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## **Evaluation of UNESCO Support to National Planning for EFA**

### **Synthesis Report**

*Education for Change Limited*  
*January 2006*

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AIBD	Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIMS	Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit
BFC	Bureau of Field Coordination
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CB	Capacity-building
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCNGOs	Collective Consultation of NGOs
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CO	Cluster Office
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DP	Development Partner
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ED/BAS	Education Sector, Division of Basic Education
ED/EPS	Education Sector, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ED/EO	Education Sector, Executive Office
EPPSim	Education Policy and Strategy Simulation
EU	European Union
EXBF	Extrabudgetary Funding
FAPED	Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education
FIT	Funds-in-Trust
FO	Field Office
FRESH	Focusing Resources on Effective School Health
FTI	Fast-track Initiative
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNP	Gross National Product
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	(UNESCO) Headquarters
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
IOS	Internal Oversight Service
JFIT	Japanese Funds-in-Trust
KEDI	Korean Education Development Institute

LDC	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MLA	Main Line of Action (in biennial planning and budgeting)
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MS	Member States
MTE	Mobile Team of Experts
NatCom	National Commission for UNESCO
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
NO	National Office
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme (Bangladesh)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QA	Quality Assurance
RB	Regular Budget
RB(x)	Regional Bureau(x)
RBM	Results-Based Management
RP	Regular Programme
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SISTER	System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
TA	Technical Assistance
TORS	Terms of Reference
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UPC	Universal Primary Completion
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WGEFA	Working Group on Education for All
WHO	World Health Organization

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## Executive summary

### Background

This is the report of an evaluation of UNESCO's support to national planning for Education for All (EFA) between 2000 and 2004. The evaluation was undertaken by Education *for* Change Ltd, UK, between June and November 2005 and included a documentation survey, ten country field visits, ten remote country case studies, information-gathering from UNESCO agencies and Institutes and on-line surveys<sup>1</sup>.

The evaluation was asked to take a perspective from the experience of Member States (MS) as beneficiaries of UNESCO's support. This report draws on the evidence of country case studies, in each of which the evaluation sought evidence from UNESCO staff, MS officials, representatives of civil society and of other international agencies. The country case study reports reflect the diversity of situations in which UNESCO works.

The period of evaluation is that in which UNESCO sought to implement and fulfil the mandate of the 2000 Dakar Conference on Education for All. The mandate authorised support for countries to achieve credible national planning for EFA that would allow the international community to move towards meeting the Dakar funding commitments. At Dakar, planning for EFA became part of a critical path to realising ambitious international aims. UNESCO was mandated to assist countries along that path and in 2000 made EFA its top priority.

UNESCO has supported its MS to undertake EFA Planning in a variety of ways, providing guidance, technical advice, direct assistance, policy and advocacy support and opportunities for national and other forums to improve participation in planning.

The TORS of the evaluation included five main areas of enquiry:

1. Integrating EFA planning support within wider educational and national frameworks
2. UNESCO's support of national, sub-regional and regional EFA forums and strategies
3. UNESCO's coordination actions in preparing and following up national planning for EFA
4. UNESCO's technical assistance and capacity building for EFA planning and follow-up
5. UNESCO's support of data collection, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of EFA

The evaluators were also asked to consider organisational factors within UNESCO where they have affected support for EFA planning.

### Major Findings

#### Country contexts

Country contexts that affect the ways in which UNESCO is able to support EFA planning include: conflict and post-conflict situations; the size and administrative structure of the country; UNESCO's organisation; and the extent to which development partners are harmonising their approach, changing the modalities of funding and becoming more involved in education policy and planning.

<sup>1</sup> Field visits were to: Angola; Burkina Faso; Colombia; Guatemala; Indonesia; Kenya; Nigeria; Pakistan; Palestine Autonomous and Occupied Territories (with Beirut RB); and Viet Nam (with Bangkok RB). Remote case studies were of: Bangladesh; Cambodia; Costa Rica; Ecuador; Egypt; Ethiopia; Mongolia; Namibia; Tanzania; and Yemen.



## Policy and Programming

The evaluation recognises that immediately after Dakar there was a conceptualisation promulgated by UNESCO that countries needed “National EFA Plans”, and that this led some countries to engage in parallel planning processes that were not integrated with continuing cycles of educational planning. In most cases countries now have integrated planning to achieve EFA within the main educational planning processes and related documents.

The evaluation identifies the extent to which EFA has been overtaken in the priorities of MS by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It finds some confusion caused by shifting international target statements and modalities. It also confirms the extent to which the changed international development architecture has contributed to lowering the priority that countries and some agencies attach to those EFA goals that address early childhood care and education (ECCE) and non-formal education (NFE).

The evaluation finds weaknesses in UNESCO’s country-level programming that lead to reactive responses to countries’ needs. Longer-term or more strategic programming is constrained by UNESCO’s biennial budgeting round, and capacity has limited UNESCO’s engagement with the CCA/UNDAF process.

## Partnerships

As a membership organisation, UNESCO has a particular relationship with most MS’s governments, valued by both parties. The opportunities and constraints of this relationship are not always understood.

There are, however, difficulties in some countries of working with the National Commissions for UNESCO (NatComs) where they lack the capacity or appropriate channels of communication.

UNESCO has positive relationships with educational NGOs, and the effectiveness of its work to involve them in participatory processes for planning and to increase their voice in the educational debates is recognised.

In some countries UNESCO has become marginal to the relationship between a donor group and the MS, whilst in others UNESCO is developing a unique role that includes brokering and mediating the government’s relationship with the development partners. There are concerns that UNESCO is not adapting rapidly enough to the changing aid architecture landscape and implementation modalities.

## Activities

The evaluation considers UNESCO’s activities in support of EFA planning, including: advocacy; regional and national forums; technical support; and capacity-building.

There is evidence of some impact of UNESCO’s EFA advocacy within the MS, although it remains difficult to assess raised awareness or commitment.

