO Education Sector.
<b>Jean-Yves Le Saux</b>	Director	UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning/Paris
<b>Ranwa Safadi</b>	Senior Program Planning Officer	UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning/Paris
<b>Suzanne Grant-Lewis</b>	Director	IIEP/Paris
<b>Jaya Conhye-Soobrayen</b>	Programme Specialist Section for Programming, Monitoring and Coordination,	Executive Office Education Sector
<b>Albert Motivans</b>	Head of Education Indicators and Data Analysis Section	UIS/Montreal
<b>Alison Kennedy</b>	Programme Specialist	UIS/Montreal

#### UNESCO Staff - Field Offices

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Division/ Office</b>
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<b>Danny Padilla</b>	Chief of the Education for sustainable Development (ESD) Unit,	UNESCO Bangkok
<b>Satoko Yano</b>	Programme Specialist, Education Policy Reform (EPR) Unit	UNESCO Bangkok
<b>Ramya Vivekanandan,</b>	Programme Specialist, EPR Unit	UNESCO Bangkok

<b>Ushio Miura</b>	Programme Specialist, EPR Unit	UNESCO Bangkok
<b>Lina Benete</b>	Assistant Programme Specialist, EPR Unit	UNESCO Bangkok
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<b>Lay Cheng Tan</b>	Programme Officer, APEID Unit	UNESCO Bangkok
<b>Ushio Miura</b>	Programme Specialist, EPR Unit	UNESCO Bangkok
<b>Ichiro Miyazawa</b>	Programme Specialist (NFE and Literacy), APPEAL Unit	UNESCO Bangkok
<b>Bertrand Tchatchoua</b>	Regional Adviser/Chief, UIS Regional Office in Asia-Pacific/UIS-AIMS Unit,	UNESCO Bangkok
<b>Roshan Bajracharya</b>	Programme Specialist	UIS-AIMS Unit, UNESCO Bangkok
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	Programme Specialist for Education	UNESCO Beirut
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<b>Anne Lemaistre</b>	Director	UNESCO Cambodia
<b>Santosh Khatri</b>	Education Program Specialist	UNESCO Cambodia
<b>Nimol Soth</b>	Education Specialist	UNESCO Cambodia
<b>Teruo Jinnai</b>	Former Director	UNESCO Cambodia
<b>Someth Yinsieng</b>	Programme Coordinator (CapEFA)	UNESCO Cambodia
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<b>Lucía Verdugo</b>	National Professional Officer/Education	UNESCO Guatemala
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<b>Fernando Berrios Bustamante</b>	Chief of Education Section	UNESCO Peru
<b>Hassan Abdi Keynan</b>	Programme Specialist/Education	UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa/Kenya
<b>Saba Bokhari</b>	Programme Specialist/Education	UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa/Kenya
<b>Michela Pagano</b>	Consultant	UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa/Kenya
<b>Girma Alemayehu</b>	National Professional Officer for HIV/AIDS	UNESCO Liaison Office in Addis Ababa
<b>Samuel Asnake</b>	Girls Education Program	UNESCO Liaison Office in Addis Ababa
<b>Kassaw Ali</b>	CapEFA Coordinator	UNESCO Liaison Office in Addis Ababa

<b>Mohammed Jalid</b>	Head of Office	UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa/Kenya
<b>Yumiko Yokozeki</b>	Director	UNESCO Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa
<b>Zulmira Rodrigues</b>	Former EFA Coordinator for the Africa Region	Former UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Dakar
<b>Ann Therese Ndong Jatta</b>	Director	UNESCO/Dakar
<b>Akemi Yonemura</b>	Current EFA Coordinator	UNESCO/Dakar
<b>Lily Hailu Neyestani</b>	Programme Specialist	UNESCO/Dakar
<b>Valérie Djoze</b>	Programme Specialist	UNESCO/Dakar
<b>Lodovico Folin-Calabi</b>	Office Head	UNESCO/West Bank/Palestinian Territory
<b>Peter Hyll-Larsen,</b>	Programme Specialist	UNESCO/ West Bank/Palestinian Territory
<b>Aigul Kalafova</b>	Education Officer	UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

#### Permanent Delegations

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Division/ Office</b>
Lian Xue	Second Secretary	Permanent Delegation of the People's Republic of China to UNESCO
Sajid Baloch	Deputy Permanent Delegate	Permanent Delegation of Pakistan to UNESCO
Ronaldo Vieira	Second Secretary	Permanent Delegation of Brazil to UNESCO

#### International Experts and Partners

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Division/ Office</b>
<b>Josephine Bourne</b>	Associate Director/ Education	UNICEF/New York
<b>Morgan Strecker</b>	Education Specialist	UNICEF/New York
<b>Changu Mannathoko</b>	Senior Advisor	UNICEF/New York
<b>Sheldon Shaeffer</b>	Ex-Director	UNESCO Regional Office

<b>Jim Ackers</b>	Education Advisor	UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)
<b>Jrmila (Uma) Sarkar</b>	Regional Advisor for Education	UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office(EAPRO)
<b>Leotes Lugo Helin</b>	Education Specialist	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
<b>John C. Friend-Pereira</b>	Education Specialist	UNICEF/Cambodia
<b>Mitsue Uemura</b>	Education Specialist	UNICEF Eastern and Southern African Regional Office (Kenya)
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<b>Anjana Mangalagiri</b>	UNICEF Education Chief	UNICEF Bangladesh
<b>Mohammad Mohsin</b>	Education manager	UNICEF Bangladesh
<b>Patience W. Stephens</b>	Director/Special Advisor on Education	UNWomen/New York
<b>Claudia Costin</b>	Director Global Practice	World Bank/Washington DC
<b>Syed Rashed Al Zayed</b>	Senior Economist, Education Global Practice	World Bank/Bangladesh
<b>Abigail Cuales Lanceta</b>	Former Programme Officer (III)	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)
<b>Claude Heyberger</b>	Regional Delegate	ATD Fourth World
<b>Rudi van Dael</b>	Senior Social Sector Specialist	Asian Development Bank/Bangladesh
<b>Ebadur Rahman</b>	Senior Social Sector Officer/Education and Health	Asian Development Bank/Bangladesh
<b>James Jennings</b>	Senior Social Sector Specialist	Australian High Commission/Bangladesh
<b>Laura Savage</b>	Advisor	Australian High Commission/Bangladesh
<b>Dina Cressati</b>	Regional Educational Advisor	UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa

<b>Ephraim Zewdie</b>	Senior Economist/Governance, Economic and Social Section	Delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia
<b>Corinne Boulet</b>	Attaché/Education, Health and Social Development	Delegation of the European Union to the Kingdom of Cambodia
<b>Isabelle Turmain</b>	Director of Information Projects and Services	International Association of Universities
<b>Sopheha Mar</b>	Senior Social Sector Officer	Asian Development Bank Resident Mission/Cambodia
<b>Lynn Dudley</b>	Education Specialist	Global Partnership for Education
<b>Martial de Paul Ikoungou</b>	Commissioner for Education	African Union
<b>Levi Uche Madueke</b>	Head, Africa's Strategic Partnership/Bureau of Chairperson	African Union
<b>Beatrice Khamati Njenga</b>	Head/Education Division	African Union
<b>Yohannes Woldetensae</b>	Senior Education Expert	African Union
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## ANNEX 3: THREE PHASES OF EFA COORDINATION (2000-2015)

UNESCO EFA coordination and leadership roles have evolved over time in line with the evolution of the global international education community (e.g. the need for increased national budget allocations to education in response to the growing number of in-country school-age youth, the emergence of new global and regional initiatives, the set-up of innovative funding mechanisms<sup>98</sup> aimed to support specific education-related causes, and the unprecedented proliferation of spaces for creative knowledge generation and dissemination on education made possible by the use of the modern technologies<sup>99</sup>).

