Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA)

ACTIVITIES REPORT

January – December 2018
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I. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the essential role of education as a driver of sustainable development, in 2015 the international community adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the fourth of which is dedicated to education. SDG4, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” and its corresponding targets are at the heart of a unique and revitalized agenda, Education 2030, that leaves no one behind and is simultaneously holistic, ambitious, transformative and universal. SDG4 reinforces the need to scale up efforts to increase access, equity, inclusion, quality and learning objectives and encompasses a broad scope through its promotion of lifelong learning.

The African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063 “The Africa We Want” is a framework outlining the AU’s strategy for socio-economic and sustainable development on the continent over the next 50 years. Within the 2063 Agenda is the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25) which contains the AU’s post-2015 strategic plan for education across Africa.

It is within the context of these two education agendas that the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA) was established on May 19, 2016. Members of the RCG4-WCA have established a Terms of Reference (TOR) and biennial work plan to implement activities relevant to the education agenda throughout West and Central Africa (WCA), taking into account each country’s unique context and aspirations for development, and agreeing to collaborate with the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region.

This report presents the current composition of the group and its working modalities and outlines the RCG4-WCA’s achievements over the course of 2018. The recommendations herein are derived from an analysis of the group’s progress since its formation, including monitoring of previous recommendations and the addition of new, strategic responses to prior recommendations.

The report concludes with a way forward for the group in 2019, with the goal of increasing the group’s functionality and its commitment to realizing the aspirations of its members.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE RCG4-WCA

Following the creation of the RCG4-WCA, its members created and ratified a TOR for the group. Members agreed on a common vision, key functions, group structure, management and the responsibilities and working modalities of each of its different components.
1. Vision, functions and working modalities

The RCG4-WCA’s TOR describes the group’s joint vision - “through synergy and coherence in the actions of member organizations at country and regional levels, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in WCA countries.”

To capitalize on its vision, the group is guided by four key functions:

1. Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience, expertise and information, as well as collaboration;
2. Implement joint initiatives to support the development of education in countries, in alignment with SDG4, its targets and with CESA 16-25;
3. Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence at the country level; and
4. Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with other coordination mechanisms in the region and on other continents.

The group and its task teams employ four overarching working modalities:

- Analytical work & tools development
- Knowledge management
- In-country support
- Capacity development

2. Composition

The RCG4-WCA is comprised of a Chair, plenary group, individual task teams, a Steering Team and the Secretariat. Each structure within the RCG4-WCA has its particular objectives, responsibilities and management structure.

The Plenary Group

The plenary group is composed of focal points designated by each of the RCG4-WCA’s 26 member organizations. As stated in the TOR, the plenary group aims to meet quarterly and has convened on eleven occasions since its formation in 2016, until December 2018. Three meetings were held in 2018, as well as an annual retreat, which took place on December 13, 2018. The Plenary group is an information sharing body, whereby focal points from each member organization come together to share experiences, resources and expertise.

The plenary group’s principle achievements in 2018 include: approval of the 2016-17 Activities report, approval of the 2018-19 Work plan, renewal of the Steering team, mobilization of support for the

The Steering Team

The RCG4-WCA Steering team has five seats, one for each of the following: the Chair (UNESCO), the United Nations (UN), civil society, multilateral organizations and one representative of additional education partners. The current members are UNICEF, CAMES, CONFEMEN, FAWE and ANCEFA. FAWE and ANCEFA jointly represent civil society and occupy one seat. UNESCO’s Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa (Sahel) Director par interim and Chief of the Education Sector, Gwang-Chol Chang, is the Chair of the RCG4-WCA and represents UNESCO on the Steering team. The Steering team meets prior to each plenary group meeting in order to provide oversight and guidance, as well as to aid the Secretariat in organizing plenary group meetings and activities. The Steering team met on four occasions over the course of 2018, in January, May, September and December.

In May 2018, the plenary group launched the process of renewing the Steering team to coincide with the end of the Steering team’s two-year mandate, and in accordance with the RCG4-WCA TOR. Members provided input on the renewal process through an online forum and a discussion during the September 18 Plenary meeting. The Secretariat compiled forum comments into a Steering Team Proposition, which, once approved by members, would amend the RCG4-WCA TOR. During the annual plenary group retreat, members accepted the Steering Team Proposition and agreed on a consultation process to determine the new members of the Steering team by February 2019.

The Task Teams

There are currently six task teams within the RCG4-WCA, each focusing on a thematic topic directly related to one or more of the SDG4 targets. Four central working modalities, as well as particular modalities related to their self-defined scope of work, guide the RCG4-WCA’s task teams.

A seventh task team, “Learning to Live Together” (LTLT), aligned with SDG4 target 7, held its first consultation meeting on December 12, 2018. Partners will continue to articulate their interests and priorities for the task team, as well as identify a lead and co-lead organization in 2019.

