

The Regional Project for Education in Latin in America and the Caribbean (EFA/PRELAC)

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region in the world. The differences between the “haves” and the “have nots”, instead of decreasing have been increasing by the day. This also includes access to quality social services such as education.

The six EFA goals, adopted by all UN Member States in Dakar (Senegal) in 2000, aim to provide a basic quality education, without exception, for all children, youth and adults by 2015.

The Regional Project for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (EFA/PRELAC) is the roadmap, which has been adopted by the region’s Ministers of Education to implement the substantive changes to educational policies and practices that are needed to achieve, by 2015, the EFA objectives of Dakar.



EFA/PRELAC strives to resolve issues that hamper the achievement of a quality Education for All by 2015.

Conceived as a framework of action, the EFA/PRELAC has identified five strategic areas as the focus of intervention:

- Focus 1: The contents and practices of education to construct meanings in regard to ourselves, to others, and to the world in which we live
- Focus 2: Teachers and strengthening their involvement in educational change in order to meet student learning needs.
- Focus 3: The culture of schools to convert them into participatory learning communities.
- Focus 4: Management of education systems in order to make them more flexible and to offer effective lifelong learning opportunities.
- Focus 5: Social responsibility for education in order to generate commitment to its development and results.

The EFA/PRELAC is governed by an Intergovernmental Committee, comprising all UNESCO Member States and Associate Members in Latin America and the Caribbean, represented by their respective Ministers of Education. The Committee has a Bureau of seven members nominated for a four-year period. The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, serves as the Executive Secretariat and represents the Director-General on the Committee.

The Secretariat (UNESCO) develops different activities in line with the six EFA goals and the five strategic focus areas of the EFA/PRELAC. UNESCO thus provides technical support to the development of educational policies and practices in the priority areas. It also evaluates the impact of educational policies and programmes implemented by Member States, and it encourages the participation of the public sector, civil society and development agencies.

The EFA/PRELAC Bureau (currently Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Trinidad and Tobago) met for the first time in July 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago. On this occasion, the Ministers made three recommendations for UNESCO to implement.

Increase the effectiveness of the EFA/PRELAC

- Conduct an impact analysis of the effects of the present political, economic and cultural landscape on education
- Harmonize the educational agendas of the development agencies working in education
- Monitor the region's progress towards Education for All
- Design a Joint Programme, having as its priority the achievement of the EFA goals by 2015.

Offer specialised technical assistance to Member States in the region

- Provide support for a more effective management of educational systems, and improved allocation and use of resources
- Design mechanisms for better investment decisions. Develop joint actions between the Ministries of Education and Finance on investment in education
- Analyze the situation for youth in the region by offering educational opportunities which meet their needs
- Take stock of the use of the ITCs in education as a key emerging issue
- Formulate and implement an integral framework of action regarding teachers in the region
- Work on education in emergencies, including post-disaster and post-conflict contexts.

Support EFA/PRELAC through international cooperation

- Organize a meeting on innovative financing for education
- Provide guidance for a better coordination, allocation and utilization of development cooperation resources.

The Bureau meeting in Rio on 25 November 2010 addressed key issues for the EFA/PRELAC, including a status report by UNESCO on the implementation of the Bureau's recommendations, followed by a discussion by the Ministers on a regional plan of action for the period 2011 to 2015 and beyond.