Cognizant of its global mandate for education and aware of the need for the whole Organization to remain an influential player both at the global and the regional level, UNESCO has taken the EFA coordination responsibility granted to it by the Dakar Framework for Action seriously and has sought to learn along the way on how to carry it out most effectively. The periodic commissioning of independent analytical research on coordination as well as the in-house development of reflective pieces focusing on the achievements and challenges associated with the EFA coordination attest to the Organization's genuine interest in assessing and improving its practices and processes. For instance, it was in response to the conclusions of two such coordination reviews, conducted respectively in 2004 and 2012<sup>100</sup>, that the Organization introduced important modifications to its EFA coordination architecture.

In order to ensure a fair assessment of the relevance, coherence and effectiveness of EFA coordination mechanisms since the year 2000, it becomes necessary not only to acknowledge the evolution of the coordination structures and processes occurring during the last fifteen years but also to group and analyse the transformations of the coordination infrastructure according to the specific period of time when they were introduced. Therefore, the history of EFA coordination between 2000 and 2015 was analysed across three main phases: (i) 2000-2004; (ii) 2005-2010; and (iii) 2011-2015.

### First Phase of EFA Coordination (2000-2004)

Before starting to review all the key characteristics of this first phase, it must be recognized that, although on a more informal basis, coordination of the global education agenda did not start in 2000 but already in 1990 with the creation of the International Consultative Forum (ICF). ICF was aimed at assisting with the implementation of the [World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs](#) (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990).<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, the setting up of the EFA coordination mechanisms in 2000 capitalized on the lessons learned during the previous decade<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>98</sup> The EFA Fast Track Initiative, later named the Global Partnership for Education, is one of the most well known ones.

<sup>99</sup> The World Education Blog, the Global Partnership for Education daily Tweets, the Norrag News online articles. The Global Campaign for Education Facebook page

<sup>100</sup> In the aftermath of the HLG meeting held in February 2010, UNESCO staff undertook a comprehensive literature review of EFA coordination efforts, including outcome documents arising from major EFA meetings (WG, HLG, UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA, regional EFA meetings). Consultations on this topic also took place with a variety of EFA partners and UNESCO colleagues, including field office staff. These activities resulted in a discussion paper on the effectiveness of EFA coordination that served as a background document for initial consultations with EFA partners, including members of the International Advisory Panel on EFA (IAP) and the CCNGO/EFA.

<sup>101</sup> With a secretariat housed in UNESCO and an annual conference whose costs were covered by several partners on a voluntary basis, ICF included 'the head of one of the UN Economic Commissions, all major donors, a few prominent personalities from the private sector, a balanced representation of NGOs from the South and the North and not limited to those having some official recognition (IAC record of meeting 23 July 1990 in Little & Miller 2000).

<sup>102</sup> One of the Forum's greatest achievements was the strengthening of inter-agency advocacy of the Jomtien goals, and the organization (thanks also to UNESCO's privileged ties with its Member States' Ministries of Education) of both a mid-term and an end-of-decade global assessment of progress towards the fulfilment of the Jomtien Goals.



Since the deliberations of the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 it was clear that the coordination of the EFA agenda would be one of UNESCO's key responsibilities in line with its global mandate for education. The [Framework for Action](#), adopted at the end of the conference in Dakar in 2000, affirmed that UNESCO would 'continue its mandated role in coordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum' and that, in doing so, the Organization would 'refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work'.

Given UNESCO's renewed mandate, Member States were turning to the Organization for technical assistance to implement the Dakar Framework for Action, especially with regards to the development of EFA National Plans of Action, as attested by the discussions held during the first High-Level Group held in Paris in 2001<sup>103</sup>. However, as UNESCO's response could not meet the overwhelming countries' request for support, the Organization attempted to mitigate the challenges encountered by national governments in setting up the national EFA coordination structures and mechanisms envisaged in Dakar, by developing an [International Strategy to Put the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA into Operation](#) in 2002. Although the objective of this effort was to strengthen the link between the global coordination and the country-level implementation of the EFA Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO could not clarify partner's respective roles and responsibilities as much as it would have liked to and, as a reflection of that, it could not guarantee the active involvement of all EFA co-Conveners in this process.

However, in order to carry out its EFA coordination tasks, UNESCO did much more than just publishing a single strategic document. As of 2001, the Organization started putting in place two main types of coordination mechanisms for the Dakar follow-up: (i) in-house coordination mechanisms with the objective of ensuring coherence among all the EFA-related efforts made by UNESCO staff across the Organization's different divisions and regions; and (ii) international EFA coordination mechanisms, intended to promote more collaborative efforts between UNESCO and other development partners, both at the global and regional level. During this first phase, UNESCO also remained committed to encouraging countries to develop national structures and processes with the aim to link the global and regional coordination efforts to the implementation on the ground.

### ***In-house coordination mechanisms***

Key in-house coordination mechanisms:

- An Intersectoral Strategic Group ;
- An Education Sector Senior Staff Group (this included the chiefs of the different sections within the Education Sector);
- [A Network of the UNESCO Category Institutes I](#) and Regional Education Bureaux; and
- A Dakar Follow-Up Unit, with a steering committee and representatives in the divisions of the Education Sector

In-house coordination mechanisms were built on a tacit distribution of tasks and responsibilities within the Education Sector. In general terms, UNESCO's Education Sector divisions were responsible for dealing with the more pragmatic and implementation-related issues of the EFA Agenda while the Dakar Follow-up unit was mostly responsible for the convening of partners around specific themes or on the occasion of global coordination events (see next section). While the respondents associated such global convening power with the organization of high-profile events, they often stated that UNESCO provided little or no follow-up to participants over time.

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<sup>103</sup> A UNESCO report published in 2001 attested that 48 of the 66 eligible countries to draft a National Plan of Action did not appear to have reliable or proven capacities to collect process and/or analyse data with a view to drafting the EFA plan. As a result, it took four years until most of the eligible countries could develop quantifiable Plans of Action. According to a different analysis carried out in 2004 on 20 Portuguese- and French-speaking countries, all the EFA Plans of Action (exception made for the one in Angola) were linked with MDGs and 100% with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (UNESCO, 2007b; 31-32).

Since its beginning, in-house coordination had its challenges. While the intention to mobilize UNESCO staff around the EFA agenda during this first phase of EFA coordination was a commendable effort, the coordination of these newly established mechanisms proved to be a challenging task. As argued in the 2004 EFA Coordination Review, the reason why these initial structural coordination arrangements were not fully implemented included: (i) the lack of a clear process to make the intra-sectoral and intersectoral coordination converge; (ii) the relatively weak communication strategy among Headquarters, Institutes and field offices staff; and, (iii) the lack of a strong integration and complementarity of the work done on EFA by UNESCO's different divisions and offices.

### **International EFA Coordination Mechanisms**

It was during this first phase of EFA coordination that UNESCO aimed to strengthen its EFA coordination role through the set-up of different international structures and processes, such as the ones included in the list below.

The top global EFA coordination structure established during this first coordination phase was the High-Level Group (HLG): According to the Dakar Framework, this was the coordination mechanism through which UNESCO was expected not only to 'coordinate EFA partners' but also to 'maintain their collaborative momentum'.<sup>104</sup> Described as a 'small and flexible' meeting, the HLG was aimed to leverage political commitment for EFA and to mobilize resources (Box 2). The HLG original membership included ministerial-level representatives of both industrialized and developing countries, the chiefs of selected multilateral and bilateral agencies, as well as the leaders of international and regional NGOs particularly committed to the EFA agenda (e.g. elected Presidents, Board members or Secretary Generals).

#### **Box 2. HLG Key Characteristics**

**HLG had a high profile and broad mandate:** The HLG met once a year and at the end of each of its [meetings](#), strategic policy recommendations were made to all EFA partners at both the international and national levels. The communiqué from the [Third HLG meeting in New Delhi](#), for instance, 2003 urged UNESCO to 'continue to play the key role in EFA coordination' and requested that other international development partners 'continue to support the role of UNESCO in enhancing EFA'. The HLG communiqué also included the recommendation that UNESCO 'review and enhance its capacity for coordination' and 'ensure more effective linkages between the Working Group on Education for All, the High-Level Group and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Partners' Group' (EFA-FTI, 2004).