Below is an outline of each task team, its lead(s) organization(s), current members, objective(s) and principal achievements over the course of 2018:
1. **Education Systems Strengthening (SYSTeam)**

**Lead:** UNESCO; **co-lead:** UNICEF

**Members:** ADEA, African Development Bank, FAWE, GPE, UNHCR, UNESCO-IIPE-Pole de Dakar and UNESCO Institute for Statistics

**Overview:** Progressing towards SDG4-Education 2030, central to the achievement of all SDGs, requires careful planning and monitoring of national education systems. Efforts to develop sound education sector policies and strategies is key as it enables countries to engage in productive dialogue with education stakeholders.

In this context, the objective of SYSTeam is to support the development of national capacities in planning and managing education systems in sub-Saharan African countries.

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2. **Teaching and Learning:**

**Educators’ Network for Transformation (TALENT)**

**Lead:** UNESCO

**Members:** *Steering group members:* ADEA / NALA (Association for Development and Education / Network for African Assessments), ANCEFA, CONFEMEN / PASEC (Conférence des Ministres de l’Education des et gouvernements de la Francophonie “Conference of Education Ministers from French-speaking governments” / Programme d’Analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la

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**Figure 1:** SYSTeam compiled a data table including information on 24 countries’ education sectors and planning cycles. RCG4-WCA members can leverage the tool to intervene in these processes to provide country support, advocate or lead other initiatives.

**Figure 2:** TALENT organized a consultation meeting during PACE to discuss the “learning crisis” in Africa. Following the conference, the team published an advocacy brief on the subject.

Team members: 135 national directors in charge of learning evaluation, curriculum, and teacher training in 35 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Overview: TALENT has adhered to the RCG4-WCA since June 2016. TALENT focuses on teaching and learning, focusing in particular on aligning curriculum programmes, pedagogy and evaluation, as well as looking at the institutional environment to support efficient learning processes. TALENT engages in research, knowledge sharing and capacity building. TALENT has three principle objectives:

- Support exchange of experience, expertise and knowledge on national and regional interventions related to the improvement of teaching and learning in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Promote research and knowledge production to inform national and regional policies
- Capacity development related to country needs.

3. **Gender and Inclusion in Education (GENIE)**

   **Lead:** Save the Children; **co-leads:** FAWE and Humanity and Inclusion (HI)

   **Members:** ADEA, ANCEFA, CODESRIA, GPE, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Plan International, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNHCR

   **Overview:** The GENIE team’s mission is to promote gender equality and inclusion in education in WCA. It brings together education actors working in the region and draws on their expertise to enhance education equality. GENIE engages in knowledge sharing, capacity building and joint advocacy on key issues regarding gender equality and inclusive education. In addition to sharing resources and knowledge, GENIE’s objectives include exploring ways to stimulate investments in inclusive education in WCA and advocate for gender equality and inclusive education in WCA.

4. **Early Childhood Education**

   **Lead:** UNICEF
Members: UNESCO - TALENT task team, Education International, World Bank, Save the Children, UNESCO-IIPPE/Pole de Dakar, GPE, CONFEMEN, REESAO and Tostan

Overview: The Early Childhood Education task team supports the development of pre-school options adapted to the needs of the region through sharing good practices, promotion of multisectoral, aligned approaches and interventions for scaling up, capacity building and advocacy.

5. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Lead: African Development Bank (AfDB) (to be confirmed)

Since the development of the team’s TOR by the AfDB in 2017, the team has not yet conducted meetings or engaged in joint activities.

6. Higher Education

Lead: CAMES

Members: CRUFAOCI, REESAO, REESIRAC, RIDEPES, CIDMEF, CADMEF, AUA, AUF, FOPAO, CEDEAO, UNESCO, CEMAC, CEEAC, UNDP, CONFEMEN, UEMOA, World Bank and AfDB

Overview: The Higher Education task team was launched on July 17, 2017 in Cotonou, Benin, at the initiative of CAMES, on the margins of the 39th session of the Inter-African Consultative Committees (ICC). CAMES Strategic Development Plan (CSDP) is the basis for the team’s work; the plan aims to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The task team’s objectives include:

- Bring together the major players in the higher education sub-sector in view of creating synergy and sharing best practices
- Carry out sub-themed monitoring of governance, Bachelor-Master-Doctorate reform, quality assurance, professionalization, community services, professional integration and management of higher education information systems
- Contribute to the creation and development of an information portal on higher education in WCA, with the involvement of all stakeholders
- Develop a framework for analysis and monitoring of SDG4 activities, in particular on higher education.

The Secretariat

The UNESCO Regional Bureau for West Africa (Sahel) leads the RCG4-WCA Secretariat with the assistance of one full time collaborator and with support from the Education Coordinator and UNESCO colleagues
on the Coordination team. UNESCO also facilitates the technical aspects of the RCG4-WCA’s online platform with the help of the Bureau’s IT Specialist, interns and volunteers, as necessary.

