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Mapping regional education monitoring, reporting and benchmarking mechanisms

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The paper was prepared by UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report, Co-chairs of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee Review, Monitoring and Reporting Working Group, for the 4th meeting of the Steering Committee in February 2018.

Ref doc 1 - Mapping regional education monitoring, reporting and benchmarking mechanisms

Background and objective

A session at the June 2017 meeting of the SDG–Education 2030 Steering Committee examined the role of regional organizations as potential peer learning mechanisms for countries to exchange information on their education policies and systems. The background paper to the session showed that almost all regions in the world have established entities that allow countries to share information on education and learn from each other (GEMR, 2017). But the background paper also concluded that strengthening policy dialogue and peer learning mechanisms at the regional level required, among other, the following:

- a regional education strategy, with clear priorities, targets, resources and monitoring frameworks;
- the alignment of regional education strategies with the global education strategy, represented by SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, with regional perspectives for how SDG 4 targets will be achieved; and
- the alignment of regional and global education targets and monitoring frameworks through a process to be facilitated by UNESCO regional offices and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

The background paper called for a mapping of regional and sub-regional strategies, targets and monitoring frameworks. Accordingly, the Steering Committee requested its Review, Monitoring and Reporting Working Group to produce such a mapping of education strategies and agendas, focusing on their:

- monitoring frameworks
- reporting mechanisms (against the strategy and/or the monitoring framework); and
- benchmarking and threshold setting processes

This note presents the main findings of this mapping exercise. As the number of organizations with explicit education monitoring frameworks is limited, the level of alignment of the regional education monitoring frameworks with the Education 2030 Agenda is not analysed here. Several of those regional education strategies have gone or are going through a process of alignment of that type, which is expected to have a positive impact on coordination between the regional and the global levels, as well as on the possibility that an increasing number of regional education strategies will develop their monitoring frameworks and reporting mechanisms.

Regional education strategies and their monitoring and reporting frameworks

Education is a central theme throughout the 2030 Agenda, which includes SDG 4 on education, education-related targets within seven other SDGs, and education implications for all SDGs. In particular, SDG 4 is ambitious and aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all” by 2030. The goal consists of ten targets to guide countries along a transformative path to a sustainable education agenda (UIS, 2017).

However, the SDG agenda is not the only cross-national one to which countries are committed. Different regions and sub-regions have reached agreements on certain goals and targets even before the approval of the SDGs. The existence of these other cross-national commitments requires coordination of the implementation processes if the priorities are to be achieved efficiently without duplication of effort.

A crucial step is setting a monitoring mechanism to help with the identification of advances and difficulties in the implementation of these education strategies. Table 1 presents the summary results of an information collection process. Additional information with links to selected documents is

available in the annex. *The information is not complete and has not been fully validated, but the aim of this note is precisely to generate interest and update the data.*

Organization with education in its mandate	Education agenda / strategy	Monitoring framework	Report on strategy / monitoring framework	Targets and benchmarks in monitoring framework
East Asia and the Pacific				
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	Work Plan on Education 2016-2020	(...)	Yes	No
Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)	Pacific Education Development Framework	(...)	(...)	No
Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)	Education Agenda 2035	(...)	(...)	No
SPS Pacific Community	Education Quality Assessment Programme	Yes	Yes	No
Europe and Northern America				
Council of Europe (COE)	–	(...)	(...)	No
European Union (EU)	Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Latin America and the Caribbean				
Caribbean Community (CARICOM)	Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy	Yes	No	No
Central American Educational and Cultural Corporation (CECC)	Central America Education Programme (PEC)	Yes	Yes	No
Organization of American States (OAS)	Inter-American Education Agenda	In process of development	No	No
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	OECS Education Sector Strategy	Yes	Yes	No
Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI)	Metas 2021	Yes	Yes	No
Northern Africa and Western Asia				
Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)	–	(...)	(...)	No
South and West Asia				
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)	SAARC Development Goals. Taking SDGs Forward.	In process of development	No	No

Organization with education in its mandate	Education agenda / strategy	Monitoring framework	Report on strategy / monitoring framework	Targets and benchmarks in monitoring framework
Sub-Saharan Africa				
African Union (AU)	Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025	In process of development	No	No
Southern African Development Community (SADC)	Process of update of Protocol on Education and Training / Regional Implementation Plan 2007-15	(...)	(...)	No
Cross-regional organizations				
Commonwealth	Commonwealth Education Policy Framework	In process of development	Yes	No
Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)	Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic World	(...)	(...)	No
Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)	–	(...)	(...)	No
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	–	(...)	Yes	No