**HLG strengths:** Overall, the HLG's role of defining and harmonizing EFA policy was important for two main reasons. First, no other EFA coordination entity was able to develop recommendations at such a high political level. Second, the HLG meetings agenda reflected UNESCO's unique effort to inform all the discussion with the most recent available evidence, mainly generated by the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) whose creation has been endorsed by the HLG based on the recommendation of its [2011 meeting communiqué](#), as well as other examples of cutting-edge research and evaluation<sup>105</sup>.

**HLG weaknesses:** The way HLG functioned presented five main challenges, which characterized some of the later global coordination mechanisms. First, as stressed by the GMR in its 2003-2004 edition, the decreasing level of seniority of participation from multilateral agencies and industrialized countries in the HLG annual meetings affected the quality as well as the political relevance of the discussions taking place at such venues. Second, given the broad mandate of such coordination mechanisms (both technical and political), it was not very

<sup>104</sup> The decision to grant UNESCO the responsibility to coordinate the new Agenda modified the arrangements that had been set up within the scope of the Inter-Agency Commission before the Dakar Conference. This entity was different in that all agencies involved could share power and responsibilities.

<sup>105</sup> The HLG was also responsible for the creation of an International Teachers' Task Force for EFA following its Oslo meeting in 2008.

clear what UNESCO's specific contribution to it would be. Third, although the HLG was expected to turn the GMR findings into action, it did not play in reality this role: its communiqués tended to be more global, rather than country-specific<sup>106</sup>, and the action they called for were not monitored. Fourth, the type of participants invited to the HLG meetings (ministries of education came from developing countries only while developed countries sent their Ministers of Development cooperation or Foreign Affairs) perpetuated the idea that EFA was mainly a development agenda<sup>107</sup>. Fifth, interpretation offered during meetings was mostly in English and French and no Spanish or Arabic translation was provided to participants.

**The added value of the Sherpas Group:** During the HLG meetings, a smaller group of participants (known as the Sherpas Group), with additional representation of developing countries, assisted in the drafting of the Communiqué that needed to be adopted by the HLG. In carrying out its tasks, the Group was responsible for aligning the Communiqué with the outcomes of each one of the yearly HLG meetings. The Group also had the option to follow-up on the Communiqué Implementation.

Another coordination structure, established during this first phase and equipped with a distinct technical function, was the Working Group on EFA (WG). The idea of creating a Working Group on EFA (WG) built upon the Dakar Framework for Action proposal to establish different 'working groups for the each of the six EFA goals' (Box 3). Since the beginning, the WG exercised two primary functions:

*Normative:* the WG was expected to serve as 'a forum for consultation and discussion among EFA partners with the goal of 'influencing the design and adoption of the strategies needed to translate expressed political commitment to EFA into concrete action' (WG1 report, Preface); and

*Networking:* the WG was intended as 'an informal and advisory arrangement ... [for] the cultivation and further development of partnership between all the actors committed to the Dakar Framework for Action' (WG2 report, Preface).

### Box 3. WG Key Characteristics

**The WG was a rather inclusive coordination structure:** The WG was an informal consultative structure that met annually at UNESCO Headquarters and its membership, which reflected the diversity of stakeholders whom UNESCO was used to working with, included well-recognized education experts coming from a vast range of EFA partners. WG members included: Ministries of Education in Member States, representatives from multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, regional bodies, civil society organizations and the private sector (Tooley, 2004; Mundy, 2010; Watkins, 2004). Regional bodies and civil society organizations from the South were represented in the WG, too.

**The WG had a rather undefined role:** Although a plethora of interesting education themes and issues were discussed at each meeting<sup>108</sup> (at the end of each meeting, the agenda for the next one was always discussed) and networking opportunities were provided to all participants, it was not clear to members which tasks and responsibilities the WG as a whole should focus on. Even distinguishing between the WG and the HLG became a bit of challenge. In addition, due to the lack of a systematic follow-up of the WG recommendations (e.g. no action plans were developed, nor responsibilities or deadlines for implementation set), it remains difficult to

<sup>106</sup> Buchert, L., (2010). Education for All – and the Value of its EFA GMR report.

<sup>107</sup> As a result of that, it was not very clear what role would be played in such meeting by those countries that fell in between the categories of development and developing countries (e.g. countries with emerging economies in Central and Eastern Europe).

<sup>108</sup> It is important to recognize that events not exclusively devoted to EFA, such as the meetings of the International Conference on Education (ICE), organized by IBE, and the International Working Group on Education (IWGE), organized by IIEP, provided, too, a platform for relevant discussion on international education and EFA-related issues.

demonstrate to what extent the WG played indeed a strong normative role on the international scene.

In addition to formal coordination structures, other EFA coordination mechanisms were established, as in the case of the EFA Flagships Initiatives<sup>109</sup>: These are specific initiatives led and supported by UNESCO with the aim to contribute to the achievement of one or more of the EFA goals and targets at country level (Table 4). During this first phase of EFA coordination, eleven EFA flagships were implemented in the following thematic areas: the impact of HIV/AIDS on education (EDUCAIDS); disabilities and inclusive education (RTE); education in situations of emergency and crisis (INEE); teachers and the quality of education; the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI); and literacy within the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012).

**Table 7. Flagship Initiatives with UNESCO serving or having served as a Secretariat**

Partnership/Initiatives	Secretariat
1. Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO)	UNESCO
2. UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)	UNESCO
3. Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)	UNESCO
4. International Task Force on Teachers for EFA (ITF Teachers EFA)	UNESCO
5. Network of Parliamentarians for Education for All (Parliamentary Network)	UNESCO
6. Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)	UNICEF (UNESCO)
7. Partnership for Education (PfE)	WEF/UNESCO
8. Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion (RTE)	UNESCO/Finnish Partners
9. UNAIDS Inter-agency Task Team on Education (IATT Education)	UNESCO
10. Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS (EDUCAIDS)	UNESCO
11. UN Literacy Decade (UNLD)	UNESCO

Source: Adapted from Little & Miller, 2011

\* From 2001 to 2003. In 2011, UNESCO became the secretariat for the INEE's specific work on Education and Fragility

Flagship Initiatives were generally successful and so was their coordination: A [Flagship Initiatives evaluation](#) conducted in 2004 confirmed the added value of such initiatives to EFA coordination. In particular, such initiatives were believed to contribute to the strengthening of international partnerships among a wide range of entities not simply focused on EFA but across variety of development frameworks (FTI, PRSP, SAPs, UNDAF). As a result, those partners participating in such initiatives strengthened a common understanding and interpretation of the EFA agenda.

EFA coordination aimed to be inclusive since the beginning, as attested by the creation of the Collective Consultation of NGO on EFA (CCNGO/EFA): This coordination mechanism was put in place to foster reflection, dialogue and joint action between UNESCO and NGOs during the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development. A fruitful collaboration with the [Global Campaign for Education \(GCE\)](#) initiated during this first phase resulted in the yearly organization of the [Global EFA Action Week](#) in more than 100 countries.

<sup>109</sup> According to UNESCO's terminology, a Flagship Initiative is "a structured set of activities carried out by voluntary partners, under the leadership of one or more United Nations specialized agencies and NGOs, that seeks to address specific challenges in achieving the EFA goals. There is a variation in the structure of these flagship programmes depending to a large extent on the way they were initiated. See the related link Flagship Initiative introduction.

The CCNGO/EFA model provided an important example to other international organizations: UNESCO's practice to enhance civil society participation in contributing to high-profile meetings in education at all levels influenced other EFA partners (e.g. the FTI Partners Group and GCE). Likewise, the Director-General's speech outlining the rationale and strategy for the participation of civil society organizations in EFA (46th ICE, 2001, p. 248) represents a recognized framework for engaging with civil society in developing countries.