The Secretariat is the coordinator of the group, acting under the guidance of the Chair and the Steering team. In this role, the Secretariat organizes the RCG4-WCA’s quarterly meetings, manages the group’s work plan and monitors and administers group activities. The Secretariat’s mandate includes communicating essential information involving SDG4 and CESA 16-25 to members, managing the online platform and coordinating joint activities.

3. Resource Mobilization

Funding for the RCG4-WCA comes from the contributions of its members. Funding is either in-kind or for specific budget items. Members contribute to the following expenses: human resources and operating funds for the Secretariat, RCG4-WCA plenary group and Steering team meetings, joint activities, group visibility and communications.

Members made financial and in-kind contributions to the RCG4-WCA 2018-19 budget. UNESCO and Plan International contributed to the Secretariat’s full-time collaborator. IFEF, Save the Children and UNESCO contributed to plenary meetings. UNESCO, FAWE, UNHCR and CONFEJES contributed to the Regional Launch of the GEMR. Additionally, in-kind donations supported content development for the online platform (publications, useful links, articles, etc.), designing communication products (the visual identity, brochure, etc.), and leading each of the task teams. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the budget closely in 2019 to ensure proper functioning of the RCG4-WCA.

The RCG4-WCA has not mobilized funding through external opportunities in 2018; however, individual task teams have been successful in securing external funds. TALENT, for example, received a GPE grant related to 21st century skills assessment in partnership with the Brookings Institute.

During the May, September and December 2018 plenary meetings, members discussed the group’s need to diversify its funding sources, particularly though external funding opportunities, citing TALENT’s success as an example for other task teams and the group as a whole. In December 2018, members agreed on a potential external resource mobilization scheme whereby concept notes would be developed to respond to the GPE’s upcoming Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) funding mechanism. In 2019, the RCG4-WCA plans to focus on external funding opportunities, including KIX.

III. MAIN ACTIVITIES

The plenary group developed and approved a 2018-19 work plan and the task teams developed their own work plans covering the 2018 period; these plans incorporate both members’ individually planned activities, as well as joint activities.
The following is a list of each of the RCG4-WCA’s four main functions, accompanied by relevant 2018 activities:

1. Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience, expertise and information, as well as collaboration (Function 1)

The RCG4-WCA exchanges knowledge, experience, expertise and information between members and with the public during plenary meetings, through the mailing list, on the Education 2030 Africa online platform.

**Plenary Meetings**

There were four quarterly plenary meetings in 2018, each providing the opportunity to recount relevant activities, knowledge and experience. At the September 20, 2018 plenary meeting, members agreed that the frequency of plenary meetings was satisfactory. One of the four quarterly plenary meetings was a full day retreat, held on December 13, 2018 in Dakar.

**Mailing List**

The RCG4-WCA mailing list allows for information circulation among members. Upcoming events, webinars, job postings and calls to action are often shared via the list. In addition, the Secretariat sends meeting reports, information from the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and requests for information via the mailing list.

GENIE, SYSTeam and TALENT also utilize mailing lists to share information among their members.

**The Education 2030 in Africa Online Platform**

To facilitate sharing of knowledge, resources and experiences with actors involved in education development in the region, the RCG4-WCA developed an online platform in 2016. The platform is a source of both external visibility to the public and internal communication between RCG4-WCA members. Members can post and share “internal documents,” look up member contact information and update and review an events calendar.

Each task team lead and co-lead can upload content, articles and resources to their respective team pages. Each organization can view member contact information, and “internal documents” containing sensitive information on the private, member space. In October 2018, the majority of the “internal documents” were made public in order to facilitate members’ access to documents and to maintain the platform’s objective to openly share knowledge.

In April 2018, the group launched education country profiles for each of the 24 West and Central African countries covered by the group. The profiles display information on education governance structures and Ministries, education sector plans, independent education sector analyses and relevant data derived from different RCG4-WCA member organizations.
External Visibility

In terms of external visibility, the RCG4-WCA and its task teams published eight articles on the Education 2030 in Africa platform. The Secretariat started to update the RCG4-WCA’s brochure, which introduces the group and discusses its objectives and activities. It will be shared with potential regional partners, in particular local education groups (LEG), in 2019.

The task team, Education Systems Strengthening, rebranded itself as “SYSTeam” and created a new logo for the team. The task team, Gender and Equality in Education, also rebranded itself with its new name, “GENIE.”

2. Implement joint initiatives to support the development of education in countries, in alignment with SDG4, its targets and with CESA 16-25 (Function 2)

Through joint activities and collaboration, the majority of the task teams advanced analytical work and tool development, knowledge management and capacity building activities to fulfill their mandate to support country needs.

Analytical Work & Tools Development

From June to December, TALENT, in collaboration with the Brookings Institution and the GPE, coordinated a mini-study in nine African countries (Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Chad and Zambia) to identify and conduct a comparative analysis of existing evaluation tools and develop new tools related to 21st century skills.