UNESCO’s work in support of national EFA Forums is valued as, in many cases, they have broken new ground in providing an opportunity for civil society to participate in educational policy-making. However, the evaluation raises concerns about the sustainability and mainstreaming of such participation.

MS accord importance to UNESCO’s commitment to encourage and facilitate intellectual dialogue at both regional and sub-regional levels. However, questions are raised about the targeting, frequency and purposefulness of such events.

UNESCO's contribution to individual professional development is of good quality, particularly IIEP's work in the context of EFA planning. However, there are questions about UNESCO's targeting of support to meet the needs of the MS in its delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building inputs. Particular concerns are weak processes to match inputs to the specific needs and contexts of the country and difficulties in programming (and financing) longer-term capacity-building inputs. In many of the case-study countries educational planning needs significant medium to long-term support that engages with organisational and political realities as well as technical requirements. Such support may be beyond UNESCO's capacity.

The evaluation notes the contribution that has been made by UNESCO to help countries improve their technical capacity and political will to provide reliable and timely information about their education systems. It notes the role of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics in this process, both in collection and validation of data and also in providing capacity-building inputs.

### UNESCO's organisation, operation and communication

UNESCO's country programming is weak, resulting in too many *ad hoc* and reactive responses.

Organisational aspects of UNESCO such as geographical location, resources, multiplicity of entities and lack of institutional memory have affected its support to EFA planning and follow-up. Questions are raised: planning cycles and budget systems; internal communications; clarity of responsibilities; and the approach to managing technical assistance and capacity building.

The resources provided to UNESCO offices do not reflect operational needs or geographical, linguistic and other contexts.

Poor internal communications between UNESCO's entities and lack of coordination of activities with MS leads to overlap and inconsistency of approaches to the MS.

The way Extrabudgetary Funding (EXBF) is used within the context of EFA planning and how UNESCO is able to integrate EXBF within its programme raises a question about the distortion of programming to match the external agendas of the donors.

There are concerns over the transparency with which UNESCO procures consultant services and project contracts and the capacity that it is able to mobilise for project-management, even of relatively large projects.

## Recommendations

The recommendations seek to build on strengths and to address challenges identified by the evaluation.

### Building on strengths

#### *UNESCO's unique relationship with Member States*

1. In emphasising how it differs from other agencies, UNESCO should accentuate the strengths of: its representativeness; access to international and regional expertise, evidence and research; and range of sectoral expertise.
2. Conversely, UNESCO should critically review activities that do not play to these comparative advantages and simply mirror the work of other agencies.
3. UNESCO should focus EFA planning and implementation support on the central government agencies and respond to the needs of the decentralised administrative areas

through support to government processes, rather than by attempting to provide similar types of support to the remote regions.

4. UNESCO should formally recognise that support to EFA planning in post-conflict countries requires one-off strategies able to address their unique needs. Strategies might include temporary allocation of specialist staff; intensive capacity-building; and highly responsive initiatives for planning, information systems and organisational analysis. This will assist post-conflict reconstruction and facilitate the engagement of other EFA partners. It may require additional resources.

#### *Regional dialogue*

5. UNESCO should ensure that regional and sub-regional events serve their purpose better by having clear objectives and specification of participants, inclusion of other stakeholders (including from other agencies) and appropriate levels of evaluation. This may lead to fewer but more effective events, and to the use of alternative ways of facilitating regional communication, perhaps using video-conferencing etc.
6. UNESCO should consider extending its support for existing political and professional partnerships as a preferred mechanism for stimulating intellectual dialogue and cooperation.
7. UNESCO should consider working with common-need country groupings that cut across cluster boundaries but bring together countries with common EFA planning needs.

#### *Intellectual capability*

8. UNESCO should improve its systems for cataloguing and managing its internal expertise. On key areas of EFA planning and follow-up the contact points need to be clearly and publicly identified.
9. Those charged with identifying sources of expertise need more up-to-date information and professional development on how best to specify and deliver the appropriate resources.
10. UNESCO should respond to the fact that other agencies are an audience for its expertise and potential partners in intellectual dialogue, for example NGOs and development partners (DPs) in country.
11. UNESCO needs to be visionary about the intellectual demands of the changing landscape of EFA planning. Areas for further intellectual investment may include: decentralisation; student assessment; transition from primary to secondary; teachers' careers; private provision of education, etc.

#### *Partnerships with NGOs*

12. UNESCO needs to look at ways to promote the integration of the voice of NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) within governmental approaches to EFA planning and follow-up so as to mainstream the sort of participation that characterised the immediate post-Dakar period.
13. Towards this end UNESCO could help to develop the representativeness and accountability that will legitimise NGO/CSO voices in the political process.

### *Advocacy and awareness*

14. UNESCO should be shifting responsibility for advocacy and awareness about EFA to the government and civil society mechanisms in the MS, providing support as necessary.
15. To support this, UNESCO should develop joint activities between the Education Sector and the Communication and Information and the Culture Sectors (mainly related to EFA advocacy, education and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), literacy and linguistic diversity).
16. Advocacy needs to be moving beyond the promotion of access to schooling that dominated the early approaches. UNESCO should lead on building awareness around other themes, including quality of schooling and awareness of rights.
17. UNESCO's advocacy could become more focussed, informative and evidence-led, basing more of its advocacy of ECCE and Literacy, for example, on research and international experience.

### *Educational information and information systems*

18. UNESCO should consider how the work of the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) can be institutionalised after the current funding.
19. UNESCO offices should use the GMR more pro-actively at country/sub-regional level.

## Responding to challenges

### *Country strategy and programming*

20. UNESCO should work towards a country programming cycle that is consistent with those of other international agencies and allows for longer term planning and budgeting.
21. UNESCO should make high-level commitment, including commitment of necessary resources, to CCA/UNDAF processes and use of the UNDAF in planning.