The main findings of this mapping exercise are the following:

- Several – though not all – regional organizations with an education mandate have education strategies or plans in place. Many are being influenced strongly by SDG 4 and aim to align with it.
- Many organizations have (or are in the process of developing) a monitoring framework although few report against the implementation of their education strategies using the monitoring framework. In some cases, such as the Commonwealth and the OECD, there is an education monitoring report but not linked to a time-bounded education strategy.
- Only one organization, the European Union, has defined benchmarks or minimum thresholds for the indicators in its regional education agenda. The OECD has also constructed a set of benchmarks for monitoring its Member States' progress towards SDG 4 targets but these are not linked to a specific regional agenda (Thapa, 2018).

In addition to regional education strategies, many regions also have processes in place to implement the Education 2030 Agenda regionally, which may result in region-specific monitoring frameworks. UNESCO coordinates these processes through the leadership of its Regional Bureaus for Education¹.

¹ Arab States, Regional Arab SDG4/Education 2030 Support Group; Asia and the Pacific, Regional Network of National Coordinators for SDG4-Education 2030; Latin America and the Caribbean, the Technical Group for SDG 4 – E2030 Implementation Roadmap for Latin America and the Caribbean; West and Central Africa, Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA)

Recommendations

On the basis of these findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- All regional organizations with an education mandate and an education strategy with clear goals would benefit from a **monitoring framework** and a regular **report** informing on progress in its implementation.
- For those organizations seeking to build an education monitoring framework, the **SDG 4 Thematic Indicator Framework** provides important guidance for building a regional set of indicators. Regional discussions will be facilitated by indicator definitions agreed at global level through the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 – Education 2030. The UIS can help to facilitate those processes based on its experience at national, regional and global levels.
- The possibilities of **cooperation between organizations at the global and regional level** for data collection to serve the monitoring frameworks needs to be explored. This should be approached on a case by case basis considering the existence already of several mechanisms of cooperation for data production and exchange (e.g. UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat education statistics framework).
- Coordination between the global and regional monitoring mechanisms for the Education 2030 agenda is important. **SDG 4-specific mechanisms** being developed in the regions, led by UNESCO, are very important and should rely on the SDG 4 Thematic Indicator Framework as much as possible before the necessary modifications and adaptations required to address regional contexts.
- Custodian agencies of SDG 4 indicators should be more present in the **governance structures of regional monitoring mechanisms** to help increase coordination between regional and global levels.
- Some regional organizations need support to strengthen their **capacity to report** against the implementation of their education strategy and its monitoring framework. The experience of the Global Education Monitoring Report can provide useful guidance for how these organizations can report on their education progress.
- The experience of setting **benchmarks and thresholds** in the monitoring frameworks is limited to a few cases only, a situation that surely reflects the complexities of those processes involving both political and technical considerations. Although in principle the establishment of benchmarks can help policy makers to determine priorities for monitoring, more in depth analysis of these experiences are needed to determine if these mechanisms are making a difference when comparing with cases that have not set explicit benchmarks or targets.

References

GEMR (2017) Strengthening Peer Learning of Education Policies for SDG 4: The Role of Regional Organizations. https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/SDG4Paper_References.pdf

Steering Committee (2017) Meeting Report, 3rd Meeting of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, 29 – 30 June 2017, New York <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002529/252973E.pdf>

Thapa, A. (2018) SDG 4 Benchmarking. Reviews and Recommendations. Paper prepared for UIS for the 4th meeting of the TCG, held in Dubai, 17-18 January 2018

UIS (2017) SDG 4 Data Digest 2017. The Quality Factor: Strengthening National Data to Monitor Sustainable Development Goal 4. <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/quality-factor-strengthening-national-data-2017-en.pdf>

Annex

African Union (AU)

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063.pdf		Yes https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/29958-doc-cesa_-_english-v9.pdf	Yes	No	No
Name of last document	Agenda 2063		Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025	CESA Indicators Framework		
Date of last document	April 2015		September 2015	June 2017		
Reference period	2013 - 2063		2016-2025	2016 - 2025		
Responsible body	African Union Commission		African Union Commission	African Union Commission		

CARICOM

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes http://caricom.org/		Yes	Yes	No	No
Name of last document	Treaty of Chaguaramas		Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy (16 key outputs)	Key Performance Indicators in HRD 2030 Strategy		
Date of last document	1973		2017	2017	1973	
Reference period			2017 - 2030	2017 - 2030		
Responsible body	Conference of Heads of Government		Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD)	Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD)		