TALENT members published the first report in the series, Observatoire de la qualité de l’Éducation (“Observation on the Quality of Education”), which examined education quality in eight countries, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Mauritius, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal.

A policy and analysis brief entitled, Promote early childhood development and guarantee access to equitable and quality preschool education: a base for success in learning, was published by TALENT and the accompanying recommendations were adopted by CONFEMEN Ministers.

GENIE participated in a meeting with countries covered by GPE financing, including several WCA countries, to take stock of disability and its integration within education sector plans.

Knowledge Management

Much of the Higher Education task team’s work in 2018 focused on the question of higher education quality assurance. In this context, the team collected, published and disseminated the results of good quality assurance practices across the region.
The Higher Education team also engaged in advocacy work on the importance of higher education among political decision-makers, including Ministers of Higher Education and Heads of State. Sharing information on international agreements led to the adoption of two Declarations: quality assurance in the context of the implementation of the SDGs and the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

GENIE completed a map of actors working on inclusive education in WCA and is working on a calendar of 2019 advocacy moments on the same subject.

GENIE was also active at a consolidation workshop on School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) responses, meant to share good practices on the topic within the region.

**Capacity Development**

TALENT hosted a launch workshop on a sub-regional programme for national capacity building related to quality basic education. Eighty participants from six countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Madagascar, Niger, Senegal and Togo), and many technical and financial partners (TFP) participated.

At the Open University of Tanzania, TALENT conducted a capacity building workshop on alignment between curriculum, teacher training and learning assessments that included participants from 18 Sub-Saharan African countries. Following the workshop, countries received online training to deepen and better define the interventions needed at the country level to improve the alignment of the education system.

TALENT, with the GPE and IIEP-Pole de Dakar, led a regional capacity building workshop on the reporting, dissemination and effective use of large-scale evaluations. The training enabled education experts from 18 countries to gain a deeper understanding of the relevance of large-scale learning assessments and their role in ensuring the quality and equity of education systems.

In partnership with IIEP-Pole de Dakar, GENIE led a working session on how to integrate gender and inclusive education principles in sector analysis and planning. GENIE also participated in another regional workshop on gender responsive education sector plans for GPE countries in the WCA region.

Continuing its work on quality assurance, the Higher Education team was active at a technical consultation on the establishment of a Pan-African accreditation quality assurance agency, at the 12th Quality Assurance Training Workshop and at the 3rd International seminar on the Mission of Universities.

**LEG Collaboration**

The RCG4-WCA met on October 17, 2018 to discuss collaboration with LEGs in order to ensure greater partnership with national actors on SDG4 implementation. Members articulated several objectives for collaboration with the LEGs, including implementing joint initiatives to support SDG4 and CESA 16-25 at

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1 Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
the national level; creating stronger links between the global, regional and national level; conducting advocacy activities; developing better understanding of the needs of countries; monitoring progress; supporting policy dialogue; and sharing information from the global level with national actors in the 24 WCA countries covered by the RCG4-WCA.

Members agreed on a road map toward LEG collaboration. The group will develop an introduction letter presenting the RCG4-WCA to the LEGs and including a call to action. The letter will be sent with the RCG4-WCA brochure to the LEGs using a data table developed by SYSTeam, containing information on the national education system planning cycles and the contact information for each LEG (see Figure 1). The group will also conduct a mapping of members' national participation in each of the WCA LEGs. Further action items will be developed based on the response rate to the letter and brochure.

**Joint Events**

The GPE co-hosted its education financing conference with the governments of Senegal and France in January 2018 in Dakar. GENIE held a side event on inclusive education and supported the participation of a youth ambassador at the conference. SYSTeam also held a side event on “Education Financing in West and Central Africa.”

In December 2018, the RCG4-WCA organized the Regional Launch of the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR), which gathered more than 50 participants to discuss the report’s theme “Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges not walls.” UNESCO and UNHCR provided opening remarks highlighting the importance of education to maintain peace, to enrich lives and provide opportunities for individuals on the move within the region. FAWE, CONFEJES, UNESCO and the IOM participated in a panel discussion around the critical role of youth in addressing education and migration challenges in the region, as well as the need for greater cohesion between education and migration actors so that migrants can understand how to access education for themselves and their children. Two videos were filmed at the event and will be launched via social media channels in 2019.

3. Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence at the country level (Function 3)

**Link to the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee**

In addition to working more closely with LEGs in order to connect global to national level SDG4 implementation efforts, the RCG4-WCA Chair participates in SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meetings. The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee met in March, September and December in 2018. Over the course of 2018, the Steering Committee has focused on preparation for the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The HLPF is a global, UN mechanism meant to monitor and examine several SDGs each year. The theme for 2019 is “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality” and
will review SDG4 in July 2019 alongside goals 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. To prepare for the HLPF, two events took stock of progress on SDG4: PACE in Nairobi, Kenya and the Global Education Meeting (GEM) in Brussels, Belgium. The RCG4-WCA actively participated in these two events. The final declarations, the Nairobi Declaration and the Brussels Declaration respectively, from these events have been synthesized and included in a report compiled by the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, which will be presented at the HLPF.

