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### Report

36 C/REP/7

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## REPORT BY THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE REGIONAL EDUCATION PROJECT FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (EFA/PRELAC)

### OUTLINE

**Source:** Article 4, paragraph 9, of the Statutes of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee for the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (EFA/PRELAC).

**Background:** Pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 9, of its Statutes, the Intergovernmental Regional Committee for the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean submits to the General Conference a report on its activities in 2010 and 2011.

**Purpose:** This document reports on action taken on the recommendations formulated by the Committee, composed of all countries in the region, in order to provide technical advice on education policy making within the framework of the strategies designed for the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (EFA/PRELAC).

The project is a strategy designed to meet the goals of education for all goals in the countries of the region. It aims to foster substantial changes in education policies and practices in order to achieve the goals of the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action. The project's technical goals are monitored by the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Regional Committee for the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (EFA/PRELAC), composed of seven countries of the region. The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago) acts as the Committee's secretariat and performs the specialized technical task of following up the Committee's recommendations.

1. The Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (EFA/PRELAC) is a strategy designed to meet the goals of Education for All (EFA) in the countries of the region. It aims to foster substantial changes in education policies and in practices in order to achieve the goals of the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action.

2. EFA/PRELAC is spearheaded by an intergovernmental committee, which is comprised of all UNESCO Member States and Associate Members in the region, represented by their ministers of education. The Committee has a Bureau composed of seven members with a four-year term of office. UNESCO serves as EFA/PRELAC's executive secretariat.

3. The first Bureau of the EFA/PRELAC Intergovernmental Committee, established in 2007, is composed of Argentina (Chairperson), Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago (Vice-Chairpersons), Brazil and Dominica (Rapporteurs). The duties of the Bureau are laid down in the Statutes of the Intergovernmental Committee, approved by the General Conference in 35 C/Resolution 10.

4. The first EFA/PRELAC Bureau session was held in Trinidad and Tobago on 21 and 22 July 2009. The second EFA/PRELAC Bureau session was held on 25 November 2010 in Rio de Janeiro. The recommendations adopted at those meetings have guided the technical work of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago) and of teams in the region's UNESCO offices (35 C/REP/7).<sup>1</sup>

5. At the same time, UNESCO, acting as technical secretariat, has made great efforts to promote the Intergovernmental Committee's recommendations in harmony with the implementation of the programme and budget. This entailed using UNESCO's technical skills to contribute to the achievement of EFA goals by giving advice, building capacities, monitoring and providing information and data. The action taken to that end is reported below under three headings, namely "efficiency of EFA/PRELAC", "specialized technical advice" and "international cooperation".

## **EFFICIENCY OF EFA/PRELAC**

6. Ministers members of the Bureau have called for EFA/PRELAC goals and activities to be formulated more precisely to meet the region's most pressing needs. UNESCO has carried out the activities set out below:

- (a) EFA/PRELAC technical meeting held in 2011, concurrently with the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review Regional Preparatory Meeting, in conjunction with the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UNDESA), to prepare for the discussion of education scheduled for July 2011 in Geneva. The meeting was held in Buenos Aires on 12 and 13 May and matters crucial to progress in achieving EFA in Latin America and the Caribbean, namely teachers, equality and quality, were discussed. Information and communication technology (ICT) in education was also discussed as a key teaching/learning tool.<sup>2</sup>
- (b) Design of an early warning mechanism for education in situations of economic crisis, consisting of education indicators and indicators specific to the economic system that affect the education system, for decision-making purposes and as a means of protecting EFA achievements and lessening the impact of the crisis.<sup>3</sup>
- (c) Alliances with regional and subregional bodies for joint action in pursuit of common goals. Several cooperation agreements between UNESCO and those bodies have been concluded, including the alliance with the Spanish Agency for International

<sup>1</sup> See the meeting's recommendations at [http://portal.unesco.org/geography/es/ev.php-URL\\_ID=8584&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/geography/es/ev.php-URL_ID=8584&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>2</sup> See the meeting's recommendations at <http://www.orealc.cl/ecosoc-lac-2011/documentos/>

<sup>3</sup> The proposal is available at <http://www.unesco.org/santiago>

Development Cooperation (AECID), the Ministry of Education of Spain, Plan International – an NGO, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Organization of American States (OAS) for the development of indicators for the recommendations adopted by the Summit of the Americas, and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI).

- (d) Drafting of “*State of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*”, a report reviewing and measuring the region’s progress in achieving the EFA goals within the EFA/PRELAC framework.

## **SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL ADVICE**

7. Inequality is the major problem in the region, both among and within countries. Poor quality education exacerbates inequality of opportunity. UNESCO has carried out various activities, with emphasis on the points set out below.

### *Action to promote EFA goals*

- (e) EFA promotion. The first meeting of the Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Parliamentarians for Education, led by UNESCO’s Sector for External Relations and Public Information, was held in Chile on 4 and 5 May 2010 in order to strengthen cooperation with legislatures and their working committees and thus promote EFA goals through the adoption of appropriate national legislation and budgets.<sup>4</sup>

### *Action for youth and the culture of peace*

- (f) Contribution to the 2010 World Youth Conference. UNESCO led five workshops geared to having “education” and “youth” placed as priority issues on the education agenda; it also drafted and distributed a document containing experiential data on pro-youth action in key issues.<sup>5</sup>
- (g) Public education policy making for a culture of peace. OREALC/UNESCO Santiago has produced the publication on the fourth Education for Peace Days in Latin America and the Caribbean, with AECID support.
- (h) Production of information on coexistence in schools. OREALC/UNESCO Santiago has produced a matrix of indicators on coexistence in schools in order to contribute to the implementation of action plans by the school community. By the end of 2011, the matrix will have been used in 90 schools in Chile. The experiment will be systematized for use by countries as and when required.

