



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization
Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Santiago Office
Regional Bureau of Education for
Latin America and the Caribbean
Oficina de Santiago
Oficina Regional de Educación
para América Latina y el Caribe

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK UNESCO, REGIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN OREALC/UNESCO SANTIAGO

2012 - 2013

**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
UNESCO, REGIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
OREALC/UNESCO SANTIAGO**

I. EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Although there have been considerable advances since 2000, particularly in access and gender parity in primary education and in the first cycle of secondary education, a great number of students finish schooling without the appropriate knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes they need to fully realize their potential. Because of inadequate educational contents and teaching and learning processes, many children, youth, and adults lack crucial elements to lead a happy and productive life. The equity issue represents the region's greatest debt; it is produced as much between countries as within their borders, and manifests itself through profound educational inequities. The lack of equitable opportunities correlates with low educational quality—the principal threat to guaranteeing rights in the region.

Disparities between countries and regions are increasing. The diversity in development levels and styles poses different demands to international cooperation, which must contribute to the so called Least Developed Countries (LDC), as well as to the new “mid-level” or “emerging” economies. In Latin America and the Caribbean many Middle Income Countries (MIC) are emerging as donors and partners for development. Those new roles and the changes in development structure and financing being established particularly in education, demand an innovative cooperative action that adjusts to these new atmospheres. In accordance with this evolution in the situation, UNESCO and international cooperation organisms have been called on to carry out a growing array of functions to help governments design and employ national, sub-regional, or regional programs that ever more sophisticated, and that constitute substantive help to the education systems in their interventions.

In this context, the decisions governments and other co-participants in education adopt now and in the years to come will be crucial to alleviate the deficiencies many countries suffer in regard to policies, data, capacities, governmental structures, financing, and awareness in the education sector—and the UNESCO is working to contribute to that challenging agenda.

II. UNESCO'S WORKING GOALS IN 2012-2013

Through its work, the UNESCO seeks to influence educational policies and practices in a balanced way, facilitating interaction between these; it also seeks to promote changes in all actors directly or indirectly involved in educational processes and to increase horizontal cooperation between countries. Keeping in mind the need for coordination between actors involved in protecting the right to education, the UNESCO contributes to strengthening the institutional networks between diverse stakeholders, such as parliamentarians, other ministries, public services, municipalities, universities, educational centers, teaching associations, etc., in implementing public educational policies and national education plans.

Based on its capacity reserves, which allow it to make valuable contributions to educational interventions that promote innovation, the UNESCO offers a technical assistance platform that promotes updating, improving, and transforming the subsystems that comprise the countries' educational systems. In this frame, it makes efforts to add to the success of Education for All, improving the coordination process, strengthening political will to intervene and invest in education, and reinforcing Member States' actions in planning, managing, and supervising efficient educational systems by generating knowledge, information and data.

III. UNESCO'S FRAMEWORK IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The UNESCO leads the Education for All (EFA) global initiative. The initiative is based on the six goals established by the countries in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, as a way to advance towards quality education for everyone in the world by 2015 (early childhood, universal primary education, literacy, youth and adult education, gender, quality); UNESCO monitors these goals through diverse technical and political mechanisms.

In the region, UNESCO leads the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (EFA/PRELAC). This strategy was conceived to fulfill the Education for All objectives in the region, which end in 2015, in a contextualized manner; and its goal is to encourage substantial changes in educational policies and practices with the intent to fulfill the objectives stated in the Dakar Framework.

IV. ACTION AREAS OF THE REGIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION: SUPPORT TO THE EDUCATIONAL SUBSYSTEMS

I.1. Quality of Education

As an organism for technical-political cooperation, the UNESCO contributes to generating information and capacities for planning, by producing data, programs, and specialized assistance for transforming and updating the capacities of public policy decision-makers able to respond to the systematic and permanent need to strengthen and update educational planning.

The UNESCO employs such actions as supporting strategic coordination, designing models, mechanisms and work plans, establishing evaluation and monitoring systems, and complementing process development, in order to transfer capacities, knowledge and data in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The office has been working to advance a conception of quality education that is relevant to the realities of the region and accepted by principal educational actors, as a way to work with the Member States to determine the quality of their systems in an integral manner, and as a basis for reinforcing their educational policies. In these efforts, we ensure that the gender perspective is incorporated transversally.