**PACE 2018**

Various RCG4-WCA members represented WCA sub-regional priorities at PACE, which took place on April 25-27, 2018. PACE, and the resulting Nairobi Declaration, defined education priorities for the African continent in line with SDG4 and CESA 16-25. RCG4-WCA members met in January to discuss how the group could best contribute to the PACE and mobilized to help organize the conference, provide technical support and distribute advocacy materials during the event.

Several task teams were particularly active at PACE, aiming to ensure that clear outcomes representing WCA priorities were included in the final declaration. GENIE contacted LEGs in advance of the event to share its policy brief and videos, “Promoting Girls’ Right to Education in Sub-Saharan Africa” and “Promoting Girls’ Right to Education in West and Central Africa.” GENIE led two parallel sessions on gender and inclusive education and sexual and reproductive health. TALENT organized a round table on “Accelerating reforms to respond to the learning crisis: which interventions are most urgent and the most effective to improve teaching and learning?” Following PACE, TALENT members developed an advocacy brief, “Levels of Learning are Alarming Low,” to share evidence at the country level on the learning crisis, which disproportionately affects African states. SYSTeam prepared a document of “key messages” that was circulated at the conference. The team also co-organized the parallel session on “Inclusion of Refugees in Education Sector Planning” and supported the parallel session on “Supporting Better Financing of Education.”

**Participation in the GEM**

RCG4-WCA members from CONFEMEN and the OIF, as well as the Chair, participated in the GEM in Brussels, Belgium on December 3-5, 2018. The resulting Brussels Declaration contains eight priorities for education over the next four years, and African countries were particularly active in providing contributions to the research and higher education themes, as well as advocating for better data collection systems across the continent.

4. **Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with other coordination mechanisms in the region and on other continents (Function 4)**

Several opportunities for cross-fertilization with other coordination mechanisms developed in 2018.

**Sub-Saharan Africa SDG4 Coordination**
PACE was envisioned as an opportunity to strengthen partnership on SDG4 coordination across the continent and in particular with the AU. The Nairobi Declaration is considered a first step in working toward alignment of SDG4 and CESA 16-25, and it supports the need to establish a Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) between the AU and the UN to this end. RCG4-WCA members actively prepared and participated in PACE alongside colleagues working on SDG4 and CESA in ESA.

To contribute to joint SDG4-CESA 16-25 monitoring, SYSTeam established a subcommittee on indicators and agreed on a sub-set of SDG4-CESA indicators to launch an online indicators project “for dummies.” Two members of the committee participated in the CESA Advisory Group to validate CESA indicators and to ensure synergy with SDG4.

**Education in Emergencies**

During the January 2018 plenary meeting, the Regional Working Group for Education in Emergencies (EiE) (coordinated by UNICEF and Plan International) presented on the impact of emergencies on education in WCA. EiE called for strong collaboration between regional mechanisms and the need for risk mitigation training. The RCG4-WCA and EiE discussed several areas for collaboration including information exchange, advocacy and education planning. A link to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) website was added to the Education 2030 platform and both groups agreed to continue to cross-disseminate information among their respective members.

**Other Coordination Mechanisms**

Coordination efforts with other continents have not occurred, beyond the circulation of information within the scope of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

### IV. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In order to construct recommendations, challenges and lessons learned have been identified around four themes: participation and reactivity of the plenary group; African-wide SDG4 and CESA 16-25 coordination; Steering team Engagement and RCG4-WCA working modalities.

**Participation and Reactivity of the Plenary Group**

Member attendance at plenary group meetings and response to email communication were relatively low, in particular in early 2018. Some members are considered “inactive” as they have low attendance at meetings or do not have a confirmed focal point.

In response, the Secretariat has developed a practice of individually following-up with members to build relationships and confirm participation in meetings, which has led to stronger member participation in late 2018.

The Education 2030 platform is a tool that should be further leveraged to increase member participation and collaboration. Its development has continued, in line with the suggestions of members on how to
improve its functionality and facilitate members’ needs. The Secretariat led a session during the plenary retreat on communications, in order to help cultivate a stronger culture of sharing work products, articles and information via the platform. In 2019, the plenary group and the Secretariat will continue to advance the platform as a method of exchange between members, including the integration of new technologies such as google documents.

The organization of joint events such as the Regional GEMR launch and PACE increased members’ participation in 2018, indicating the positive impact and force of the plenary group. The group should consider how to continue to incite coordinated mobilization in 2019, particularly through relevant regional events or through monitoring of the 2018 joint events.

Plenary members have requested more thematic topics be addressed during each plenary meeting. Accordingly, the Secretariat attempted to balance the agenda of the annual retreat with both thematic and administrative topics and will continue this practice in 2019.

