



Regional Bureau for Education in Africa
BREDA - Dakar

EFA AFRICA BULLETIN – June 2002

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Education for all (EFA) : what progress has been made in the preparation of national plans of action ?

A few months before the deadline of the "plan available for all in September 2002" objective, it is important to critically examine the results obtained so far. It is also time to review the point of departure, the performances made in relation to the deadline, the tasks that remain to be accomplished.

In fact, as agreed at the World Forum, held in Dakar in April 2000, the first decisive step for the realisation of objectives consists in planning, in a rigorous and credible manner, the activities to be implemented. 90 days before the deadline, and following a survey conducted ahead of the EFA fora, the state of preparation of national EFA plans of action are as follows: Out of the 46 sub-Saharan African countries, seven (7) have neither a National Education and Training Plan (NETP) nor a National Plan of Action (NPA). Five (5) countries (Eritrea, Ghana, D.R. Congo, Somalia and Zambia) did not provide any of the required information. Six (6) countries (Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Guinea and Senegal), have a first draft of their national plans of action and are awaiting their validation. As for the agreement that concretely materialises the commitment of governments and EFA sponsors, only nine (9) out of 46 countries succeeded in attracting the attention of major actors.

The reticence of most of the technical and financial partners to support the process, our governments' lack of commitment and the poor institutional capacity at the national level are the main reasons for this preoccupying situation. The last regional and sub-regional EFA fora, organised by UNESCO in partnership with EFA partners whose general aim was to take stock of the state of progress of the formulation of national EFA plans of action, identify major constraints and propose solutions to finalise the process within the required deadline, came up with the following recommendations:

- To governments: strengthen the leadership of ministers in charge of education by insisting on the latter's fundamental role in the realisation of EFA objectives. In this regard, the governments should establish partnerships to back-up the process and strengthen the capacities of NGOs and civil society organisations;
- To technical and financial partners: the need to respect the commitments aimed at supporting governments in the process initiated to realise EFA objectives by providing

adequate resources. To that end, UNESCO should set up operational mechanisms for resource mobilisation, co-ordination and the efficient management of the technical and financial support to local, bilateral and multilateral partners.

- To all actors: provide technical support to national EFA co-ordinations as regards training, the understanding of diagnosis tools, data collection and analysis and the use of performance and follow-up indicators.
- Finally, EFA co-ordinators should see to the implementation of the credibility criteria for national plans of action and ensure that set deadlines are respected.

The analysis of the current situation concerning the preparation of national plans of action are prepared three months before the deadline, raises a certain number of questions that are of concern to us.

How many credible national plans of action will be ready by September 2002?

What will happen after September 2002 if the results expected are not realised on the set deadline or are less fruitful?

What new strategies do we need to adopt for more efficiency and better results?

The main EFA actors should be conscious of the situation and envisage appropriate measures to provide answers to these questions.

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EFA MEETINGS IN AFRICA

Sub-regional workshop on the incorporation of human rights, a culture of peace and democracy education into national action plans for Education for All. From 17 to 21 June in Gambia

A sub-regional workshop on the incorporation of human rights, a culture of peace and democracy education into national action plans for Education for All, was organised by UNESCO-BREDA, in partnership with the Gambian national commission for UNESCO.

The main objective of the workshop was to support member States in their efforts to integrate into their National EFA Plans, a strategy for education and for the preparation of teaching materials on education in the culture of peace, human rights and democracy.

The meeting was attended by national EFA co-ordinators, specialists in human rights and a culture of peace education, UNICEF, the UNESCO chair on the culture of peace in Cote d'Ivoire, as well as a representative of the UNESCO quarters.

The specific objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- Train National EFA Co-ordinators on techniques for the incorporation of human rights, a culture of peace and democracy education in their countries' National EFA Plans.
- Train human rights education experts on policies and methodologies relative to human rights education.
- encourage collaboration among participants particularly between EFA co-ordinators and specialists in Education.
- identify the countries' needs in terms of the conception and production of teaching materials meant for education in the culture of peace and human rights.

The workshop deliberations were structured around the following points:

- exchange experiences
- analysis issues and needs

The deliberations registered:

- brief presentations by participants on teaching human rights and a culture of peace at national level
- discussions in plenary sessions
- working sessions according to groups of countries: EFA co-ordinators and specialists in education on human rights and the culture of peace worked together to analyse the needs, develop concrete and relevant initiatives specific to their respective countries and contexts and produce a preliminary work plan.