Central American Educational and Cultural Corporation (CECC)

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes http://www.sica.int/cecc/		Yes, recently updated.	Yes, under revision to align with the new PEC http://www.sica.int/cecc/indicadores_educativos.aspx	No	No
Name of last document	Convenio Constitutivo de la Coordinación Educativa y Cultural Centroamericana (CECC)		Central-America Education Program (PEC) 2030 (6 targets)	Regional System of Educational Indicators (SRIE) (22 indicators)		
Date of last document	1982		2016	June 2017		
Reference period	(...)		2013 - 2030	Currently data available for 1995-2015		
Responsible body	Heads of State meeting / Council of Ministers of Education		Council of Ministers of Education	CECC Secretariat		

European Commission

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Name of last document	Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en		Education and training 2020 (ET 2020), 2016 New Skills Agenda for Europe http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en	Education and training 2020 (ET 2020)	1. Education and Training Monitor EU and country reports 2. Sustainable Development in the European Union	
Date of last document	2009		2009		2012	2009
Reference period	2009 - 2020		2009 - 2020	2009 - 2020	2009 - 2020	2009 - 2020
Responsible body	European Commission		European Commission	European Commission	European Commission	European Commission

Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes http://www.oecs.org/		Yes http://www.oecs.org/edmu-resources?task=document.viewdoc&id=520	Yes http://www.oecs.org/edmu-resources?task=document.viewdoc&id=520	Yes	No
Name of last document	Treaty of Basseterre		OECS Education Sector Strategy (7 goals)	Key Performance Indicators in the OECS Education Sector Strategy	Education Statistical Digest 2016	
Date of last document	1981		2012	2012	2017	
Reference period			2012 - 2021	2012 - 2021	2014 - 2015	
Responsible body	Heads of Government of the Member States		OECS Council of Ministers	OECS Council of Ministers	OECS Commission	

Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes		No	Yes http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/49338320.pdf	Yes	No
Name of last document				Education Indicator Framework	Education at a glance	
Date of last document				2017	1992	
Reference period						
Responsible body				OECD's Indicators of Education Systems (INES) Programme	OECD's INES Programme and EAG team	

Organisation of Ibero-American States

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes http://www.oei.es/acer-cade/estatutos-oei		Yes http://www.oei.es/iesme/metas2021	Yes http://www.oei.es/iesme/informes-miradas	Yes http://www.oei.es/iesme/informes-miradas	No
Name of last document	(Statute)		Metas 2021 (11 targets)	Metas 2021, Chapter 11 (39 indicators)	Miradas	
Date of last document	1987		2010	2010	2017	
Reference period	1987		2010-2021	2010-2021	Annual, since 2011	
Responsible body	Summit of Heads of State / Government		Conference of Ministers of Education	OEI Secretariat / IESME	OEI Secretariat / IESME	

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Name of last document	Pacific SDG Taskforce		Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development	Pacific Regional Headline Indicator Framework	Pacific SDG Monitoring Report	
Date of last document	2016		2017	2017	2018	
Reference period	2016 - 2030		2016 - 2030	2016 - 2030	2016 - 2017	
Responsible body	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat		Pacific Island Forum Leaders	Pacific SDG Taskforce	Pacific SDG Taskforce	

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes http://saarc-sec.org/download/publications/TAKING_SDGs_FORWARD_saarc-sec_20100616032736.pdf		Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Name of last document	SAARC Development Goals (SDGs): taking SDGs forward		Covering all 10 targets for 2030	Agreed to develop it and has to be endorsed by ministerial meeting	Not yet produced	
Date of last document	2010					
Reference period	2004					
Responsible body	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)		Conference of Ministers of Education	SAARC secretariat		

SPC Pacific Community

	Education as part of its agenda?	If so	An education strategy / plan / policy ?	An education monitoring framework ?	A report on its plan / monitoring framework?	Specific targets and benchmarks in its monitoring framework?
Does the organization have:	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Name of last document	Education Quality Assessment Programme		PEDF/REF	PEDF/REF	PEDF/REF	
Date of last document	n.k.		2009/2018	2009/2018	2009/2018	
Reference period	2018 - 2021?		2009 - 2015/ 2018 - 2030	2009-2015/ 2018-2030	2009-2015/ 2018-2030	
Responsible body	Pacific Board for Education Quality		Pacific Heads of Education Systems	Pacific Heads of Education Systems	Pacific Heads of Education, Systems	