The principal actions of the UNESCO Santiago's Planning, Management, Monitoring and Evaluation Section are:

a. Planning and Information Systems: SIRI

The objective of the work done in this field is to produce and analyze relevant indicators for internationally monitoring the status of education in Latin America and the Caribbean in coordination with UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS). Through this frame, the status of Quality Education for All in the region is systematically monitored from a rights perspective, indicators for specific themes are defined, and national capacities in educational statistics are strengthened.

b. Evaluation: The Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE)

The Laboratory carries out comparative studies, basing itself on students' learning outcomes in primary school in Literature, Mathematics, and Science, which it obtains by administering tests to measure learning achievements; it is a forum for generating ideas on new models and trends for evaluating the quality of education: teachers, students and

schools. The Laboratory is imagined as an instrument for the professional formation and development of the national technical teams and evaluation systems; and it calls for strengthening the systems for evaluating student learning outcomes, teachers and schools; furthermore, it is a space for researching factors related to students' cognitive development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the current biennium, the Laboratory is in the application stage of its Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE), which will produce results towards the beginning of 2014 and which was developed through close collaboration with the Ministries of Education in 15 countries in the region, plus the Nuevo Leon state in Mexico. (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay).

c. Quality of Education:

The OREALC/UNESCO Santiago works to develop a regional conception of quality education through a rights perspective that is relevant to the region, and accepted and utilized by principal educational actors. The purpose is to work with the Member States to determine the quality of their education systems in an integral manner and to strengthen their educational policies. To this end, the office tries to foment, inform, and frame the technical debate; to create indicators and tools to define and monitor quality of education; to promote analyzing international treaties and conventions, as well as national legislations in support of the right to education and to promote strategies to guarantee quality of education, ensuring they are in tune with UNESCO's priorities.

I.2. Regional Strategy on Teachers

According to UNESCO, there is no possibility to fully exercise the right to education without substantial changes in teaching policies that aim to modify teachers' roles and professional careers, to focus these towards an effective instruction that creates the adequate conditions for students to exercise their right to learn, and that diminishes the risk to drop out of the system in search of better opportunities—a risk they are permanently exposed to and which only leads to poverty.

Following the objective of addressing the “teacher gap,” which is one of UNESCO's priorities, we seek to contribute to strengthening global efforts and to make progress in three deficient action areas in the teaching field: the capacities to generate evidence and knowledge-based policies, the capacities to plan and manage relevant policies, and the lack of financing to address the challenge.

In this framework, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago has invited the Center for Studies in Educational Policy and Practice (CEPPE) from the Universidad Católica de Chile (CEPPE) as a technical partner, to contribute to developing the Regional Strategy on Teachers for Latin America and the Caribbean. In close collaboration, this top-level alliance, along with other competent partners interested in the region, has produced relevant results that allow for approaching and offering focused assistance during the current biennium.

The themes addressed by the regional strategy, considered fundamental to improving teacher performance in the region are: initial teacher formation; continuous formation and professional development; teaching profession; and processes and institutions for public teaching policy decision-making.

The purpose of the strategy is to influence the design of regional public teaching policies. In its initial phase, the initiative produced a “state of the art” on the teacher issue and a report on criteria and guidelines for designing teaching policies relevant to the region; it also established a regional network of actors comprised of representatives with diverse

backgrounds—*experts, policy-makers, academics, teacher unions*—who have contributed to elaborating, appropriating and distributing these reports.

It is expected that the reports produced by the project, as well as the range of activities directed at developing them, with the participation of a wide regional network of actors and developed over an adequate analytical base, will serve as a basis for generating agreements that will simultaneously direct resources towards teaching policies. The 2012/2013 biennium will be dedicated to distributing these products, and to designing models and tools that will advance putting into practice the developed concepts, as well as interventions in different countries, with the purpose of implementing UNESCO's recommendations for the teaching field.