The deliberations led to:

- fruitful exchanges and collaboration among various participants
- development of the knowledge of co-ordinators in education on human rights and the culture of peace, and of the knowledge of experts of the objectives and modalities of education for all.

Co-ordinators and specialists in education are henceforth better equipped to collaborate at the national level in the preparation of a national plan of action for the incorporation of human rights and a culture of peace and democracy education in and National EFA Plans and education in programmes.

- Preliminary planning was prepared respectively by 3 groups of countries represented each by the EFA co-ordinator and the expert in education on the culture of peace and human rights.

The planning is included in the workshop's final report and will serve as a basis for the preparation of a manual on strategies and techniques for the introduction of the notions of education on peace, human rights and democracy in teaching programmes and EFA plans, as well as the strategies for the conception and production of teaching materials meant for education on the culture of peace and human rights.

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Promoting Civil Society involvement in EFA in Sub-Saharan Africa

Planning meeting on NGO/CSO capacity building program for EFA

UNESCO-Dakar, June 12-14, 2002

UNESCO, in partnership with the World Bank and the focal point of the Collective Consultation of NGOs for EFA (CCNGO/EFA) for the Africa region, ANCEFA (Africa

Network Campaign on Education For All), have organized a planning workshop on a regional NGO/CSO capacity building program for EFA. The meeting was held at UNESCO-Dakar from 12 to 14 June 2002.

In the aftermath of the Dakar World Forum on Education, UNESCO and the World Bank, in collaboration with the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA, organized a seminar on civil society contributions to education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The seminar took place in Bamako in November 2000 and was followed by a working meeting in Dakar at UNESCO/BREDA in May 2001. Participants included representatives of African ministries of education, NGOs and other civil society organizations, the World Bank, UNESCO, and multi- and bilateral partners. Participants recommended the development of a regional capacity building program for non-governmental and other civil society organizations (NGOs/CSOs) involved in EFA to reinforce the scope and quality of civil society participation in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of education strategies and programs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Thus, a conceptual framework and a program proposal were drafted and submitted to various partners for consideration. Four areas of training were identified: (i) education policy analysis, formulation and advocacy, (ii) curriculum development, (iii) pedagogic methods and approaches, (iv) program design, planning, management and evaluation.

The first year activities of the program, which reflects the consensus achieved at the various meetings, will focus on training NGOs/CSOs in six selected countries which are part of the group of sixteen African countries with lowest school enrolment rates. These six countries are Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal. All six were represented at the Bamako Summit of the Head of States, which provided the framework for initiating the first regional seminar on assessing NGO/CSO contributions to EFA.

This three days workshop, which brought together the planning team composed of a limited number of NGO/CSO representatives, resource persons and UNESCO professionals, led to (i) the finalization of the implementation strategy for Year I of the capacity-building program, (ii) the development of some tools necessary for the launching of the program in the six countries selected for phase I and (iii) the elaboration of a detailed work plan for the implementation of Year 1 activities.

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National Seminar on Education for All, Maputo 27 – 28 March 2002

The Ministry of Education in cooperation with UNESCO Maputo organised a National Seminar on Education for All in Maputo from 27 – 28 March 2002. The seminar sought to bring a wide range of stakeholders in the field of education together to strengthen broad participation in the elaboration of the National Action Plan for EFA. Representatives from the Government of Mozambique, National Institutions, NGOs, religious organisations, Teachers' Association, bilateral and multilateral agencies took part attended the seminar and took part in the working sessions. The participants came from all over the country - covering the 11 provinces of Mozambique.

Presentations included an overview of the EFA process in Mozambique by the National EFA Coordinator, Ms. Paula Mendonça; an outline of the development and implementation of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) of the Ministry of Education by Mr. Virgílio Juvane (National Director of Planning, MINED) and a wide range of presentations by civil society on their involvement and contribution to achieving education for all.

The need for partnership between a variety of stakeholders in order to pursue EFA goals once again became apparent during the seminar as was the need for wide dissemination of the ESSP and the Dakar Framework for Action throughout the country.

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Project for setting up an African Forum of parliamentarians for Education (FAPED)

With a view to better involving African parliamentarians in education-related issues and get them to mobilise more resources, a Contact Group for the establishment of an African Forum of Parliamentarians for Education (FAPED), was set up at the initiative of Mauritian and Senegalese parliamentarians. The Contact Group which met in Dakar (Senegal), from 21 to 23 January 2002 and in Port Louis (Mauritius), from 6 to 8 June 2002, comprises nine countries: Cameroon, Cape Verde, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Namibia, Senegal and Sudan.