### *NatComs*

22. The evaluation recommends a range of actions to improve the capacity of NatComs, their communication infrastructure and the transparency of their role in contracting and project management.

### *Coordination and leadership for EFA planning*

23. UNESCO must be involved in the formal education groups in which the DPs and the MS governments meet and must establish a clear role there. It has unique qualification to chair such groups, or it may lead on areas of its comparative advantage.

### *Evaluation and Quality Assurance*

24. UNESCO must respond to the need to develop and to embed quality assurance (QA) procedures in all its activities and demonstrate them to partners.

### *Human resources*

25. The evaluation notes the constraints on UNESCO's human resource management but recommends profiling key positions, including representative positions, and pursuing human resource management policies to improve the match of personnel to positions.

26. UNESCO should consider making more temporary postings of staff from Institute or HQ to FO, linked to specific tasks but with recognition of the professional gains.

*Making the decentralised structure work*

27. The evaluation recommends simply that UNESCO continues to monitor the organisational impact of decentralisation and retains the flexibility to experiment and consider ways to improve the operations.

*Technical assistance and capacity building*

28. UNESCO should seek to improve the quality-assurance of technical assistance (TA) and capacity-building (CB) by introducing procedures and *pro-formas* for specifying the needs, identifying the intended outcomes and providing information on critical country context.
29. CB activities should benefit from the same structure of analysis, performance management and evaluation. This might also include analysis of the organisational, political or practical constraints that are outside the scope of UNESCO's inputs, and how they might be addressed.
30. Where elements of CB are provided by cluster or regional workshops UNESCO must ensure that the appropriate individuals and countries are targeted.
31. The Institutes need to develop remote access to their courses and expertise, including more Open and Distance Learning (ODL) that could be mediated into country contexts and offered at regional centres.

*Management of consultants and of projects*

32. UNESCO should adopt procedures for procurement of services that accord to standards of other international agencies for transparency and openness.
33. Similarly the evaluation recommends a standard approach to project design, monitoring and evaluation that allows for transparent monitoring of project progress, outcomes and impact.

*Extrabudgetary funds*

34. UNESCO should adopt a more structured and disciplined approach to EXBF that prioritises the fit with global, regional or national programming or strategies.

*Communications, information sharing*

35. UNESCO needs to improve its knowledge management systems and widen its scope to include internal material and that of MS and partner organisations to serve as an in-country knowledge centre on EFA planning and follow-up.

## PART A: About the Evaluation

### A.1 Background

#### A.1.1 Education for All

In 1990, delegates from 155 countries as well as representatives from about 150 organisations attended the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, where they reaffirmed the right of all people to education, and declared that meeting basic learning needs was a priority, to be achieved by universalising primary education and reducing illiteracy before 2000. Despite this pledge the Official Development Assistance (ODA) declined as well as loans in the mid-nineties, and Universal Primary Education (UPE) was not achieved.

In 2000, more than 1,100 participants attended the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, to reaffirm their collective commitment to Education for All (EFA). Based on the EFA 2000 Assessment conducted 10 years after Jomtien at national, regional and global levels, goals and strategies were set out to “enable all individuals to realise their right to learn and to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the development of their society.”<sup>2</sup> The “Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments” introduced six goals to be achieved by 2015.

#### **The Six EFA goals**

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The Dakar Framework calls for external assistance on a systematic basis. Specifically, it states: “We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources” (Art. 10). It also calls for a “global initiative aimed at developing the strategies and mobilising the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts” (Art. 11).

Countries made commitments in Dakar to develop or strengthen their national education plans by the end of 2002, and to define the path to achieve the EFA goals.

<sup>2</sup> The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000, Art. 29.

*“Each country’s approach to EFA planning should reflect this sense of responsibility and become one means through which national ownership and direction of EFA efforts are pursued”.*<sup>3</sup>

The international community agreed to work in a coherent manner to support countries’ efforts in achieving EFA goals.

### A.1.2 The Millennium Development Goals<sup>4</sup>

#### Millennium Development Goals for 2015

1. Halving extreme poverty and hunger
1. Achieving universal primary education
2. Achieving gender equality
3. Reducing child mortality by two-thirds
4. Reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters
5. Reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases
6. Ensuring environmental sustainability
7. Creating a global partnership for development

A few months after the Dakar Conference, there was a further commitment from countries within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (see box) that were drawn from the UN Millennium Resolution at the 55<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The MDGs identify and address priority development concerns and Goals 2 and 3 are directly related to education: the indicators for Goal 2 focus on the completion rates for primary education, those for Goal 3 on eliminating gender disparities, ideally by 2005.

UNDP coordinates international and national activities to reach the MDGs and helps countries integrate the MDGs into their national development frameworks and national development strategies and policies. The MDGs are also integrated into assistance frameworks and programmes, including the poverty reduction strategies.

### A.1.3 Financing the commitments

At the heart of EFA and the MDG lay commitments from the richer nations to finance poor countries to meet these goals. There was already an important new financial mechanism in place since the announcement in 1999 of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative that proposed debt relief for countries with an approved Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The PRSP is a comprehensive, country-based strategy for poverty reduction. It aims to provide the crucial link between national public actions, donor support and the development outcomes needed to meet the United Nations’ MDGs. PRSPs provide the operational basis for Fund and Bank concessional lending and for debt relief under the HIPC Initiative.

Five core principles underlie the PRSP, by which it is required to be:

- Country-driven, promoting national ownership of strategies through broad-based participation of civil society;
- Result-oriented and focused on outcomes that will benefit the poor;
- Comprehensive in recognising the multi-dimensional nature of poverty;

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO 2000, Country Guidelines on the Preparation of National EFA Plans of Action, p.2:  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001219/121911e.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)

- Partnership-oriented, involving coordinated participation of development partners (government, domestic stakeholders, and external donors); and
- Based on a long-term perspective for poverty reduction<sup>5</sup>.