Another important structure which UNESCO committed to supporting further, as part of its EFA coordination role during this first phase, was the E-9 Initiative<sup>110</sup>: Established in New Delhi in 1993<sup>111</sup> in the aftermath of UNESCO's 27<sup>th</sup> General Conference<sup>112</sup> and initially regarded as a UNESCO/UNICEF joint-effort<sup>113</sup>, the E-9 initiative (UNESCO, 2012b) served during this first phase of the EFA coordination as a multi-partner platform aimed at mobilizing the nine most populous countries in the world (that is, accounting for 53% of the world's population) with the lowest enrolment rates and literacy levels, towards the achievement of four key objectives: (i) the elimination of illiteracy, (ii) the implementation of basic education programs, (iii) the set-up of networks to exchange lessons learned, and (iv) the mobilization of resources.

Despite the broad coordination agenda, some measures were needed to strengthen it further. Some of the areas where coordination could be improved included the following: (i) more inter-flagship collaboration; (ii) a closer link between the Initiatives and both the UN as a whole (responsible for the UNDAF coordination) and the World Bank (responsible for coordinating PRSP) (Caillods & Hallak, 2004); and (iii) a more effective integration of the EFA agenda into regional development frameworks, such as the [New Partnership for Africa's Development \(NEPAD\)](#).

### **National EFA processes**

As part of the EFA agenda coordination implemented during this first phase, UNESCO committed, along with all other partners and Member States participating in the Dakar conference, to support the development of EFA fora at the national, sub-regional and regional levels (DFA, para. 18). More in particular, UNESCO's tasks and responsibilities revolved around providing assistance to countries towards the preparation of the so-called National EFA Plans of Action<sup>114</sup> (UNESCO, 2000). This was made possible through the dissemination of a document produced in six languages: [Country Guidelines on the Preparation of National EFA Plans of Action](#). Similar regional initiatives, building upon the guidelines developed at UNESCO HQ, were undertaken, especially by the [UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok](#).

In order to facilitate the coordination at this level, UNESCO also published a document entitled [Generic Criteria for Assessing the Credibility of National EFA Plans of Action](#) which encouraged countries to take greater account of such issues as gender equality and HIV/AIDS, when developing their own national EFA plan. However, such processes established at country-level

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<sup>110</sup> UNESCO contribution to the E-9 initiatives: Since the foundation of such coordination mechanism, UNESCO made an effort to contribute to it in two different ways: (i) by providing technical and financial support to the EFA activities implemented by the E-9 countries at the national level; and (b) by promoting networking and cooperation opportunities among the Initiative members. In reality, the quality of UNESCO's coordination of this specific mechanism in the aftermath of the Dakar conference was assessed as "very minimal" by a 2003 evaluation<sup>110</sup> commissioned by UNESCO. Bibeau, J-R., Kester-McNees, Reddy, V. (2003). Report on the evaluation of UNESCO's E-9 Initiative. p.21

<sup>111</sup> Education for All Summit of High-Population Countries, New Delhi, 12-16 December 1993. Panel Proceeding. Paris, UNESCO, 1993, 78 pp.

<sup>112</sup> Records of the General Conference – 27th Session, Paris, 1993, p.19.

<sup>113</sup> Minutes from the "Meeting to discuss the UNESCO/UNICEF initiative to promote education for all in the largest developing countries" (Geneva, 15 September 1992) held on the occasion of the 43rd International Conference on Education, by the International Bureau of Education (IBE).

<sup>114</sup> According to the UNESCO Country on the preparation of National Plans of Action, such plans were of utmost important because they represented not only each country's design for achieving the goals of EFA within a generation but also the basis on which the international community would "support, in a coordinated, coherent and consistent way, national EFA efforts" (UNESCO, 2000; p.3).

were not systematically followed up on as it was originally planned. According to the 2004 EFA Coordination Review, the reason for that was tied to the limited human and material resources available to UNESCO, especially in Africa and South Asia.

### Second Phase of EFA Coordination (2005-2010)

The creation of new EFA coordination mechanisms during this second coordination phase was recommended by the Task Force<sup>115</sup> that the UNESCO Director-General appointed in 2004 to conduct the strategic review of UNESCO's post-Dakar follow-up role in EFA. Such Task Force, whose set-up responded to a specific request made by the UNESCO Executive Board (169 EX/Decision 3.4.4.), included two 'core working groups' (one on programme and the other on coordination) and four sub-groups, each of whom reviewed specific issues of UNESCO EFA coordination, including in field offices and Institutes. Presented during the [fifth EFA Working Group meeting \(July 20-21, 2005\)](#), the Review realized by this Task Force was well received by both the EFA donor agencies and civil society organizations.

Three key changes in the EFA coordination architecture were introduced during this phase. First, the transformation of the Dakar Follow-up Unit, directed by the person who served as the Chief Rapporteur of the 2000 Dakar Conference, into a stand-alone section within the Division of International Coordination and Monitoring for EFA (ED/EFA) in 2006<sup>116</sup>. Second, the set-up of a Special Coordination Group of Senior Management on EFA (including Directors of Category I Institutes of regional education bureaux), chaired by ADG/ED. Intended to ensure stronger linkages between international coordination and UNESCO's programmatic work on EFA than had been the case during the first coordination phase, this group emphasized UNESCO's role as a provider of technical assistance to Member States to help them attain the Dakar goals. Third, the Development of *The Global Action Plan (GAP)* (Box 4), a framework for enhancing and harmonizing collective effort among the five international agencies that had convened the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 and the World Conference on EFA in Jomtien in 1990.

#### Box 4. The Global Action Plan (2006)

The Global Action Plan (GAP) meant to serve as a global platform for cooperation, spelling out areas of action and respective responsibilities among the five UN agencies. This reference framework proposed six areas around which to coordinate international support for EFA: (i) supporting national ownership; (ii) capacity development; (iii) communication and advocacy; (iv) resource mobilization; (v) effective use of aid for EFA; (vi) widening the scope of monitoring EFA. The GAP was included in the 2006 G8 Summit document as well as in UNICEF's medium-term strategy, [CCA/UNDAF Guidelines for UN Country Teams \(UNCT\)](#). A copy of the GAP was also distributed by UNDG to all UN Resident Coordinators. That notwithstanding, no shared understanding of the potential and the purposes of such Plan (in reality, it was a reference framework more than plan) existed at the global and national levels. Some critics (Sutton, 2007) state that this Plan was 'little more than an inventory' of what each one of the EFA convening agencies was already doing. Similarly, the Plan did not seem to lead to any specific steps (Robinson 2014).

Interestingly, GAP was not followed up as expected. As a result, UNESCO adopted an alternative strategy to both address its Member States' planning capacity and funding gaps and strengthen coordination with their other development partners: the [UNESCO National Education Support](#)

<sup>115</sup> Appointed on 12 May 2004, the Task Force at first included the DDG (Chairperson), ADG/ED, DADG/ED and DIR/ED/EFA from within the Education Sector, and ADG/ODG, DIR/BSP, DIR/IOS, DIR/UIS and DIR/BPI. During a second phases, all Education Sector directors, the heads of the Organization's central services, and directors of relevant Education Category I institutes and certain National Offices, notably the Regional Bureau for Education; joined the Task Force.

<sup>116</sup> In 2009, the newly created section was placed under the direct supervision of the UNESCO Assistant Director General for Education. During this period, the Section staff was downsized: from 10 professionals 2004 to only five in 2010 (Edward et al, 2015).

**Strategies (UNESS).** Intended to be adopted as the basis for planning the Organization's Education Sector's Medium-Term Strategy and biennial programmes, as well as for defining UNESCO's programme priorities and implementation strategies in each country, UNESS soon appeared redundant as it overlapped with the already existing UNDAF-related coordination efforts.