The key purpose of the first meeting was to present the project for the creation of the FAPED and the following working documents:

- FAPED objectives and strategies
- Draft Statutes for the creation of FAPED
- Draft regulations
- Draft financial regulations
- Programme of activities and financing
- Port Louis Declaration

During the first meeting, emphasis was placed on the need to popularise the quality of education and Africa's major interest Africa in developing FAPED action in the perspectives opened by NEPAD. The parliamentarians attending the meeting signed a joint declaration to mark their total support to the initiative to set up FAPED.

Placed within the framework of the follow-up of the Dakar meeting, the second meeting of the Contact Group in Port Louis provided the opportunity to examine the above mentioned working documents which will be submitted to African parliamentarians, for review and adoption, during the Constituent Conference scheduled in Tanzania from 27 November to 2 December 2002, alongside the 8th Conference of African National Education Ministers (MINEDAF VIII). The meeting concluded that education is the solution for peace, stability and economic development.

By setting up this forum, parliamentarians intend to mobilise themselves in favour of efforts to eradicate illiteracy, fight against poverty, promote girls' and women's education, fight against AIDS and other diseases that are seriously affecting the future of the African continent, have access to new information and communication technologies, promote education for peace and give prominence to a closest possible partnership with UNESCO and international institutions such as UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank, UNFPA, African Development Bank, African Parliamentarians Union and the various civil society components.

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EDUCATION IN AFRICA

UNESCO expresses serious concern over education in Africa

(PANA) - Dakar, Senegal 02/05/2002 - The head of the UNESCO regional Bureau for education in Africa (BREDA), Armoogum Parsuramen has expressed serious concern over the situation of education in Africa two years after the world forum on Education was held April 2000 in Dakar.

"In Africa, 22 countries might not give primary education to their children by the middle of the decade," he observed, saying it was likely that "in 2015 more than 30 percent of African children would not enrol at primary school or be able to read and write."

In a speech during the opening ceremony of the symposium to mark the second anniversary of the World Education Forum, Parsuramen warned that the first step towards achieving the objective of Education for All by 2015 consisted in elaborating national education plans.

"However, currently only Senegal, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea-Conakry and Angola have elaborated a plan" he pointed out at a meeting with representatives of the Senegalese Ministry of National Education, NGOs, teachers unions and parents.

Parsuramen said that in sub-Saharan Africa 38 million children had no access to school and, the class repeating rate was about 17 percent.

Furthermore, he said "there are 13 million AIDS orphans whose chances of attending school are limited because the AIDS epidemic kills more teachers than new ones can be recruited" in some countries of the region.

To allow Africa to reach the goals set by the Dakar World Forum, he urged donors, governments and the Civil society in Africa to intensify their efforts.

"Depriving millions of children of a minimum education would have terrible consequences not only for their home countries but for the whole of humanity in generations to come," added the chairman of BREDA.

Parsuramen urged journalists and members of Parliaments to highlight progress of countries like Eritrea, Malawi and Gambia in the area of education.

"I strongly call on donors, NGOs, the civil society, the private sector, the businessmen to use more of their resources toward education," he said.

Africa needs five million teachers

(PANA) Paris, France - 25/05/2002 - African ambassadors accredited to UNESCO have appealed for the organisation's assistance to train five million teachers needed to fill up the current gap in the staffing of schools on the continent.

"We need at least five million teachers to meet the current needs of schools on the continent and UNESCO can help us fill up this gap," Burkina Faso's permanent representative at UNESCO, Philippe Sawadogo told PANA.

Sawadogo, also chairman of the African Group at UNESCO, said that the ambassadors had met UNESCO Director-General Matsuura Koichiro to sensitize him on Africa's expectations in the field of education.

African ambassadors have suggested that a balance of one million dollars from credits that had not been paid out be used for training teachers. They said the need for teachers in Africa was urgent.

"If you take the example of Burkina Faso, there are school buildings that have never been used because we do not have teachers," Sawadogo said.

Africa's need for teachers was raised during a session of the Executive Council of UNESCO.

Conference Calls for Higher Status of African Teachers

(PANA) Paris, France - 22/05/2002 - Delegates to an international conference on universal primary education in French-speaking African countries Wednesday called for the elevation of the status of teachers on the continent.

Ten countries are taking part in the conference that opened Monday in Saint-Denis near Paris.

A general opinion among the delegates was that the quality of teaching in Africa would not improve without social and economic upgrading of the profession itself.

"For some years, we have witnessed widespread deterioration of the living conditions and the social stature of teachers in Africa. Such a situation has inevitable repercussions on the quality of teaching," said Mamadou Billo Barry of Guinea.