International political commitments led to questions of financing and consequent commitments by richer countries to meet the 0.7% of GNP target for aid, first pledged in 1995 and reiterated in the Monterrey Declaration in 2002<sup>6</sup>. ODA has been growing with a number of countries now reaching or approaching the 0.7% target.

#### *A.1.4 The EFA-Fast Track Initiative*

The Education for All Fast-track Initiative (FTI) is a global partnership between donors and developing countries to ensure accelerated progress towards the EFA and MDG goals by providing a “Fast Track” to the necessary funds. Launched in 2002 the FTI is based on an agreement whereby donors provide increased financial and technical supports to countries that have developed robust education plans with primary education as a top priority. FTI aims at developing sound education plans, better coordination, country-led programmes, predictable aid and measurable results and best practice<sup>7</sup>.

The FTI has been criticised since its inception for not being “fast” enough in identifying and disbursing funds.

#### *A.1.5 Changing modalities of financing*

Since the mid-1990s, and at an increasing pace, there has been a change to the dominant modalities of development support, particularly by the financing agencies (i.e. development banks, multilateral agencies, and national/bilateral agencies). New modalities are characterised by:

- Greater cooperation and harmonisation between agencies;
- Programmatic and sector-wide approaches (SWAps);
- Increased political ownership of development planning and implementation by the country concerned; and
- Financing through budget support or other “broad category” funding mechanisms so as to reduce transaction costs and work through government financial machineries.

This has been a complicated set of changes, which has proceeded more or less rapidly in different countries and in different agencies. However, in many countries it is changing the relationships between the government and its DPs.

#### *A.1.6 UNESCO's role*

UNESCO's mission in education is threefold as reflected in the strategic objectives of the Medium-Term Strategy 2002-2007: (i) to promote education as a fundamental right; (ii) to improve the quality of education; (iii) to stimulate experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/involved/action07.htm>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www1.worldbank.org/education/efafti/documents/factsheet\\_basic.pdf](http://www1.worldbank.org/education/efafti/documents/factsheet_basic.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO and Education, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001289/128951e.pdf>



UNESCO's mandate in coordinating EFA partners was extended in the Dakar Framework, and the organisation agreed to "serve as the Secretariat" and "refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work"<sup>9</sup>. This commitment was reiterated in the Medium-Term Strategy 2002-2007 (31C/4)<sup>10</sup>. To do so, UNESCO built on existing partnerships and further developed its country support mechanisms.

The Dakar Framework for Action emphasises the double dimension of UNESCO's role regarding EFA from 2000:

- Co-ordination of EFA partners (Dakar Framework, Art. 19)
- Programmes geared towards Dakar's priorities (Dakar Framework, Art. 20)

### A.1.7 EFA mechanisms

To fulfil these roles UNESCO worked within existing mechanisms and established new ones.

#### *The High-Level Group on EFA (HLG)*

A High-Level Group on EFA meets every year and brings together some thirty Ministers of Education and of International Co-operation, heads of development agencies and civil society representatives. Its role is to sustain and accelerate the political momentum created at the World Education Forum and serve as a lever for resource mobilisation: "*The UNESCO Director General will convene annually a high-level, small and flexible group. It will serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilisation. (...) it will also be an opportunity to hold the global community to account for commitments made in Dakar.*" (Dakar Framework for Action (Art. 19)).

#### *The Working Group on Education for All (WGEFA)*

The WGEFA is a post-Dakar coordination mechanism set up by UNESCO which brings together a wide range of participants including countries, development banks, NGOs, multilateral and bilateral organisations, and other private organisations or individuals.

*"Its function is professional and consultative, providing a forum for exchange and discussion of the varied experiences with Education for All (EFA) in countries, regions and international organisations, and for recommending concrete actions."* (WGEFA 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, p.6)

The first meeting of the WGEFA stressed the existing differences between countries in terms of preparation of EFA plans, as well as the lack of clear and practical guidelines to support the planning process. Recommendations highlighted the need for more operational guidelines and for effective ways of integrating EFA with wider development frameworks. UNESCO's role in EFA follow-up was defined in terms of being a synthesiser of progress made by countries, facilitator of inclusive processes to prepare national plans and a possible "*leadership role in identifying where help is needed in terms of both technical assistance and financial support and to channel requests for support to funding and technical assistance agencies.*"<sup>11</sup>

#### *The E-9 Initiative*

The E-9 Initiative was launched in 1993 on the occasion of the EFA Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and

<sup>9</sup> Dakar Framework for Action, 2000, para 20.

<sup>10</sup> Medium-Term Strategy, 2002-2007, 31C/4, para 50.

<sup>11</sup> WGEFA 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, p.28.

Pakistan). The nine countries signed the Delhi Declaration, committing to reach the Education for All goals as soon as possible. Education of girls and women is at the top of the E-9 agenda, as is teacher-training and literacy.

### *EFA Regional and sub-regional forums*

In article 18, the Dakar Framework proposed regional activities to support national efforts for EFA planning and the establishment of Regional and Sub-Regional Forums. UNESCO's long-standing regional and sub-regional organisation provided the framework for the establishment of such forums. The work built on existing regional discussions and organisation for regional Frameworks for action for EFA.

### *National forums*

National Forums were defined as the country-level machinery at the heart of EFA activity.

#### ***Dakar Framework article 16***

The heart of EFA activity lies at the country level. National EFA Forums will be strengthened or established to support the achievement of EFA. All relevant ministries and national civil society organisations will be systematically represented in these Forums. They should be transparent and democratic and should constitute a framework for implementation at subnational levels. Countries will prepare comprehensive National EFA Plans by 2002 at the latest. For those countries with significant challenges, such as complex crises or natural disasters, special technical support will be provided by the international community. Each National EFA Plan will:

- (i) be developed by government leadership in direct and systematic consultation with national civil society;
- (ii) attract co-ordinated support of all development partners;
- (iii) specify reforms addressing the six EFA goals;
- (iv) establish a sustainable financial framework;
- (v) be time-bound and action-oriented;
- (vi) include mid-term performance indicators; and
- (vii) achieve a synergy of all human development efforts, through its inclusion within the national development planning framework and process."