I.3. Inclusive Education

The UNESCO defines inclusive education as a process directed at responding to student diversity, increasing students' participation and reducing exclusion in and from education. Inclusion is tied to access, persistence in school, participation and learning achievements by all students, with an emphasis on those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized, constituting a fundamental urge to advance the Education for All goals. In this frame, the Santiago Office works on these actions:

- a. Regional Education Information System for Students with Disabilities (SIRIED):**
Designed in close collaboration with the region's Ministries of Education over three years, the system's objective is to rely on a collection of regionally comparable basic information and educational indicators that report on the status and needs of students with disabilities, in hopes that it will become an efficient tool for formulating, analyzing, and monitoring public actions that guarantee equitable opportunities in education. The office has already made available a digital publication on SIRIED's Proposed Methodology in Spanish and Portuguese, which is available on its website, the Ministries of Education's websites, and which has been distributed in regional and sub-regional political and technical meetings. In the current biennial, SIRIED's implementation phase has begun in eight countries in the region: Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and the Dominican Republic.
- b. Consultancy and Technical Assistance for the region's Ministries of Education through the Ibero-American Network of Cooperation for the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs (RIINEE)**
In RIINEE, Ministries or Secretariats of education from Latin America and Spain participate through the appropriate departments responsible for special education and attention to diversity. The work accomplished through RIINEE looks to seminars on training and exchange, internships between countries to support south-south cooperation, systematizing good policies and practices and creating documents and work materials. This has allowed for strengthening the capacities of the technical teams from the Ministries of Education for the development of inclusive education policies and practices that guarantee access, learning, and participation by all boys and girls—especially those that are most often excluded or discriminated in different countries. During 2012, new internships will take place between countries, the accounts from the VIII Seminar on Inclusive Education (which took place in Montevideo in October 2011) will be published, and the IX Seminar on Inclusive Education will take place.
- c. Regional Inclusive Education Observatory:**
Is an inter-agency initiative that calls for participation from the OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, the IIPE Buenos Aires (International Institute for Educational Planning), the

International Bureau of Education (IBE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), OEI (the Organization of Ibero-American States) and the CLADE (Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education), with the goal of distributing information and generating knowledge that will contribute to countries' development of their educational policies. The observatory is a follow through on the "Inclusive Education World Conference: the Way of the Future", as a result of which two studies have been conducted to contribute to designing the observatory: a review and systematization of how existing observatories in the public policy sector function and their characteristics; and an analysis using information on the social and educational panorama. During 2012 the Observatory will be in its design phase.

I.4. Educational Innovation

In order to contribute to improving the quality and equity of education, since the year 2000, the OREALC/UNESCO Santiago coordinates with the Regional Educational Innovations Network, Red Innovemos, an interactive space and permanent forum for reflection, production, exchange and distribution of knowledge and practices on educational innovations and change.

The network benefits from the participation of the region's Ministries of Education, education development and study centers, educational formal and non-formal institutions, and teachers, students and community educators from the different Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Innovemos' priority is to contribute to transforming educational practices and conceptions, generating knowledge from and for practice. A fundamental characteristic is collaborative work and collective knowledge production. All network participants simultaneously generate and use the knowledge and information produced. Innovemos incorporates action research and critical reflection as an inseparable component of innovative experiences and as support for teacher training programs and for defining educational policy.

Its principal communication and interaction tool is the www.redinnovemos.org website, that simultaneously serves as a database and as a space for distributing educational experiences, bibliography, documents, educational research and materials, and as a communication platform between network members. The website includes eight thematic areas: Curriculum Development, Professional Development, Institutional Development, Education for Sustainable Development, Education and Work, Diversity and Equity, Democracy and Citizenship, and New Technologies. Each thematic area has a conceptual framework: a theoretical frame of reference on the thematic area; a registry of educational experiences that have been especially selected and a Library section with reference documents, educational materials, bibliography and research, as well as studies on issues related to the thematic area. Furthermore, in each thematic area we can find links to related websites.

At the same time, Innovemos periodically publishes:

- a. **Monthly Newsletter:** periodically provides information on new publications posted on the Website (educational experiences, research, documents, educational materials) and updates on the network's activities, motivating members to participate and interact. The newsletter is sent through an email communication to database subscribers and institutions in the network.
- b. **Temas de Innovemos Magazine:** Quarterly, a digital magazine is edited to address a specific theme through a central article that presents topics for analysis, reflection, and conveying innovative educational experiences developing in different countries

throughout the region. There have been three publications centered on these topics: coexistence in schools, sexual education and gender equity, and education for Sustainable Development.