During this second phase, a new coordination structure was set-up to replace the previous Sherpas Group: the International Advisory Panel (IAP). **This new structure was established in 2007** to provide UNESCO with technical and policy advice, especially in relation to the preparation for and follow-up to the meetings of the HLG and the WG (Box 5).

#### **Box 5. IAP's Key Characteristics**

**IAP Strengths:** Its rather inclusive and geographical balanced membership<sup>117</sup> comprised representatives from different EFA constituencies and this contributed to the diversity of perspectives that informed its work<sup>118</sup>.

**IAP weaknesses:** Despite the significant advisory role assigned to IAP, the selection criteria adopted to establish who would be part of it (e.g. representatives of the country hosting the IAP meeting along with the representatives of the country that hosted the previous IAP meeting and the country that would host the following IAP meeting) were not conducive to ensuring the effectiveness of its work. Participants were not adequately briefed on whom they would need to represent during the IAP meetings: instead of representing the collective position of the respective geographical region which they belonged to (as it was expected due to the global nature of the discussions held during the IAP meeting), IAP delegates represented their own country's interests and needs. Furthermore, given that IAP meetings participants were not designated by their regional groups (they were directly appointed by UNESCO), IAP meeting participants did not feel they had any global or regional representative mandate or duty.

During this second coordination phase, a series of actions were also taken to ensure that UNESCO's EFA planning efforts would be better integrated with national Education Sector Plans<sup>119</sup>, national development strategies and PRSPs<sup>120</sup>.

Likewise, the provision of evidence-based policy advice (using data from the GMR and UIS reports) also increased. As a result of such initiatives, UNESCO's coordination role became even more influential during EFA planning, especially in relation to the incorporation of EFA goals into Education Sector Plans and PRSP<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup> As of 2011, IAP members included the UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education (Chair), the previous, current and future hosts/chairs of HLG, E-9, G-8 and G-77 and China, the Chair of the Least Developed Country Group, a representative of civil society, a representative of the private sector, the head of the EFA-FIT, the Director of the GMR team, and a representatives of ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank as well as of two developing country governments.

<sup>118</sup> The speech delivered by the UNESCO Director-General during the first IAP meeting confirmed the Organization's firm commitment to EFA as attested by Mr. Matsuura's closing remarks: "I can assure our partners that I continue to give the highest priority to EFA, and to the international cooperation which is its lifeblood".

<sup>119</sup> The educational planning processes adopted by two African countries (Mali and Benin) during this second phase of EFA coordination confirmed this renewed emphasis on integration. The Mali National EFA Action Plan, for instance, had not been validated officially, but was rather embodied in the framework of the 2000-2010 Ten-Year Education Development Programme. Likewise, the activities of the EFA coordinator were re-assigned within the framework of the Education Sector Investment Programme (ESIP), where the coordinator also acted as interface between the Ministry and TFPs. Similarly, in Benin the National EFA Plan of Action served as the basis for the adoption of the Ten-Year Education Sector Development Programme (TYESDP) in 2006. This document was used by Benin to draw on the catalytic fund of the Fast Track Initiative (UNESCO, 2007b).

<sup>120</sup> The Organization's 2002-2003 Programme and Budget (31 C/5) had already envisaged the allocation of resources to implement education projects closely related to such cross-cutting themes as eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty).

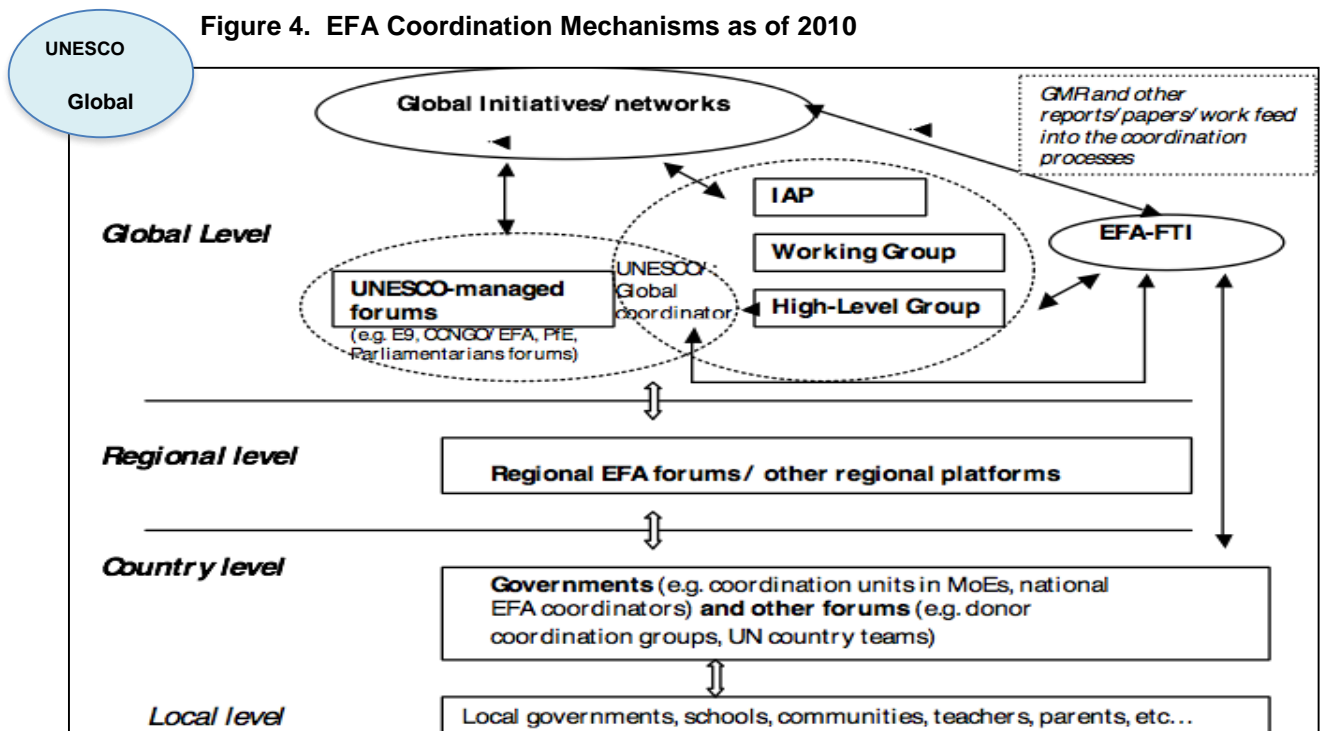
<sup>121</sup> When signing the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000, it was expected that UNESCO would advocate toward the fulfillment of a broad range of education-related goals from early childhood development to adult literacy. However, as most national education policies (e.g. the Cambodia Education Sector Five-year Plan 2014-2018)

During this second phase, the planning of UNESCO's coordination efforts started concentrating more effectively in E-9 countries (despite the opportunity to withdraw its support from this long-established initiative and provide its support to the emerging BRIC countries), post-conflict countries, LDCs, and countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. However, reaching consensus among all the countries was a constant challenge due to both the frequent turnover of ministry officials participating international and regional gatherings, and the divide existing across the meeting participants' respective development levels. That notwithstanding, the E-9 (sporadic) bi-annual ministerial meetings organized by UNESCO, proved the Organizations' outstanding ability to mediate across different stakeholders with divergent interests (e.g. during the drafting of the Islamabad Declaration at the biannual E-9 Ministerial Meeting hosted by Islamabad in 2009).

In view of the growing number of international education initiatives striving to achieve one or more EFA goals, UNESCO's recognition of the need for coordinating with other partners more effectively became stronger during this second phase. Therefore, specific efforts started being made to strengthen the linkage between the EFA Agenda and the rest of the International Development Fora (e.g. G-8 and G-21) as well as between the HLG and the WG work or between the FTI and the MDG initiatives. This strategy also facilitated the development of a common response to the Millennium Review meeting in September 2005, especially in relation to the two education-related MDGs (MDG 2 and 3).