### *Internal arrangements*

The Director General of UNESCO issued a *Blue Note*<sup>12</sup> in 2000 to establish an internal structure for EFA within UNESCO comprising:

- Intersectoral Strategic Group
- Education Sector Senior Staff Group
- Network of the UNESCO Institutes and Regional Education Offices
- The Dakar Follow-up Unit, its steering committee and its correspondents in the divisions of the Education Sector.

<sup>12</sup> DG/Note/00/36, 28 December 2000.

Roles within the organisation were described as follows:

- Dakar Follow-up Unit: to orchestrate follow-up activities at regional, sub-regional and international levels;
- Education Sector/Division of Educational Policy and Strategies (ED/EPS): to assist Member States in the preparation of follow-up plans and activities at the national level. In order to provide rapid and effective assistance to Member States, a mobile team will be constituted; strengthened by the recruitment of at least three high-level experts (P-5) specialised in the areas of educational planning, programming and policy-making;
- Education Sector/Division of Basic Education Section (ED/BAS): to identify and disseminate best practices at national, regional and international levels and to implement certain flagship programmes. In order to fulfil its responsibilities, ED/BAS will need to be strengthened through the recruitment of a high-level expert in the areas of literacy, adult education and non-formal education and a specialist in primary education;
- Other sections of the Education Sector (Section for Early Childhood and Inclusive Education, Section for Primary Education, Section for Teacher Education, Section for Science and Technology Education, Section for Literacy and NFE): to incorporate Dakar follow-up into their programmes of activity and to implement specific flagship programmes. There will be at least one specialist in each division devoted to Dakar follow-up;
- UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS): to operate the EFA Observatory;
- Other UNESCO Institutes, Regional and Cluster Offices (COs): to undertake activities relevant to their respective fields of competence.

UNESCO's commitment to EFA has been expressed through numerous and varied actions since Dakar at the national, regional and international levels. These have focused on five core areas:

- First, to integrate EFA fully in all programme activities of UNESCO. This concerns education specifically but also involves inter-sectoral activities related to culture, communication and information, and the sciences.
- Second, to support countries in the implementation of EFA, for example in the formulation of education policies that cater to excluded groups.
- Third, to develop regional mechanisms for capacity building and exchange between countries.
- Fourth, to champion more efficient use of resources and increased investment in basic education.
- Fifth, to sustain the EFA momentum at global level through EFA advocacy at international meetings.

### *A.1.8 EFA Flagships*

EFA Flagships were established to provide a vehicle for activity around priority areas, in cross-cutting EFA challenges.

*“An EFA flagship initiative is a structured set of activities carried out by voluntary partners, under the leadership of one or more United Nations specialised agencies and NGOs, that seeks to address specific challenges in achieving the EFA goals. There is*

*a variation in the structure of these flagship programmes depending to a large extent on the way they were initiated. The common denominator is a partnership platform.*

*The EFA flagships address specific problems from an interdisciplinary perspective, taking into account the interaction between education and other factors (for example, health, nutrition and rural development). Programmes and activities differ between flagships, but most involve advocacy and communication, exchange of experience, institutional capacity development, technical advice and monitoring of progress. EFA flagship initiatives perform the following three major roles: (1) assist countries to achieve the EFA goals; (2) provide special focus on a related aspect of EFA that poses particular problems; and (3) strengthen partnerships among stakeholders.”<sup>13</sup>*

There are nine EFA flagship initiatives:

- The Initiative on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education
- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion
- Education for Rural People
- Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis
- Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH)
- Teachers and the Quality of Education
- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)
- Literacy in the Framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade

### *A.1.9 Global Monitoring Report (GMR)*

UNESCO was involved in assessing EFA progress in the mid 1990s and in 2000 in preparation for Dakar. UNESCO prepared the *EFA Monitoring Report 2001* with inputs from the EFA partners.

From 2002 DFID provided funds for the annual production of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) by an independent team. This has become the prime instrument to assess global progress towards achieving the EFA goals. The GMR tracks progress, identifies effective policy reforms and best practice in all areas relating to EFA, draws attention to emerging challenges and seeks to promote international cooperation in favour of education.

The Report is produced by an independent, international team based at UNESCO in Paris (France), with the UNESCO UIS in Montreal. During bi-annual meetings the Board discusses the scope and contents of the Report underway and provides advice on its future development. The Report is developed over a twelve to eighteen month period. It draws on scholarship and expertise from governments, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies, UNESCO institutes and research institutions.

Whilst the report has an annual agenda for reporting progress on each of the EFA goals, each issue also adopts a particular theme, chosen because of its central importance to the EFA process. Themes to date have been: *EFA—Is the World on Track?* (2002); *Gender and EFA—The Leap to Equality* (2003/2004); *EFA—The Quality Imperative* (2005); *EFA—Literacy for Life* (2006).

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/know\\_sharing/flagship\\_initiatives/index.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/know_sharing/flagship_initiatives/index.shtml)

## A.2 Context of the evaluation

UNESCO played a central role in nurturing and formalising the international commitment to EFA. It was actively involved in the 1990 organisation of the Jomtien declarations and the series of actions to monitor and promote EFA in the 1990s, up to and including the 2000 Assessment that showed the extent to which the goals and targets, and the financial support, had been, at best, partially realised over the decade. UNESCO also took a lead role in the Dakar conference that sought to respond to the disappointing progress on the EFA agenda by securing an increased level of commitment and, in particular, the financial commitments by donor nations and the international and national agencies.

UNESCO therefore has a history as the steward and prime mover of EFA and, consequently, was mandated at Dakar to support countries to meet their EFA commitments. A critical element in the Dakar Framework for Action is that no country should be in a position where it fails to meet EFA targets because it lacks the financial means.