- c. Innovemos Collection:** a published overview of a thematic field that transcends the theme's specificity, analyzing educational innovation experiences to draw lessons learned and recommendations that promote the development of new innovations and education policies in the region. The Collection already comprises four publications in themes such as Education and Work, Democratic Co-existence and Inclusion, Cultural Diversity, and Second Chance Educational Experiences. In the year 2012, a volume on innovative educational experiences in Literacy and Youth and Adult Education will be published.

I.5. HIV/AIDS Prevention and Sexuality Education

For UNESCO, education plays a vital role in preventing HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). Its efforts in this field aim to provide youth with the knowledge and capacities they need to make healthier and safer choices.

As a specialized United Nations agency, UNESCO's contribution focuses on the key role of education in response to HIV and in achieving Universal Access [to prevention, treatment, and support]. This includes learning through formal education, non-formal activities, non-formal education, and communication through mass media and community channels. Keeping in mind that education alone cannot produce the necessary changes to halt this epidemic, the organization promotes the need to complement it with efforts towards addressing the cultural and social factors that influence people's capacities to make healthy choices and to adopt safe lifestyles and actions in all sectors of society.

To reach the goal of Universal Access, the UNESCO works to:

- Contribute country level capacities for an integral response to HIV in the education sector
- Strengthen sexuality and HIV education
- Advance gender equity and human rights protection

The OREALC/UNESCO Santiago lends support to country offices in the Latin America and Caribbean region in managing their diverse projects related to sexuality education and HIV prevention in schools and among youth.

Among the actions the Office develops in this field are:

The International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An evidence-based review aimed at schools, teachers, and health educators (UNESCO, 2009)

These reviews form the basis of UNESCO Santiago's technical support to the Ministries of education in the region, and other sector partners. Their principal objective is to offer assistance to health and education authorities, as well as other authorities dedicated to the development and implementation of sexuality education materials and programs at the school systems level. They were elaborated based on recommendations from a technical team that revised global integral sexuality education and HIV prevention experiences, reports on their effectiveness, and the curriculums used in various countries. Through learning objectives and contents based on the most effective programs, and divided by age groups from five to eighteen years of age, they offer a frame for guided access to information and knowledge for boys, girls, and youth, on sex, relationships, and HIV/STIs within a structured teaching and learning process.

a. Homophobia

Given the characteristics of the HIV epidemic in the region, homophobic school-based violence is a systematically acute issue. Since topics on harassment, or bullying, co-existence, and the culture of peace are priorities for many Ministries of Education in the region, the UNESCO Santiago promotes the strategic lines developed in the “Good Policy and Practice Booklet” (The Education Sector’s Response to Homophobic Bullying, UNESCO 2012), that will soon be available in Spanish on UNESCO Santiago’s webpage.

b. Gender

Achieving Gender Equity—understood as the eradication of injustices, disadvantages and discriminations based on the condition of male or female—is crucial to reaching the Education for All Goals (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Gender Equity aims for men and women to have the same access to using, controlling and benefitting from the goods and services available in society.

Considering that the gender issue should be regarded as a priority in education planning—from the infrastructures to the development of materials and pedagogical processes—and that full and equitable participation by women is vital to secure a sustainable future, UNESCO supports actions that foment gender equity in education. In this frame, it carries out inter-agency actions for a multisectoral approach to gender issues, promoting the United Nations Secretary-General’s campaign “UNiTE to End Violence against Women”; it also strengthens the media’s capacities to address gender-based violence in specific vulnerable zones; and it promotes harmony between public policies aimed towards HIV prevention and those aimed at addressing, preventing and eliminating violence against women through interagency collaboration with UNHCR (The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

UNESCO Santiago takes part in regional and global networks on gender, and through this participation it hopes to improve coordination with UNESCO’s developed lines of work towards gender equity.

I.6. Education for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) allows each human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to build sustainable societies.