The 2018-19 Work plan was validated in January 2018 but has been difficult to monitor, as it does not contain concrete indicators or assignment of specific responsibilities. During the annual retreat, members agreed to re-formulate the work plan to correspond to results-based management principles, which will ensure better monitoring of activities and allow members to manage specific activities. In this way, the group can mobilize greater member participation and its accomplishments can be easily tabulated, accounted for and shared.

In following one of the important lessons learnt by GENIE, fostering a small group of highly committed individuals has been productive in advancing the team’s objectives. Therefore, the plenary group, Secretariat and Steering team should continue to reflect together on how to prioritize efforts that will lead to stronger engagement across the different RCG4-WCA bodies and among existing members.

**African-wide SDG4 and CESA 16-25 Coordination**

Despite members’ participation and mobilization in the lead up to PACE, a formal mechanism for continent-wide collaboration was not articulated during the conference. In the absence of a formal coordination structure in ESA, African-wide coordination of SDG4 has not been achieved.

UNESCO and the AU are continuing talks at a high level on this front, including in relation to an AU-UN RCM, which contains a work plan for the development of human resources, including education. The Chair has regularly reported on the status of the RCM, its work plan and collaboration with ESA at plenary meetings and will continue to do so in 2019.

Concurrently, the Education 2030 platform has expanded its scope to cover news, publications and resources relevant to the entire continent, in an effort to anticipate stronger continental coordination and create a tool that is relevant beyond WCA. The Chair has proposed that partners in ESA utilize the
platform for their own coordination and information sharing efforts so as to efficiently share resources and compile knowledge in one location.

Several RCG4-WCA members, and the SYSTeam task team in particular, have made first attempts to collaborate with CESA clusters on aligned themes and meetings on the development of joint SDG4-CESA indicators. During the formulation of the LT廖 task team TOR, Save the Children, lead of the CESA cluster on Peace education was consulted on its potential involvement and coordination role between the two groups, though the two groups have varying thematic foci and therefore have decided to continue their work separately.

Finally, the Steering team Proposition that was accepted by the plenary group in December included a permanent seat for the AU (and in the absence of the AU, its partner ADEA). With the addition of the AU to the Steering team, continental and CESA priorities will be well-represented.

Steering Team Engagement

Throughout the Steering team renewal process, plenary and team members alike have expressed a need to bolster the Steering team in terms of its mandate and its engagement. One member commented on the team’s lack of dynamism, as well as the need to clearly define the team’s role and what “coordinating” SDG4 and CESA means in practice. With the confirmation of the new Steering team members set for February 2019, their first meeting in 2019 will be an occasion to re-define the role of the team and to affirm the engagement of new and continuing partners. The Steering team Proposal defined seven seats on the team, each representative of a particular constituency within the RCG4-WCA, allowing the Steering team to become more dynamic, as Steering team members will be responsible for representing the interests of their constituents.

Reinforcing Country-level Support

Beyond the organization of regional workshops, the modality of “country-level support” has been difficult for the majority of the task teams to implement. In some cases, limited funds and human resources have led to an inability to implement activities.

A structural constraint exists in that RCG4-WCA focal points are mainly designated from organizations’ regional offices. The link to the national level is not clear, which has led to missed opportunities to monitor and follow up on activities, discover countries’ unique needs and respond with technical or other support. Therefore, at an organizational level, greater collaboration between regional and national offices is needed to boost country level support and lead to reinforced coordination efforts.

Members and task teams alike have requested support from the Secretariat in coordinating collaboration with LEGs in 2019, particularly in view of responding to needs at a national level.

Advocacy activities have often reached a national level, and advocacy is a modality adopted by the majority of task teams and advocacy results are often among each team’s greatest annual
accomplishments. Several members have suggested including advocacy as one of the RCG4-WCA’s working modalities, and the plenary group will have the occasion to discuss this proposition in early 2019.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Each recommendation below is taken from the 2016-17 Activities Report; each was formulated based on the challenges and lessons learned included in last year’s report. The following table lists each recommendation, followed by the action item associated with it. Actions from the 2016-17 report are accompanied by a monitoring update and proposed next steps. Based on progress in 2018, as well as an analysis of the challenges and lessons learned discussed in this year’s report, new action items have been added and labelled “2018.”