UNESCO has subjected its work post-Dakar to considerable internal review and identified questions and concerns about the way that the organisation has tackled its mandated role. This evaluation has been characterised as an opportunity to consider the experience of Member States and partner organisations, and to synthesise from their experiences any generalisable issues, lessons and ways forward. The TORS are at Annex 1.

## A.3 Methodology

The evaluation was carried out from June to November 2005 by external evaluators. The work was steered by a UNESCO Reference Group including representatives of ED/EPS and Internal Oversight Service (IOS).

The team of evaluators (Annex 2) incorporates different experiences including: familiarity with the working of UNESCO and/or other UN agencies; familiarity with the work of other international development agencies; and regional experiences. All personnel have been involved with education development and education planning.

### *A.3.1 Desk study, data-collection from UNESCO bodies*

The evaluation was informed by three days of meetings in Paris where the team met with key divisions or units from Headquarters, better to understand the organisation of UNESCO, its working practices, its main streams of work related to EFA and the programmes and activities it carries out in-country.

Meetings were organised with the following divisions or units:

- Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, Section for Support for National Educational Development
- Division of International Coordination and Monitoring for Education for All
- Section for Early Childhood and Inclusive Education
- Section for Primary Education
- Section for Teacher Education
- Section for Science and Technology Education
- Section for Literacy and NFE
- Internal Oversight Service (IOS)
- Bureau of Field Coordination (BFC)

In addition a meeting was organised with the team in charge of the GMR, and an information meeting took place at the IIEP. Other consultation was undertaken by e-mail and telephone, including with UIS and the International Bureau of Education (IBE).

### *Evaluation Framework and investigation tools*

An evaluation framework was developed around six areas of investigation, namely:

1. Integrating EFA planning support within wider educational and national frameworks
2. UNESCO's support of national, sub-regional and regional EFA forums and strategies
3. UNESCO's coordinating actions in preparation and follow-up on national planning for EFA
4. UNESCO's technical assistance and capacity building for EFA planning and follow-up
5. UNESCO's support of data collection, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of EFA
6. UNESCO's internal organisation and communication

The framework included evaluation criteria, sub-areas of investigation and their related questions, and identified potential sources of information for each sub-area (Annex 3).

The framework was informed by discussion with UNESCO and a brief literature review of key documents provided by Headquarters or through a comprehensive review of UNESCO's portal. Documents included:

- Key policy documents related to the Dakar framework
- Key Blue Notes<sup>14</sup>, programming documentation (C5), UNESCO's medium-term strategies worldwide and by region, and reports by DG on EFA related issues
- Selected progress or evaluation reports on EFA planning activities
- General Report and Recommendations for Joint Action in the Context of the CCNGO<sup>15</sup>/EFA Network
- Synthesis reports on involvement of civil society in EFA
- Communiqués from High-Level Group On Education for All
- Reports on meetings of the Working Group on EFA
- Technical documentation around EFA assessment, EFA planning guidelines, Results-Based Action Planning in the Education Sector
- Documents related to the monitoring of EFA planning worldwide, including UNESCO survey reports,
- Specific evaluation reports on UNESCO offices and UNESCO activities, especially extra-budgetary funded activities
- UNESCO Institutes' and development partners' EFA planning and implementation related literature

A research toolkit was developed for first and second tier countries to ensure coherence and communality of approach when undertaking country visits or telephone interviews. The document was discussed with all team members. The toolkit for second tier countries was revised at completion of the first tier country missions to reflect lessons learned and to probe and expand on the emerging findings.

<sup>14</sup> Communications from the office of the Director General

<sup>15</sup> Collective Consultation of NGOs

### *Preliminary questionnaire*

Many UNESCO entities and divisions were contacted and requested to fill in a short form providing information on activities carried out between 2000 and 2004. Inquiry fields covered name of activity, budget codes, start and end dates, budget and actual costs, source of funds, purpose and beneficiaries of the activity, relevant reports and evaluation documents.

The table below shows the number of returns.

**Table 1: UNESCO responses**

Type of entities	Contacted	Returns
Headquarter divisions or units	8	6
Regional Offices	4	2
Cluster or national offices	21	15
UNESCO Institutes	3	2

### *A.3.2 Country visits*

Ten 'first tier' countries were selected by UNESCO for field case studies:

- Angola
- Burkina Faso
- Colombia
- Guatemala
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Palestine Autonomous and Occupied Territories (with Beirut Regional Bureau (RB))
- Viet Nam (with Bangkok RB)

Evidence was gathered in each country through the preliminary questionnaire described above, and a ten-day mission carried out by two consultants.

UNESCO national or cluster offices responsible for activities in country arranged meetings with key stakeholders, including:

- UNESCO Director/Education Officers
- National Commission for UNESCO Secretary General/Officers
- Government representatives (EFA Coordinator, Ministry of Education (MOE) senior officials, Planning officials, Ministry of Finance officials, officials from the Statistics Department)
- Development partner representatives, including UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, INGOs, national NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs)
- Other public or semi-public bodies involved in the education sector
- A short debriefing was organised at the end of the mission wherever possible. Otherwise, follow-up was done by email discussion.

The evaluation sought to identify how the whole UNESCO organisation has responded to the challenges within the case study countries. It was not an evaluation of the work of individuals, field offices or units.

### *A.3.3 Second tier countries*

The ten, 'second tier', case study countries were researched from a distance. They enlarged the evidence base of country contexts and provided opportunities to validate and probe emerging findings from the first tier countries. The second tier countries were:

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- Ethiopia<sup>16</sup>
- Mongolia
- Namibia
- Tanzania
- Yemen

The second tier countries were asked to provide evidence remotely. The evaluators recognise the diversity of contexts in which UNESCO offices support MS and that this militates against using a standardised written questionnaire. The evaluation therefore used *telephone interviews*, which proved to be more effective and, it is to be hoped, less intrusive. The target was to conduct at least three telephone interviews with representatives, including:

- UNESCO national or cluster office's Director or Education Officer
- Government (MOE or planning department)
- Development partner

Interviews with the UNESCO officers were generally carried out first so that they could help identify and organise interviews with representatives of government and development partners.