According to Barry, international finance institutions, including the World Bank, have contributed to the economic and social decline of the African teacher.

Several delegates expressed the same opinion, denouncing "the promotion" of a category of unqualified teachers in countries that were subjected to structural adjustment programs by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

"In our country we have tried the formula of volunteer teachers on the advice of international institutions. I am not sure that it yielded good results," remarked Abdoulaye Teuw of Senegal

Without underrating the importance of external funds in developing the education sector, delegates emphasised the need to treat the working condition of teachers and the provision of material as more important than others.

"Not many years ago, the teacher was regarded as a master and a respectable person in the African society," Pai Obanya, a Nigerian academic, recalled, expressing a wish for returning to the old days in order to ensure high quality education in Africa.

Nigerian academic says Africa can finance its Education

(PANA) Paris, France - 21/05/2002 - African countries are capable of financing the Education for All (EFA) programme through prudence and without external support, Nigerian education Professor, Pai Obanya said in Paris Tuesday.

Speaking at the international symposium on basic education in Africa holding in the French capital, Obanya said education policies in Africa suffered setbacks not because of financial difficulties but because of lack of political will.

"The poorest African country has the means to finance its national EFA programme. It only needs to make considerable savings by ensuring that the State is moderate and avoids wasting of public funds," the Nigerian academic said.

Obanya, who served for many years as Director of the Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA) in Dakar, Senegal, also urged African States to rely on their own resources to finance their education policies.

"External financial assistance should only come as an addition to funds allocated (to the sector) under the national budgets," he said, stressing that Education in Africa was also beset by incoherent decentralisation policies and lack of reliable statistics.

Obanya, a representative of the Francophone Association for Comparative Education (AFEC), said: "I have observed that for three years, every time I asked for statistics on the Education sector, an African country sent me the same figures. This makes one doubt their reliability."

But he said specialists should not be discouraged, noting that many countries on the continent were making commendable progress on education.

"When we see the performance registered in this sector by countries like South Africa, Senegal, Swaziland, Mauritius and Namibia, among others, we have a good reason to hope in the education system in Africa," the former BREDA Director said, and urged other African countries to follow the examples of these nations.

Bush's wife says US to devote \$357 million to education

(PANA) Paris, France - 14/05/2002 - The US first lady, Laura Bush, said in Paris Tuesday that the US government would devote 357 million US dollars to fund education programmes in poor countries in 2002.

Bush made the remarks when she delivered a keynote address at the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2002 Forum underway in the French capital.

She said the amount represented an increase compared to 2001 amounts of 285 million dollars and confirmed the Bush administration's commitment to support education initiatives as key to economic growth world-wide.

According to her, her husband's administration had targeted the delivery of quality education as a top priority.

The forum, being attended by ministers, Nobel laureates, captains of industry, labour leaders and influential NGOs on global issues, was being held under the theme "Taking Care of Fundamentals: Security, Equity, Education and Growth."

At the three-day conference, which began Monday, participants were holding day-long debates on how best to meet key challenges facing the world in a bid to build a more peaceful, tolerant world in which economic prosperity promoted equity world wide.

Education was identified as a crucial component of economic growth and key towards building more tolerant, democratic and prosperous societies.

Laura Bush is credited for championing education causes world-wide as well as lending significant support towards efforts to support teachers whom she identified as key towards providing quality education to children which opened doors of hope to many of the world's people.

She hailed several African countries, among them Uganda, which she said had registered significant gains in the sector with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) which had enabled these countries to put some 17 million children in schools.

That Uganda devoted some 31 percent of its budget to education was a signal of its commitment to enhance education opportunities in the country, she noted.

Bush also emphasised pre-school reading as necessary in equipping children with an early start to literacy for better success in future.

COUNTRY ACTIONS

NIGERIA - Meeting of the UNESCO in Lagos to raise the level of education

(PANA) Lagos, Nigeria – 16/05/2002 – The UNESCO and the Nigerian Ministry of Education organised a two days meeting in Lagos within the framework of a lasting partnership aimed at raising the level of basic education in the country.

In an interview with the press, the representative of the UNESCO in Nigeria, Mr. Hubert Charles, declared that this meeting will try to reinforce the involvement of the private sector in supplying services for basic education.

He also announced that he would endeavour to reach the signature of a Draft Agreement in order to create a special fund “ which will constitute a source of support of selected initiatives of the private sector as well as a support of a mid or long-term programme of research, experimentations and updates which will be implemented in teaching institutions with a view to of Education For All (EFA)”.