Following the set-up of this new ad-hoc entity set-up within UNESCO and serving as the EFA Secretariat, a series of international agreements focused on EFA were reached. During the High-Level Event on the MDGs held in New York on September 23, 2008, the EFA convening agencies committed to collaborating with each other to further support countries in their effort to develop sound sector plans (that would include the development of simulation models).

Figure 4. EFA Coordination Mechanisms as of 2010



Source: Draft Briefing Note for IAP meeting on September 10, 2010 (UNESCO, 2011).

and Poverty Reduction Strategies have increasingly integrated most of such goals, the need for a "separate" agenda as EFA is no longer there and the traceability of its key principles back to the UNESCO original intervention is no longer feasible. That is especially true in countries where a larger number of development partners are implementing a systemic approach. Interestingly, this is also the case where UNESCO does not have a direct representation, such as Laos, but where the Bangkok regional office, in cooperation with IIEP and UIS has often sent planning and statistical monitoring consultants.



### Third Phase of EFA Coordination (2011-2015)

The strategies implemented during this third and last phase of EFA coordination addressed most the issues and challenges that had been identified in relation to the functioning of the EFA coordination since 2005.

Most of the changes made to the EFA coordination architecture during this phase were introduced in 2012 as a result of three major events and discussions occurred during the earlier coordination phase.

First, the specific request for ‘concrete measures to be taken at the MDG Summit in September 2010 to enhance the effectiveness of the EFA High-Level Group and the underpinning coordination architecture’ was originally made by the international community in the Addis Ababa Declaration signed during the Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA (23-25 February 2010)<sup>122</sup>.

Second, the suggestions put forward by a discussion paper developed by UNESCO for the meeting of the International Advisory Panel on EFA (IAP) in May 2010. The suggestions for improvements made during the IAP meeting as well the identification of the main challenges related to the EFA coordination during the previous decade (Table 5) served as the basis for further consultations between UNESCO and a plurality of partners during the following months.

Third, the publication of a special paper commissioned by the EFA Global Partnership Team and titled ‘Enhancing Effectiveness of EFA Coordination’. The draft paper was revised in September 2010 and its main recommendations were discussed during the Tenth Meeting of the HLG on EFA (Thailand, 22-24 March 2011). The changes introduced at the end of this meeting<sup>123</sup> were the result of a long series of discussions and consultations with many EFA partners, including groups of the UNESCO member states.

**Table 8. Main Challenges during the first two phases of EFA coordination (2000-2011)**

• Low responsiveness of EFA coordination architecture to national needs and voices
• Disconnect between national/regional EFA processes and the WG/HLG
• Increasing number of regional and sub-regional groupings and EFA-related initiatives created since Dakar
• Lack of accountability by partners with regard to the results of mechanisms and initiatives, including follow-up of outcome documents adopted during WG and HLG meetings and activities undertaken by the many individual initiatives
• Lack of clarity of the role which each EFA partner and convening agency plays at global, regional and country level, due in part to their competing priorities, as well as to their inconsistency in presence at WG and HLG meetings
• Lack of sufficient high-level participation at HLG meetings to galvanize political commitment, particularly by donor countries and organizations.
• Insufficient two-way interaction between education and wider development goals.
• Agenda-setting for the WG and HLG meetings overly influenced by the particular focus of the annual EFA-Global Monitoring Report (GMR)
• Key policy messages not sufficiently heard by those outside of the education sector

Source: Adapted from the ‘Enhancing Effectiveness of EFA coordination’ Draft Briefing Note (UNESCO, March 2011).

During this third and last coordination phase, UNESCO made a specific effort to maintain its coordination as relevant as possible in response to an evolving education scenario, both at the

<sup>122</sup> The requested changes were expected to “boost political leadership and mutual accountability”. Addis Ababa Declaration (p.3) ED/EFA/2010/ME/1

<sup>123</sup> The changes made to the EFA coordination mechanisms during this third phase were also presented in the General Director’s Report on the Reform of the Global EFA Coordination Mechanisms (186 EX/INF.23).

regional and national level. At a time when national governments were claiming more ownership over development planning and implementation processes than ever before, the role of coordination claimed by UNESCO during this phase was profoundly impacted by the changing landscape where the Organization operated. As a result, UNESCO coordination was gradually replaced by that of mediation between national governments (e.g. their understanding of the national context, the political willingness to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and the identification of national priority areas of intervention) and development funders (e.g. their financial inputs, their suggestions for new models of interventions, their introduction of new ideas into the national education debate). Furthermore, in those contexts where international large funding was available, UNESCO coordination rapidly turned into a mediation role with the aim to find a balance between the principle supported by many national policy-makers that education is a both public good and a human right *and* the rather private-sector-oriented and economically-oriented strategies promoted by such large funders as the WB and GPE.

During this phase, UNESCO set the new global education agenda and established closer coordination with other partners: UNESCO gradually gained a more visible role in a number of high-level events to promote education and managed to strengthen the link between the Education sector and the other sectors within the Organization (e.g. Culture and Sciences). Also, by building on the efforts made during the earlier coordination phase, the Organization managed to further raise the profile of education in major international events, such as the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the G8 and G20 Summits, the World Economic Forum as well as a number of Aid Effectiveness Fora.

Rationale behind the revitalization of the EFA coordination after 2012: The greater involvement of UNESCO at the global level during this third phase was all the more necessary for two reasons. On the one hand, the promotion of more cohesive international efforts towards the fulfilment of the six EFA goals (the so-called Big Push) helped bring the EFA back on the international agenda, also through the publication (in international newspapers) of joint editorial pieces written by the heads of several EFA co-conveners. On the other hand, UNESCO's revitalized coordination re-established a sense of urgency about the Agenda implementation among national governments and development partners, despite the progress already attained in relation to two EFA goals (i.e. gender equality and enrolment in primary school had increased by 2012) that had received the most funding until then<sup>124</sup>.

A new coordination mechanism was finally set-up: The EFA Steering Committee (SC). With the objective of replacing the IAP, the SC<sup>125</sup> had a specific purpose to provide strategic advice to UNESCO on global EFA coordination including, but not limited to, the preparation for and follow-up to the GEM. It was within the scope of this newly established mechanism that UNESCO launched the Task Force on EFA beyond 2015, an important initiative that succeeded in bringing the heads of the other EFA convening agencies back to the table of discussion with a stronger engagement and sense of ownership (Box 6).

Designed to be smaller than the IAP, the SC was expected to enable its members to have in-depth discussions that could contribute highly technical and relevant advice towards the fulfilment of the EFA agenda. The SC contributed quite positively to the strengthening of the EFA coordination at the global level.

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<sup>124</sup> For more details, see paragraph 4 in the Introduction section.

<sup>125</sup> Its sixteen members included: (i) one Member State representative from each UNESCO electoral group chosen by their respective groups on biennium rotational basis (six members); (ii) one representative from each EFA convening agency and EFA Fast Track Initiative (six members); (iii) four representatives from civil society and the private sector, on biennium rotational basis (four members).

## Box 6. SC's Added Value

The SC had five main merits:

- It conferred greater legitimacy on the EFA deliberations of this third coordination phase based on its more stringent membership requirements (e.g. Member States and NGOs representatives participating in SC work needed to be elected);
- It helped strengthen the coherence and inclusiveness of UNESCO 'coordination' processes with a variety of partners after a decade of uneven coordination (with Member States in the Executive Board; with civil society in the CCNGO/EFA; with Co-conveners in special meetings/calls; with private sector in PfE);
- It provided UNESCO with a balanced platform where to find a common voice on EFA-related issues, despite the partners' pressures to influence (and communicate about) the global education agenda. This was also confirmed by the fact that SC became the Drafting Group of the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action;
- It strived to emphasize further the universality of the EFA agenda and movement by assigning seats to the two Regional Groups I and II (Western Europe/North America and Eastern Europe respectively) that had remained largely under-represented or misrepresented as 'donors' in the global EFA meetings of the previous decade and that had never benefited much from attending any regional EFA meetings in the past.
- Consistent with UNESCO's global mandate and supported by the Member States and civil society representatives attending, the SC defended the need for a holistic Agenda 2030 despite the recommendation by some development partners that new Agenda should focus on secondary and vocational education to drive green and sustainable growth (United Nations, 2012; p.30-32).