An outline of the enquiry questions was prepared and distributed beforehand to enable interviewees to understand the scope of the telephone interview. The questions were organised under the six areas of the evaluation framework.

In some cases face-to-face interviews were organised, linked to a first tier country visits or other work by the consultant team. Second tier countries that were visited were Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ecuador, Namibia and Mongolia.

### *A.3.4 Selection of countries*

UNESCO HQ made the selection of countries for both tiers in negotiation with the relevant UNESCO FO(s). Only where the relevant FOs agreed and made commitment to support the evaluation were the countries included. It is not clear how the self-selection has influenced the sample.

The countries include representatives of identifiable groups and attributes as below. Further details, including main findings, are at Annex 4:

<sup>16</sup> Evidence from Ethiopia was limited to the telephone exports from the UNESCO Office Addis Ababa.



**Table 2: Case study country attributes**

	Tier 1	Tier 2
E-9 <sup>17</sup>	Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan	Bangladesh, Egypt
LDC	Angola, Burkina Faso	Ethiopia, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Yemen
Conflict/post-conflict (C); Fragile states (F) <sup>18</sup> ; Transition states (T) <sup>19</sup>	Angola (C/F/T); Indonesia (F); Kenya (F); Nigeria (F); Palestine Autonomous and Occupied Territories (C); Viet Nam (T)	Cambodia (C/F/T); Ethiopia (C/F); Yemen (F)
HIV/AIDS Prevalence rate > 5% <sup>20</sup>	Angola, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria	Ethiopia, , Namibia, Tanzania
PRSP <sup>21</sup> status, (first publication)	Burkina Faso (2000), Kenya (2005), Pakistan (2004), Viet Nam (2002)	Bangladesh (2005), Cambodia (2002), Ethiopia (2000), Mongolia (2003), Tanzania (2000), Yemen (2002)
HIPC status	Burkina Faso, Kenya	Ethiopia, Tanzania, Yemen
Fast Track Initiative Endorsed	Burkina Faso, Viet Nam	Ethiopia
CCA, (CCA & UNDAF) <sup>22</sup>	Angola, (Burkina Faso), Colombia, (Guatemala)	(Cambodia), (Ethiopia), Mongolia, (Tanzania), (Yemen)

UNESCO field offices serve the selected countries in different ways (see Annex 4). Most of the first tier countries have National Offices (NOs) except: Angola (served by Windhoek CO), Burkina Faso (Bamako CO) and Colombia (Quito CO). Most of the second tier countries have NOs except: Mongolia (Beijing CO) and Yemen (Cairo CO). The geography of UNESCO was identified in advance as an important contextual factor for the evaluation - of particular concern where UNESCO's decentralisation has resulted in the closure of NOs, as is the case in Angola and Burkina Faso.

Recognising the role of Regional Bureaux (RBx) in the planning and delivery of UNESCO support to MS, the evaluation undertook visits to the Regional Bureau for the Middle East in Beirut, and for the Asia-Pacific Region in Bangkok.

Documents consulted are shown at Annex 5.

<sup>17</sup> Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan: accounting for more than 50 per cent of the world's population.

<sup>18</sup> <sup>18</sup> DFID working definition of fragile states: "countries where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor. The most important functions of the state for poverty reduction are territorial control, safety and security, capacity to manage public resources, delivery of basic services, and the ability to protect and support the ways in which the poorest people sustain themselves." *Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states*, DFID, January 2005.

<sup>19</sup> States in transition from central planned economies towards more market-oriented policies. The application of the term to the case-study countries is debatable: only Mongolia fits the usual interpretation of the term.

<sup>20</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005 p.254-261.

<sup>21</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper the acceptance of which is central to the heavily indebted priority country (HIPC) initiative and to other external support. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

<sup>22</sup> The Common Country Assessment (CCA) is the common instrument of the United Nations system to analyse the national development situation and identify key development issues [http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrls/ohrls/cca\\_undaf\\_prsp.htm](http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrls/ohrls/cca_undaf_prsp.htm). United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) provides a collective, coherent and integrated United Nations system response to national priorities.

## A.4 Issues for the synthesis report

UNESCO is a complex organisation that seeks to stimulate intellectual exchange and build political and cultural relationships. It works in different ways, through different channels, making it appear complicated to observers and beneficiaries.

The case studies in this evaluation looked at UNESCO from the countries' perspectives, offering a focus on activities and initiatives from where they are intended to have their impact. The view from the different countries is remarkably varied and the synthesis has tried to represent the variety and to identify the critical parameters and contexts that have affected UNESCO's support for EFA planning and follow-up.

In the synthesis, the evaluators also seek to distil common findings from the country case studies and, to the extent possible, present generalisable findings. The challenge for the evaluation of building from country evidence to organisational lessons and recommendations is a microcosm of the challenge that UNESCO faces in its work with MS: building policy, principles and overarching approaches able to respond to the MS's differences.