RECOMMENDATION 1. Increase member participation:

Identify the causes limiting the participation of certain members through a process of participative inquiry so as to increase the group’s ability to function, as well as its general visibility (ownership, interest and expectations).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year: 2016-17</th>
<th>Action items:</th>
<th>Monitoring since last report:</th>
<th>Next steps:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Consult the group through the use of an online questionnaire (Secretariat).</td>
<td>The use of online questionnaires has not proven a fruitful tool for knowledge collection within the RCG4-WCA. Instead, to consult the group, a workshop on plenary group functionality and communications was conducted, wherein members outlined both individual motivations and expectations for the group. An exhaustive list is available in the Annual retreat report.</td>
<td>The Secretariat will incorporate members’ feedback on communications into the group’s actions. Focusing plenary group meetings and exchanges on thematic topics will be essential.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2. Develop a dynamic exchange outside of group meetings via email or the platform in order to reinforce</td>
<td>An online forum to consult on the Steering team renewal was launched in July 2018. It was hoped that the forum would increase interaction and participation between members, however only several members</td>
<td>The Secretariat will continue to implement new technologies on the platform in 2019 that will create a more dynamic and interactive space for member interaction. Time of</td>
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interaction and participation between members. utilized the forum to provide their feedback, whereas the majority of members responded with feedback via email, which did not lead to member interaction. year should be considered (July-August should be avoided).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1.3. The Secretariat will send letters to the Directors of “inactive” member organizations with the aim of updating organizations’ focal points.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
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**RECOMMENDATION 2: Provide support to the Secretariat:**

Explore the possibilities of reinforcing the Secretariat with human resources support, allowing the Secretariat to fulfill its role in individually following-up with members when necessary.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>2.1. Recruit a UN volunteer or a volunteer from a different organization.</td>
<td>The Secretariat shared a proposal with agencies able to recruit volunteers, but a volunteer was not recruited. A full-time position within the Secretariat was financed in 2018.</td>
<td>The Secretariat will consult members in 2019 on funding possibilities for the Secretariat staff in 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>2.2. Solicit in-kind support from members whenever possible.</td>
<td>Members committed to the <a href="#">2018-19 Contributions list</a> in February 2018.</td>
<td>The Secretariat will continue to monitor member contributions to support the Secretariat financially or in-kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2.3. External funding sources should be identified and targeted. Funding proposals submitted</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
to donors by task teams or the plenary, should consider whether the Secretariat would play a supporting role and allocate funds accordingly.

**RECOMMENDATION 3. Actively engage in country support:**

Lead a discussion to reflect on how the RCG4-WCA can best support its constituent countries, in particular how to employ LEGs and through the use of the web platform.

| Year: 2016-17 | Action Items: 3.1. Consult LEGs to understand their expectations on how to leverage the RCG4-WCA coordination mechanism to their benefit. | Monitoring since last report: A first meeting was organized by the Secretariat to develop a plan for collaboration with the LEGs was held on October 18, 2018. A road map was developed to outreach to LEGs, present the RCG4-WCA's accomplishments and value proposition to the LEGs. | Next steps: The Secretariat will help coordinate interactions between the LEGs and the group, including task teams. |
| Year: 2016-17 | Action Items: 3.2. Transmission of information and targeted, localized messages at the country level, employing sufficient human resources (synthesis of reports, global recommendations and adaptation) | The Education 2030 platform has evolved to expand its scope to all of Sub-Saharan Africa, including the publication of country profiles and news articles related to education in SSA. | The development of targeted, localized messages is included in the coordination of outreach to the LEGs. Regarding other national partners, action item 3.3 will be employed. |
3.3. Establish a newsletter to share platform resources, information and tools, which can also be shared with national partners.

**RECOMMENDATION 4. Reinforce links with CESA 16-25:**

Further strengthen communication and collaboration with the AU and the Regional Economic Communities in order to establish greater support to CESA 16-25.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>4.1. Leverage PACE to facilitate such collaboration.</td>
<td>The Nairobi Declaration from PACE 2018 called for SDG4-CESA collaboration. Yet a road map with concrete actions was not articulated despite expectations.</td>
<td>High level talks between UNESCO and the AU are ongoing. Information will be communicated to members as it becomes available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>4.2. Where there is an overlap of objectives, the RCG4-WCA task teams could approach the thematic clusters created under CESA.</td>
<td>SYSTeam, GENIE and LTLT interfaced with the CESA clusters corresponding to their thematic focus.</td>
<td>Outreach to the agencies coordinating CESA clusters and inviting them to attend individual task team or plenary meetings, by Skype, to increase information sharing and coherence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4.3. UNESCO will position itself with a concrete role within the proposed RCM between the UN and the AU, which will</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>articulate a work plan with one objective concerning education. UNESCO will relay information to the RCG4-WCA, allowing both the RCM and the RCG4-WCA to support SDG4-CESA integration in 2019.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4.5. Expand the Education 2030 platform to encompass a regional, SSA theme. Submit a proposal to the AU for this platform to host the CESA clusters to facilitate information and resource sharing, as well as leverage existing resources so as not to duplicate efforts.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4.6 Leverage the relationship with Burkina Faso, as a country covered by the RCG4-WCA, to provide greater support at the country level, and to develop greater</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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understanding of national SDG4 implementation needs and areas for RCG4-WCA intervention.