### *Education in post-conflict and post-disaster situations (PCPD)*

- (i) Rehabilitation of education systems adversely affected by natural disasters or conflict situations. OREALC/UNESCO Santiago formed part of the emergency team in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, immediately after the January 2010 earthquake, supporting the design of United Nations Flash Appeal projects to meet the country’s most pressing basic education needs. Furthermore, it contributed to the rehabilitation of Chile’s education system after the earthquake and tsunami of 27 February 2010, by drawing on the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to contribute to the building of “safe learning environments” (63 classrooms), providing the affected districts with psychosocial counselling and educational planning, repairing the school infrastructure and, in conjunction with the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

<sup>4</sup> The report and declaration adopted at the meeting, attended by 22 countries, may be found at [http://portal.unesco.org/en/files/47552/12748827893Final\\_Documents\\_FLACPED\\_1.pdf/Final%2BDocuments%2BFLACPED%2BI.pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/en/files/47552/12748827893Final_Documents_FLACPED_1.pdf/Final%2BDocuments%2BFLACPED%2BI.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The document is available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001891/189108s.pdf>

(IOC), giving disaster-prevention training to educational communities. Lastly, it contributed to the rehabilitation of the education system in Guatemala after flooding in August 2010.

#### *Quality of education*

- (j) OREALC/UNESCO Santiago performs two high-level technical tasks as inputs to public education policy design and decision-making. Both include national capacity building. The first consists in updating and disseminating indicators that reflect the education systems' effectiveness through its Regional Information System (SIRI) which delivers data from all countries in the region. The second consists in collecting comparable data on pupils' attainment through studies by the Latin American Laboratory for the Assessment of Quality in Education (LLECE), which is conducting the third study, the results of which should be available in 2013.

#### *Teachers for quality education*

- (k) Design of the teachers for EFA in Latin America and the Caribbean strategy. The strategy, led by OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, is designed to produce a state-of-the-art report on issues crucial to the strengthening of the teaching corps in Latin America and the Caribbean, establish a network of experts and lay down public education policy criteria/guidelines for decision-making in this field. The first strategy-related meeting was held in Lima on 7 and 8 July 2011. The strategy's results will be available in June 2012.

#### *ICT – a tool for quality education*

- (l) Holding of the first regional conference on the impact of ICT in education. The conference was held in Brasilia from 23 to 25 April 2010 and organized by OREALC/UNESCO Santiago and the UNESCO Office in Brasilia. The purposes of the meeting were to learn about the state of the art and to draw up a plan for addressing the issue. An action programme for the use of ICT in education, including cooperation with the private sector, was drawn up on the basis of the conference. The programme is under way and all countries in the region may receive information that it produces.

### **SUPPORT EFA/PRELAC THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

8. In Latin America and the Caribbean the level of investment in education is unequal, ranging from 1.2% to 13%.<sup>6</sup> OREALC/UNESCO Santiago has devised a convergence strategy for the right to education, which consists in supporting education systems jointly with other agencies in order to achieve the EFA goals and MDGs set for 2015 more quickly and ensure that post-2015 tasks will be coherent and consistent with the countries' interests. Convergence will enable technical work to be done to assist and strengthen the supporting systems required for education in the region: information-generating, indicator, evaluation and monitoring mechanisms; accountability systems; technical assistance for programme development and policy making, among others.

9. UNESCO is conducting various activities under the strategy which, together with activities already carried out, have made it possible to move the boundaries of the education agenda.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2008, Latin America and the Caribbean countries earmarked an average of some 4.7% of GDP for education. That percentage is rather close to the average investment of 5% of GDP recorded by OECD countries. Cuba is the country that invests the most, with 13%, while the other incur more conservative expenditure amounting to some 6% to 7% in six countries only (Barbados, Bolivia, Jamaica, Guyana, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). In the other 13 countries, investment in education ranges from 2% to 4%. The extreme case is Bermuda, which earmarks only 1.2%.

- FA/PRELAC has refocused and consolidated its scope and impact by revitalizing its roles as a key strategic framework and high-level political forum. Under its remit, work on the most pressing issues is under way and attention being paid to the main unresolved problems on the regional education agenda, namely quality and teachers as the main players. The results of strategies under way have further increased the interest of the region's ministries that are participating actively in activities organized by UNESCO.
- The efforts made to mitigate the impact of natural disasters on the education systems of countries in the region have been vital in protecting EFA achievements and in contributing to the renewal of the education agenda for the right to education that is at risk in such situations.
- UNESCO's steadfast commitment to the conduct of activities in the field of international cooperation has been systematic. Owing to the consistency shown by UNESCO in the technical support granted to other bodies in the region, the common agenda to achieve *convergence* has been tightened up. Assistance in unveiling the common agenda and a variety of skills, to which agencies have made various, complementary contributions, is giving rise to a common discourse on the need to converge – a discourse that will no doubt bear fruit in the next few years.

10. The lessons learnt from the biennium entail continued efforts to resolve such problems as the quality of education and, above all, teachers. In mobilizing education stakeholders to address the hard cores of problems, by giving them information and advice for decision-making, UNESCO will continue to surpass itself, to achieve new goals and to encounter new challenges to the right to quality education for all – the main goal and commitment in Latin America and the Caribbean.