

West and Central Africa Region
Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group (R-EiE WG)
Terms of Reference - July 2018, revised February 2021

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I. Context

The West and Central Africa region experiences recurrent emergencies caused by conflict and natural hazards, including floods and epidemics, which greatly hamper access to and continuity of education. Given the high proportion of children and young people among the region's forcibly displaced populations, protecting the right to education - availability, accessibility, quality and adaptability - is essential.

In 2020, the numerous crises have persisted in the region: 8 countries have a humanitarian response plan (HNO/HRP) and over 30 million children are in need of education in emergencies. In addition, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that emerged in 2020 has interrupted the learning of millions of children and youth. More than 128 million children and young people were directly affected by national school closures in West and Central Africa (schools in all 24 countries in the region were closed for several months). School closures have jeopardised progress in access to education and learning in a region where nearly 41 million children aged 6-15 are out of school. The poorest and most marginalised children and young people, particularly in humanitarian and fragile contexts, also face additional risks from limited access to essential services such as school feeding programmes, disease prevention information, water and sanitation and health services.

The devastating impact of these crises on national education systems - the primary consequence of which is the interruption of children's access to education and a protective environment - requires a quality humanitarian response in the education sector. Furthermore, the anticipatory integration of risk and disaster reduction measures into the education systems of the region would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the response, while strengthening the resilience of the systems.

The establishment of this Regional Working Group is in line with measures and decisions taken in the context of the humanitarian reform (2006), including the creation of the Global Education Cluster, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, as well as the adoption in July 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly of resolution A/RES/64/290, which *"urges Member States to implement strategies and policies that ensure and support the realization of the right to education as an integral part of humanitarian assistance and action¹"*. Experience has also shown that *"In emergency situations through to recovery, quality education provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives² »*.

While the Working Group continues to focus primarily on critical issues within education in emergencies and crisis situations, it has also been shaped by the changing context in West and Central Africa, which is why the terms of reference have been updated and expanded to reflect the current context in the region. The increase in refugee flows and the growing phenomenon of internal displacement in the context of the inclusion of these populations in national education systems requires, among other things, that the mandate of the Working Group deals with these issues. Similarly, the group's mandate requires it to make the link between emergency and development, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees³ and the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education (SDG 4). Thus, in January 2021, the inclusion of the Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group (R-EiE WG) within the regional coordination for SDG 4⁴, was endorsed.

¹ https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/290&Lang=F

² [Normes minimales pour l'éducation: préparation, interventions, relèvement \(INEE\)](#)

³ <https://www.unhcr.org/fr/vers-un-pacte-mondial-sur-les-refugies.html>

⁴ <http://www.education2030-africa.org/index.php/fr>

II. Mission and Objectives of the Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group

The Regional Education in Emergencies Working Group (R-EiE WG) was created to mirror some of the efforts of the Global Education Cluster at the regional level; to participate in advocacy for the continuity of education during emergencies and to strengthen regional visibility of education needs; to improve data collection and analysis; to strengthen information sharing and coordination among regional education actors; and to provide technical support to countries in the region, through national Education Clusters and Local Education Partner Groups (LEGs).

The Regional Working Group aims to establish a framework for exchange, joint action, experience sharing and advocacy in order to build the capacity of regional and national education actors at different stages of an emergency - preparedness, response and recovery - on risk reduction and on the nexus between humanitarian and development actions.

The group also assumes a sub-regional representative of the African Union's Peace and Education Cluster, which aims to support the implementation of the CESA 2016-2025 strategy⁵ in the areas of peace education and protecting education from attack.

Specific Objectives:

- Facilitate coordination between EiE actors to harmonise the response in the region;
- Support and harmonise EiE data collection in the countries of the region, and produce regular regional analyses;
- Share information and analysis on humanitarian needs and responses in the countries of the region (regional and sub-regional scale);
- Identify, collect and disseminate lessons learned and good practices;
- Identify needs and gaps and propose actions to support country offices and national education clusters to improve the performance of their response;
- Analyse training needs at national and regional level and ensure capacity building accordingly;
- Establish and carry out joint advocacy and resource mobilisation actions in collaboration with the Regional Coordination Group on SDG 4 (RCG4);
- Promote and contextualise tools for education in emergencies and protracted crises and keep members informed of the latest developments in the field;
- Coordinate education activities and strategies with other sectors and identify avenues for collaboration, particularly with the Protection, Health, Food Security, Nutrition, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sectors.

III. Participation and Leadership

The Group is open to any organisation or agency with education programmes in humanitarian situations in one or more countries in the West and Central Africa region or which is interested in developing its capacity in this area.

Each member undertakes to participate actively in the meetings and exchanges of the group, and to share the tools, documents and analyses produced at regional level with their national focal points. Each member represents an organisation/agency and is responsible for reporting back to his/her organisation on the exchanges within the Working Group, as well as feeding into all regional discussions. The leadership of the Group is provided by two member agencies/organisations of the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG).

⁵ https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/33178-wd-cesa_-_french_-final.pdf

Meetings are held on a monthly basis, but their frequency and format may vary according to the regional context and country needs.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Co-leads (*UNICEF and an International NGO, elected every two years*)

- Represent the Working Group at the Regional Coordination Group on SDG 4 (RCG4) meetings as well as at regional intersectoral meetings (IASC);
- Liaise with the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) for the preparation of meetings (agenda setting, preparation of interventions, etc.);
- Participate in the monthly SAG meetings to define the strategic orientations of the Group, the work plan, the actions to be carried out, etc;
- Prepare and share the documents of the monthly meetings (agenda, minutes, presentations, etc.) with the members of the Working Group;
- Ensure that the Working Group webpage on the OCHA platform is up to date and that all relevant documents are regularly uploaded;
- Maintain regular liaison with the RCG4 secretariat, share documents from the R-EiE WG meetings and complete all documents required by the RCG4 coordination (work plans, list of members, etc.);
- Maintain the Working Group mailing list and regularly share relevant documents for the region.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG):

- The SAG is the Strategic Advisory Group of the Education in Emergencies sector at regional level.
- The SAG is composed of the following members, elected by all members of the Working Group:
 - Co-leads of the R-EiE WG
 - 1 UN Agency
 - 2 INGOS
 - 1 or 2 Bilateral Donors
- The SAG performs the following functions:
 - Identification of regional strategic priorities for the EiE sector and definition of common orientations;
 - Identification of gaps in the regional response and definition of a roadmap to support countries in the region;
 - Definition of a common advocacy strategy;
 - Maintaining transparent and regular communication of decision-making processes to the members of the R-EiE WG.