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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4.7 Ensure stronger participation of the AU (and ADEA as the alternate) on the Steering team to ensure greater continental coherence, knowledge exchange from ESA and CESA-sensitive contributions.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</table>

**RECOMMENDATION 5. Collaborate with partners in ESA:**

Reinforce communication between the two coordination mechanisms in WCA and ESA to ensure that both these African regions can equitably benefit from the SDG4 and CESA structures already in place, including those at a global level.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>5.1. Better connections could be reinforced through the preparation and monitoring of PACE.</td>
<td>A coordination mechanism in ESA has yet to be established, therefore a SSA coordination mechanism has not been established.</td>
<td>Coordination efforts continue without a formal coordination mechanism in ESA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>5.2. A meeting of the plenary group could be organized in</td>
<td>A meeting among partners was held in January 2018 to collect partners’ feedback on PACE 2018</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
anticipation of PACE to better leverage the opportunities presented by the conference.

preparations. Partners mobilized strongly in support of conference planning, organization, reporting and hosting of parallel sessions.

2018 5.3. Contact colleagues designated to manage SDG4 coordination in ESA to develop relationships, determine future partnership agreements and encourage them to leverage the Education 2030 in Africa platform.

N/A  N/A

RECOMMENDATION 6. Foster stronger functionality and communication within the RCG4-WCA:

Systematize and reinforce collaboration and communication between different task teams and also between the task teams and the group.

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<tr>
<th>Year:</th>
<th>Action items:</th>
<th>Progress since last report:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>6.1. The cross-cutting task teams such as TALENT and SYSTeam could represent themselves in the remaining task teams in order to better facilitate the</td>
<td>Cross-cutting task teams have not represented themselves within other teams. The Secretariat has subscribed to the listservs to relay information to the plenary group when necessary.</td>
<td>The Secretariat will participate in task team exchanges and meetings when possible to relay information to the plenary group when necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>Development of joint activities.</td>
<td>Rather than modify the structure of the task teams, position the Secretariat at the nexus of RCG4-WCA information sharing, especially by integrating collaborative technology within the Education 2030 in Africa platform.</td>
<td>Ongoing information sharing. Implementation of new collaborative technologies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>6.3. The web platform should be leveraged to achieve this objective.</td>
<td>The Communications and functionality workshop during the annual retreat indicated that members would like to see more information from other task teams shared on the platform.</td>
<td>The Secretariat will give demonstrations on how to use different aspects of the platform to the task team leads to facilitate their use of the platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>6.4. The Secretariat will develop a proposal based on the Communications and functionality workshop for discussion during a special meeting on Communications and functionality with task team leads and Steering Team members. A finalized proposal will be shared for comments and approval by members.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</table>
VI. CONCLUSION

Over the course of 2018 the RCG4-WCA has made great strides towards its mandate to coordinate SDG4 implementation. The RCG4-WCA has measured great success and achievements, especially in relation to functions 1 and 2: to exchange knowledge and experience, and to implement joint initiatives. Significant progress has been made toward functions 3 and 4, to establish linkages from global to national level and to ensure cross-fertilization with other mechanisms.

The recommendations from the 2016-17 Activities Report have been monitored and updated based on the accomplishments of 2018. Important lessons learned from the task teams and plenary group have been shared and this report reflects on their replication and scalability, not only among other task teams, but within the scope of the plenary group, Secretariat and Steering team.

Two of the RCG4-WCA’s defining moments were the mobilization of member support behind PACE and the organization of a work plan to engage in country support through collaboration with LEGs. Participatory methods, and thematic, rather than administrative, topics will guide the RCG4-WCA’s actions in 2019.

Momentum leading into 2019 has been strong, particularly in light of the Regional Launch of the 2019 GEMR report, the annual plenary retreat and the finalization of the Steering Team Proposition and the resulting consultations among member constituencies to appoint new Steering team members.

Adjustments to the RCG4-WCA’s work plan, outreach to the LEGs, the welcoming of a new Steering team and the implementation of more thematic, joint activities are the first step toward advancing the RCG4-WCA’s objectives in 2019. The RCG4-WCA will continue to fulfill its regional reporting and information dissemination role and will therefore remain active leading up to the HLPF, which will be a momentous occasion to engage in an examination of SDG4 progress at the global level. Finally, the RCG4-WCA has identified concrete actions leading to strengthened coherence with CESA 16-25 and its mechanisms in 2019, which will lead the group closer to a truly regional mechanism for the coordination of education across Africa.
VII. LIST OF RCG4-WCA MEMBERS

1. Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA)
2. African Development Bank (AFDB)
3. African Union (AU)
4. Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
5. African and Malagache Counsel for Higher Education « Conseil africain et malgache pour l’enseignement supérieur » (CAMES)
6. Conference of the Ministers of Education of French speaking countries (CONFEMEN)
7. Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers of the Francophonie (CONFEJES)
8. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)
9. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
10. Education International (EI)
11. Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA)
12. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
13. Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
14. Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
15. Institut de la Francophonie pour l’éducation et la formation (IFEF)
16. International Labour Organization (ILO)
17. Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
18. Plan International
20. Save the children
21. Sightsavers
22. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
23. UN Women
25. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
27. The World Bank