Over time, a new coordination mechanism replaced both the HLG and WG: The Global EFA Meeting (**GEM**). Due to the increasing overlap of the HLG and WG meetings during the prior phase, it was decided that they would both be replaced by one only annual Global EFA Meeting (GEM)<sup>126</sup>. The GEM main objective was twofold. First, to critically review the world's progress towards the six EFA goals (based on the GMR and on information and reports from the country and regional levels). Second, to hold the global community accountable: the expectation was that, at the end of each GEM, concrete actions for follow-up (not recommendations) would be agreed on to guide the activities of the EFA community until the subsequent GEM<sup>127</sup>.

GEM participants selection: In order to define who would be eligible to participate in the GEM, each UNESCO electoral group was given the right to select eight countries to represent them at the GEM on a biennial rotational basis. Together with UNESCO Member States, the other EFA convening agencies and a selected number of representatives of EFA constituencies. These would include bilateral agencies, United Nations and regional organizations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), research institutes, foundations and the private sector.

During this third coordination phase, concurrently with the development of the Post-2015 Agenda, the E-9 countries started finding more of a united voice. In addition, the discussions among the delegates of the countries participating in the E-9 meetings informed the position of their respective

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<sup>126</sup> In reality, the GEM was convened only twice (in 2012 and 2014).

<sup>127</sup> In order to represent the diversity of perspectives among the participants invited to attend the GEM and as a way to ensure that the discussion would be sufficiently focused, it was decided that the annual meeting (three to four days in duration) would feature technical discussions among senior officials and more political debates among Ministers, Vice-Ministers and leaders/heads of the other EFA constituencies (ministerial/high-level segment). Consistent with the Dakar Framework for Action, GEM was also expected to provide a venue for monitoring donor support to EFA.

governments as attested by the frequent exchanges between the latter and their corresponding missions to the UN during the SDG discussions and deliberations<sup>128</sup>.

More recently, the thematic consultations set-up for the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Agenda brought UNESCO back to the forefront of the global coordination in education. In response to a specific UNESCO Executive Board decision (186 EX/Decisions) which requested 'the Director-General to initiate deliberations with Member States on the EFA objectives to be defined for the post-2015 period', UNESCO started holding regional consultations on the future of the education sector (e.g. in the Arab region in June in June 2011 and in the Asia-Pacific region in July 2011) and administered a survey to collect Member States' feedback on the possibility of organizing a World Education Forum 2015<sup>129</sup>. By doing so, UNESCO started developing a roadmap towards the development of a new global education agenda.

Despite the limited resources made available by the UN to conduct these thematic consultations (around \$120,000), UNESCO staff made repeated efforts to convene other development partners to discuss the future of the EFA agenda. Unfortunately, the response from the other partners in 2011 was not as prompt as UNESCO would have expected. Despite the Member States' willingness to have UNESCO lead the post-2015 consultations (see 186 EX/Decisions), none of the EFA Co-conveners, for instance, designated a focal point to the EFA task force set-up by UNESCO to facilitate the thematic consultations. Interestingly, co-conveners contributed more promptly to the broader UN-sponsored Thematic Consultations held as of 2012, initially under the UNICEF leadership and later placed under a joint UNESCO-UNICEF coordination.

### ***Enhanced collaboration and strengthening of regional EFA coordination mechanisms***

Some efforts had already been done to establish closer links between the global and the regional coordination mechanisms during the second phase of EFA coordination, namely during the Regional EFA fora organized to discuss the results of the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (e.g., the Dakar+5 Forum in Dakar in June 2005 or the Regional Planning Meeting in Bangkok in October 2005). However, it was after 2012 that a more sustained effort was made to enhance in-house coordination between UNESCO HQ and the regional Bureaux<sup>130</sup>. A systematic communication mechanism between the regional and global EFA coordination mechanisms, for instance, was established during this third phase (UNESCO regional Bureaux started producing annual regional reports). As a result, the EFA coordination team at UNESCO HQ started sharing strategic information and documentation with Regional Bureaux and Field Offices on a more regular basis. This included more frequent e-mail exchanges (including teleconferences on a number of occasions) in particular with the Regional Bureaux to inform them about new global initiatives (e.g. as of 2012, the members of the EFA coordination team started sharing the summary notes of UNESCO Executive Board meetings and circulated brochures on GPE funding opportunities despite the lack of an official coordination strategy between UNESCO and GPE).

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<sup>128</sup> According to some respondents, through its coordination of the E-9 Initiative, UNESCO should have not only responded more promptly to Member States' needs (whenever specific requests for assistance were made to the Secretariat) but also anticipated and differentiated the needs (better education quality or better higher school enrolment rates) associated with each one of the E-9 countries' education sectors. Some respondents suggested that UNESCO get the discussion going on a number of relevant education issues among E-9 countries through the provision of a "zero draft" that could then be worked on by both the E-9 delegations and their respective national Ministry of Education officials.

<sup>129</sup> Within the United Nations-facilitated global conversation on post-2015, thematic consultation on education was co-led by UNESCO and UNICEF as from 2012. This involved a series of consultation meetings at regional and global level as well as with civil society and thematic online discussions. The Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda held in Dakar in April 2013 proposed "Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All" as the overarching goal for education. It also recommended developing specific goals, indicators and targets around a number of priority areas.  
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/envisioning-education-post-2015-development-agenda-execsum.pdf>

<sup>130</sup> According to the 2004 Strategic Review, considerable work was undertaken since 2000 by the Regional Bureaux for Education (Dakar, Bangkok, Beirut,) to coordinate EFA at the regional levels. Based on this document, cluster and field offices also played a key role in coordinating and advocating for EFA in addition to implementing EFA activities.

During this third coordination phase, other adjustments of the EFA regional coordination architecture were made. UNESCO organized more frequently regional meetings to share knowledge, good policies and practices among national government officials as well as other EFA partners. Furthermore, existing networks, such as the E-9 Initiative and the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO-EFA), were strengthened (the CCNGO/EFA membership, for instance, tripled since 2000). More active and strategic advocacy at the global level as well targeted at regional and sub-regional entities was carried out through the promotion of the EFA agenda at major events. During this third phase, a few other events were organized to further mobilize political commitment to the EFA goals within the scope of policy dialogue informed by evidence and experience between countries, and across a range of education stakeholders. These included meetings and workshops, as well as a more targeted use of online, print and radio media.

The realization made during this third phase of coordination that not all countries would achieve the EFA goals was the driving force behind the strengthening of the regional EFA coordination in various regions<sup>131</sup>. In Africa, for instance, the UNESCO-BREDA Regional Bureau for Education in Dakar, in collaboration with the Pôle de Dakar (the IIEP Office for Africa), started mobilizing partners to make an additional effort to accelerate progress towards the achievement of EFA goals within the two following years. Under such new initiative better known as 'Big Push', UNESCO regional coordination mainly consisted in liaising with several partners (e.g. UNICEF, UNFPA, ADEA, FAWA, ANCEFA and CONFEMEN) to provide a selected number of countries with technical assistance to assist them in their efforts of EFA acceleration<sup>132</sup>.

All other UNESCO regions produced national reports that were consolidated in a regional report, including the group I and group II regions. They were presented at the SDG4-Education 2030 regional preparatory conferences. The regional coordination in the Asia-Pacific Region, often considered as a model for all other UNESCO regions, received more funding and could rely on a dedicated EFA team who, together with a pool of regional UIS advisors (and with the assistance of a few cluster offices), played an instrumental role in promoting EFA-related partnerships among a variety of actors in over forty countries (see Box 7).