The OREALC/UNESCO Santiago coordinates with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as a support guide for their ESD policies, programs and projects, so that the sustainable development vision is included in educational programs and their curricular proposals. These actions integrate government and non-government actors as well as research institutions. Among others, the UNESCO develops the following actions:

a. Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, DESD (2005-2014):

The UNESCO is the leading organism in DESD and coordinates the different United Nations organisms, programs, and organizations related to this field. Within its role as coordinator, UNESCO is carrying out a series of monitoring and evaluations reports (2009, 2012, and 2015), to follow progress towards the Decade’s goal and to draw lessons from the implementation phase. Diverse tools are being used to gather information such as surveys, interviews with key actors, case studies, regional consultations, and literature reviews, among others. The global reports draw from the regional reports. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, a regional report was developed in 2009 on the structures and contexts for ESD as well as two sub-

regional reports—one for Latin America and another for the English-speaking Caribbean and Haiti—on ESD processes and lessons.

b. Teacher Formation for ESD

Teachers are key actors in putting ESD into practice. The ESD concept is very complex due to its holistic and transversal vision. Because of this, it is important to equip teachers with the appropriate tools to allow them to plan their lessons in the existing curriculum's framework, but with a focus on ESD. The OREALC/UNESCO Santiago supports these processes in Latin America and the Caribbean through two projects:

- *Education for Sustainable Development: a challenge in improving education quality in Chile*
- *Regional Educational Skills for Sustainable Development Graduate program*

c. Climate Change Education

Although Latin American and Caribbean countries have the lowest Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, they are suffering the effects of climate change. It is therefore important to inform affected populations about the causes and effects of climate change and to develop institutional and personal capacities to adapt to and mitigate the local effects. In this context, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago is proposing a regional program based on two strategic lines of action: i) strengthening ESD with a focus on climate change, and ii) promoting technical-professional skills for a green economy.

The program proposes four main action areas:

- Climate change education
- Disaster risk reduction in education
- Behavior change towards sustainable lifestyles
- Making technical-professional education “green” for a green economy

I.7. Literacy and Youth and Adult Education

Lifelong literacy and youth and adult education contribute to poverty reduction and to women's education, among other fundamental goals for development. Member states from Latin America and the Caribbean, with support from the OREALC/UNESCO Santiago and UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL/UNESCO Hamburg), promote a strategy to monitor the agreements made in the Belem Framework for Action (BFA), which the countries subscribed to in the VI International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA), in 2009 in that Brazilian city.

Keeping in mind the main themes addressed by the Belem Framework for Action: policy and governance; financing; participation, inclusion and equity; and quality, the OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, in collaboration with the UIL, created a work matrix that included country advances and requirements related to the CONFINTEA VI process. This matrix was enriched with contributions by participants from 48 Member States at a meeting in Mexico in May, 2011, which was organized by the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA) in that country, in collaboration with the UIL, OREALC, and the UNESCO office in Mexico City. As a result of this work, national and regional lines of action were proposed and prioritized for the region, in consultation with the countries. In addition, relevant information has been gathered from the Member States which constitutes the basis for developing country-led regional and/or sub-regional projects, which will be supported by regional and international organisms.

Among the actions developed by UNESCO towards literacy, there is:

- a. A comparative study on the advances made by the Latin American and Caribbean countries with regard to regulations and guiding criteria to improve the quality of the literacy and youth and adult education curriculum:** Taking into consideration the diverse requirements and needs of the populations served, the study hopes to promote policies and legislation that integrate Youth and Adult Education in the public education systems and in the national reports, contributing to generating a more solid and adequate institutionalism. The hope is to establish common criteria that allow for contextualized curricular reforms that are appropriate to the current requirements of the lifelong learning framework. The results of the comparison between the regulations and curricular frames will be the basis for recommendations that encourage governments to make progress along these lines, generating better policies for the populations affected.
- b. Development of a youth and adult education observatory in Latin America:** The need for a meeting point and a space for monitoring youth and adult education policies and practices in Latin America, is a topic that has sparked a growing interest. Since the mid 2000s, Mexico's National Institute on Education (INEA) and regional collaboration organisms have shown interest in generating a space that affords visibility and that allows for monitoring public policies and practices in this field. The agreements established in CONFINTEA VI emphasize the need to supervise the Belem Framework in practice and points to how fundamental it is to propitiate South-South collaboration in international cooperation. In this context, INEA and OREALC/UNESCO Santiago signed a collaboration agreement to encourage the Youth and Adult Education Observatory in Latin America. This laboratory will be functional in 2012 under INEA's coordination and with technical support from OREALC/UNESCO Santiago.