The UNESCO Representative reminded that Nigeria along with other member countries of the United Nations had adopted at the end of the World Forum of Education in Dakar which took place in 2000, the Dakar Framework of Action, which is a declaration of intention and commitment in favour of the supplying of high quality services for basic education for all until 2015.

Mr. Charles confirmed that the Parliament and the Ministry of Education of Nigeria reacted in an exemplary manner regarding the framework of action, in particular with the reinforcement by the government of its programme for universal basic education (UBE) which will be serving as “central instrument” for the achievement EFA before the year 2015.

Meanwhile, the UN representative said that the Nigerian non-governmental sectors should have to commit themselves totally in the effort which aims at the success of EFA.

He declared: “In the eyes of the UN, the private sector is a legitimate area for the actions carried out in the framework of EFA. Each society has to commit itself to ensure that all the staff members and their families will fully take advantage of the learning opportunities that EFA involves”.

Mr. Charles noted that the effort to carry out EFA and the supply of education services generally are in the interest of the sector.

He added: “ An instructed worker is more creative, more in a position to understand the dynamics of work and, consequently, can be recruited more easily to reinforce the quality and to improve the profit.”

THE GAMBIA - 2002 Big Bang EFA campaign

The Department of State for Education in collaboration with its partners and collaborators including UNESCO/NATCOM, UN Agencies, Governmental Institutions, the Media, Religious Organisations and NGOs working in the sector will be embarking on a campaign

known as the Big Bang on Education for All from 24 to 30 June 2002. A task force was inaugurated by the Honourable Secretary of State for Education on May 20, 2002.

The task force is charged with the responsibility of conducting a massive and intensive sensitization campaign for school registration in areas considered to be the most deprived and having the largest number of out-of-school children. Grade Twelve students and members of the Association of Secondary School Students (NASSA) are part of the campaign team and they will travel with the task force to all the affected areas so that they can serve as role models for out-of-school children.

The objectives of the campaign are to:

- make every school/madrassa a girl-friendly institution
- make every community/village/hamlet a girl-friendly community
- ensure that every child of school-going age is enrolled in a school/madrassa by September 2002
- assess other needs of the community/village/hamlet
- develop a strategic plan for the sustainability of the EFA Movement
- establish literacy centres with polyvalent teachers to provide instruction
- link Literacy and Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres with the programme of the Mothers' Clubs
- encourage the establishment of community based ECD Centres

ACTIVITIES

- Mobilisation: Grade Twelve students in Regions Four, Five and Six will serve as hosts to other students going to their areas
- Mobilisation: Second-hand clothing will be collected through the assistance of student volunteers. These will then be distributed as gifts during the house-to-house visits
- Meetings: One day focussed group meetings will be held at the divisional, village and ward levels
- Sensitisation The task team together with Grade 12 students will visit the affected areas on an intensive sensitization programme.
- Data Collection: The task team will also gather information and data relevant to EFA activities.
- Follow-up Activities: The Regional Education Offices, the committees, student volunteers and partners within their areas are expected to follow up on the activities of the task team. This will keep up the momentum until school reopens in September 2002.

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MOZAMBIQUE - Celebration of the EFA week, Maputo 22-26 April 2002

UNESCO Maputo, in co-operation with Ministry of Education, the EFA Movement in Mozambique and the National Commission for UNESCO organised various activities to celebrate the second anniversary of the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000. The

celebrations were an opportunity to “renew the momentum generated in Dakar and to stimulate public debate on key issues related to Education for All”.

In Mozambique the week was celebrated in 5 provinces from the 21st of March until the 2nd of May 2002. The events and activities concentrated on a drawing competition for both in- and out-of-school children between the ages of 6-12 years. The theme of the drawing event was “What I want to do when I grow up”.

Other activities included a visit by school children to a home for people living with HIV/AIDS (including children living with HIV/AIDS), debates on the topic of Education for All and alternative manners in which to increase access and equity broadcast through both radio and TV, and the signing of a ‘school report’ within the framework of the global campaign for education, which was subsequently submitted to the Canadian Embassy in preparation of coming G8 Summit.

The closing ceremony was at Josina Machel secondary school on the 2nd of May. During the closing ceremony parents, teachers, children, civil society representatives present were able to view the drawings selected during the drawing competition. Amongst the key addresses were those from the Minister of Education, Ms Graça Machel on Behalf of Movimento de Educação Para Todos, the representative from the Canadian Embassy, and the UNESCO representative made key addresses of the event. Submitting the school reports to the Ministry of Education and Canadian Embassy was part of the closing event.

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