### **Box 7. Regional Coordination in the Asia-Pacific Region**

**1) Coordinating Entity: UIS-AIMS:** The UIS-AIMS unit was launched in 2003 as the regional office for the UIS in Asia and the Pacific and a joint programme between UIS and UNESCO Bangkok. Led by the Asia Pacific Regional Advisor for Asia-Pacific, UIS-AIMS provides advisory services and technical assistance in statistical capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation across all sectors of the UNESCO mandate. One of the UIS-AIMS unit's main missions was to assist Member States in the region in statistical capacity-building efforts to help countries become technically and institutionally self-reliant so they acquired the expertise to determine their own data needs and priorities, to collect data, to interpret and use them effectively and to sustain these capacities. Towards this end, UIS-AIMS worked closely with other UNESCO units and field offices, UN agencies and partners across the education sector towards meeting the EFA goals by 2015.

**2) Regional Coordinating Mechanism 1: Thematic Working Group (TWG) On EFA.** The UIS-AIMS Unit, along with the UNESCO Bangkok Education Sector, UNICEF and other TWG on EFA members carried out various activities to support the enhancement of capacity in countries to carry out a national assessment of EFA as well as the regional coordination for the EFA. The TWG on EFA consisted of UN partner agencies, international NGOs and civil society

<sup>131</sup> The 2011 UNESCO EFA coordination review, too, called for the strengthening of the EFA coordination mechanisms set up at the regional level (p. 22).

<sup>132</sup> The focus of such coordination initiative would enable countries and partners concentrate efforts and build on each other's experiences and lessons learnt. Governments would drive the process of determining where acceleration was needed, around which an EFA compact would be created, by also aligning stakeholders and resources within a partnership framework. The "Big Push" implementation guidelines were organized in 5 components (Acceleration Plan, Advocacy and Mobilization Plan, Resources and Partnerships Mobilization Plan, Communication and Dissemination Plan and Institutional and Implementation Arrangements) and provided methodologies to elaborate a national EFA Acceleration Framework and useful tools to design and implement.

organizations and special interest groups working together towards the realization of the Education for All goals. The TWG worked under the umbrella of the UN Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and reported regularly to this coordinating body. The TWG also supported UN efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The TWG was steered through a coordinating committee of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education, the UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Office, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and UNESCAP. Based on its Terms of Reference, the TWG had the following core functions: a) information sharing; b) establishing priority areas for cooperation and potential joint programme responses; c) a venue for dissemination of innovative/good practices and lessons. The TWG served as an advisory body for the Asia-Pacific EFA MDA and Mid-Term Policy Review.

**3) Regional Coordination Mechanism 2: Meeting of national EFA coordinators:** This was facilitated through the regional meetings of national EFA Coordinators and other regional level meetings convened by UIS-AIMS to support implementation of the MDA. This finding is supported by the survey of national EFA coordinators where a majority of respondents rated the regional level workshops as 'very important' or 'important' to completing the MDA. The national EFA coordinators meetings were particularly valued as it was seen as a forum for sharing, listening and learning from other country's experiences of implementing the MDA.

**4) Coordination Challenges:** The national EFA coordinators meetings presented some challenges and these are discussed below:

- There is a perception that the regional discussions at these meetings were slanted towards South-East Asia and this led to South Asia and Central Asia feeling somewhat disconnected from these discussions. Ensuring equal emphasis across all countries in the region was seen as a challenge and this needs to be managed for the future.
- Sustaining continuity of participation of key members was difficult particularly where countries did not have a designated national EFA coordinator position. In some instances, the opportunity to travel was seen as a privilege and so these countries tended to share the opportunity, resulting in lack of continuity.
- The regional meetings of National EFA coordinators were seen as 'too few and far between' and requests were made for an increased number of these sessions. In particular, the time lag between gaining technical skills through workshops and putting them to use in their country as part of the MDA process was too significant.
- The needs of countries were variable with some having high capability, others had limited/minimum capability to undertake the statistical analysis required as part of the MDA. Addressing these variable needs through regional meetings was seen as challenging and points to the need for innovative approaches for ensuring engagement from all countries.

#### **5) Reflections on Coordination**

- The technical guidelines and the training provided at the regional meetings were seen as critical to help national EFA coordinators and statisticians make sense of the tasks associated with the MDA. Countries highlighted the value of receiving guidance around the process of conducting the MDA as well as statistical capacity building. For instance, advice provided on setting up a national EFA steering committee or task force or ways to bring together different sources of data were crucial to supporting countries to undertake comprehensive and inclusive assessment. This was seen as necessary if countries were to achieve EFA by 2015.
- The role of the TWG was not well understood at a country level and there may be opportunities for reviewing how the value of the regional coordination and mobilization role is communicated and demonstrated to EFA coordinators for the future.
- During the case studies, EFA coordinators commented that more could be done to facilitate sharing of best practice and lessons between countries.

Adapted from: *Evaluation of the Asia-Pacific EFA Mid-Decade Assessment and Mid-Term Policy Review (2010)*

## **ANNEX 4: CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN EFA**

### **AFRICA**

According to ANCEFA, at least 26 national education coalitions in Africa are involved in education-sector policy planning, monitoring, and reviews. CSOs in Africa report participation at various national forums, including technical working groups, policy development meetings (especially through the *Joint Sector Reviews*), Budget Consultation Forums and structures such as the Local Education Groups (LEGs).

### **ARAB STATES**

In recent years, civil society in the region has been able to find and create more spaces for participation in EFA processes, and organizations from a number of different countries report positive changes since 2000. Internal coordination has played an important role in mobilizing engagement across different countries, including from regional networks such as the Arab Network for Literacy and Adult Education, or the Arab Network for Human Rights and Citizenship. The formation of the Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA) in 2008 increased momentum for civil society activism on EFA in the region. In 2009 it led to mass mobilization around the Global Action Week, AW, strengthening influence in policy dialogue as governments find it harder to ignore grassroots pressure. UNESCO's CCNGO/EFA Secretariat was also said to be supportive, whereas some field offices were considered less helpful. Nevertheless, national and regional discussion on the post-2015 agenda was highlighted as an inclusive and valuable process.

### **ASIA**

The picture described for Asia was overwhelmingly positive. ASPBAE report 'a leap in civil society's advocacy with governments for EFA', with a growth in national coalitions from two in 2000 to fourteen today. There is also increasing space for these coalitions to participate at both national and regional level. ASPBAE reports national civil society taking part in the EFA regional architecture, in particular in spaces offered by UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education. There have been some opportunities in engaging the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), but communication with civil society is not regular. ASPBAE reports that, with coalition members, it has undertaken continuous research, monitoring and policy studies related to key education issues. The outcomes of the studies have been used by national coalitions in developing and updating education policy agenda in their respective countries.

### **LAC**

Formal EFA structures and mechanisms were highlighted as increasing civil society participation, including events held by UNESCO and UNICEF. The UNESCO Regional Bureau and CLADE have a formal memorandum of cooperation, and CLADE has been consistently invited to participate in the regional events on EFA. In the last regional ministerial EFA meeting in Lima in October 2014, thirteen CLADE representatives participated, taking part in official media conferences and the final declaration-drafting group. CSOs also participated in drafting groups of other regional meetings. The seventh meeting of the CCNGO/EFA held in Santiago de Chile in 2014 further engaged CSOs from the region in the EFA movement. More than simple participation, civil society generates new forums, such as *El Observatorio Regional de Educación Inclusiva* (OREI), a new regional inclusive education initiative, created in conjunction with the UN to combat discrimination in education. Participation is generally moving in a good direction, but only as a result of pressure from civil society calling for dialogue and spaces; governments usually do not actively consult. There are also examples of regressive laws in some countries, such as those criminalizing demonstrations that raise great concern as they are limiting democratic participation.

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