The evaluation adopted a number of principles in this synthesis of findings from the country case studies. These include:

- The evaluation has not reviewed the workings of the machineries for inter-agency cooperation and coordination at the global level as these are outside its scope. However, the evaluation necessarily considers the relationships between agencies working at country level and the way that global agreements and initiatives have played out in the case study countries;
- The evaluation period coincides with the period in which UNESCO undertook its decentralisation and restructuring of country support<sup>23</sup>. The evaluation acknowledges the importance and administrative and political complexity of this initiative. The new structure is still being embedded and made to work. The evaluation comments on how the structure is working for the case study countries, but cannot generalise from this;
- The evaluation heard pleas for increased financial and staff resources, which is an important finding. However an evaluation of this sort is not able to assess the competing calls on UNESCO's resources;
- The evaluation has sought to recognise that UNESCO is an organisation of MS upon which it is dependent for finances and governance. UNESCO necessarily responds to MS' different perceptions and concerns. It is beyond the scope of the evaluation to examine the functioning of the organisation at this political level; however, the findings show how UNESCO is responsive to MS' requests and how high-level, political, negotiations can steer UNESCO's professional work. The evaluation notes that many respondents do not appreciate this structure as one important reason why UNESCO is different from other agencies;
- The evaluation heard serious questions about the EFA process (and to some extent the MDG process) as an approach to international cooperation for development. These are familiar in the development debate: "whether common targets across all countries can be realistic"; "whether targets distort priorities (for example by pursuing 'quantity' over 'quality')"; "whether external funding commitments can be sustained at the levels now predicted for EFA". These are serious concerns that can fuel either constructive criticism or simple scepticism about the EFA process. To that extent they have coloured the responses and findings of the case studies but further analysis and discussion are beyond the scope of this evaluation.

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<sup>23</sup> Including significant decentralisation of operational and financial responsibility away from HQ. It also resulted in a rationalising reorganisation of UNESCO field offices, including the closure of some.

The synthesis has sought to build on evidence from the twenty case study countries, taking into account evidence from the field offices, Institutes and HQ divisions that have been involved with those countries. However, the evaluation has heard from many respondents whose experience extends beyond those countries. Evidence from these sources has been given due weight.

## PART B: Findings

### B.1 Country contexts

As well as the characteristics identified earlier and used to structure the selection of the case studies, the following contexts are important influences on UNESCO's support to EFA planning and follow-up.

#### *B.1.1 UNESCO organisation for country support*

The geography of UNESCO support (whether there is a NO in the country, for example) changes the frequency and the nature of the dialogue between UNESCO and the MS. The changing geographical structure associated with UNESCO's decentralisation has rolled out over the period considered by the evaluation, and the country studies included five which do not have in-country offices (Angola, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Mongolia and Yemen). In each case, the support provided through the relevant CO could best be characterised, including by the staff, as striving to make the remote dialogue work as well as possible. Respondents for these countries stressed the difficulties of working from a distance.

The proximity and accessibility of the next levels of support (i.e. the COs and RBx) are also factors. For example, the countries of South-East Asia benefit from the proximity and accessibility of Bangkok RB, which contributes to the vitality of the work in Bangkok; those of West Africa have a similar relationship with Dakar. On the other hand, respondents in East and Southern Africa note the time and cost of liaison with Dakar as a constraint on the relationship. Beirut and Santiago have advantages of a dominant common language across their respective Regions.

This sense, in which UNESCO is near some countries and remote from others, therefore, affects how UNESCO is perceived.

#### *Kenya: speaking to the cluster*

The Nairobi cluster office has five countries in its cluster: Burundi, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. The Nairobi office is committed to a cluster approach and therefore has to provide simultaneous translation between English and French during cluster meetings and has to publish all documents and reports in both languages. There is no additional funding from the Regular Program to cover these costly activities.

UNESCO sometimes cannot provide the language support necessary to work with beneficiaries in the Regions or Clusters, for example Angola is the sole Portuguese-speaking country in the Windhoek cluster of countries, and Nairobi CO struggles to support the French speaking member of its Cluster (see box).

#### *B.1.2 The size and administrative structures of the country*

UNESCO's scope for engagement with the planning machinery outside central government is stretched in large countries in which participation necessarily involves more people and more remote locations. Indonesia, Pakistan and Nigeria (Tier 1) and Bangladesh and Egypt (Tier 2) are E-9 countries that were included in the evaluation. The EFA challenges facing large countries are acknowledged within UNESCO and the work of the E-9 group: they include, for example, the extra resources needed for timely and reliable data-collection.

In countries that have established (or are actively working to establish) decentralised administrative and governance responsibilities, there is an additional challenge to provide

support at the decentralised point(s) of responsibility. As well as established federal states, such as Nigeria and Pakistan, the case studies include many countries that are working to increase decentralised responsibilities including: Angola; Burkina Faso; Colombia; Indonesia; Kenya; and Viet Nam (Tier 1) and Bangladesh; Cambodia; Ecuador; and Ethiopia (Tier 2)<sup>24</sup>. UNESCO's strengths are in its dealings with national governments: it is the national government that is the member of UNESCO. UNESCO does not normally have the capacity and relationships in the field to provide support to the decentralised governance and administration. Yet it is reasonable to assume that there are usually similar if not greater technical needs at these levels, as is reported in the Pakistan case study.

To varying extents in these countries, EFA planning has involved the decentralised structure, above and beyond actions for their participation in national EFA forums and processes. Some countries (Viet Nam, Pakistan, Indonesia) have taken a centre-first approach, prepared national

**Kenya: decentralised planning**

UNESCO Nairobi initiated provincial consultations to inform the forthcoming Kenya EFA national plan. This "bottom-up" approach was original, interesting and in line with the call for wide participation in Dakar. The consultations were geared towards networking and information sharing on EFA. Field visits were undertaken to observe the education sub-sectors at the district-level and to engage participants in discussions within schools and surrounding communities. It is from these visits and consultations that the District EFA plans of action were formulated and drafted. This approach persuaded the Ministry of Education to ensure that consultations took place in all provinces, and our interviews with various stakeholders indicate that this approach was accepted and praised.

planning documents and then asked that decentralised planning be undertaken within their frameworks. Others (e.g. Costa Rica, Nigeria, Kenya – see box) have used a more "bottom-up" approach, encouraging each state/provincial administration to develop separate planning documents. This has proved slower but is arguably more in the spirit of participation and ownership and more representative of the political relationships within a genuinely decentralised structure.

The evaluation does not have findings on how UNESCO has supported the articulation of planning processes for EFA at the national and decentralised

levels, although it notes the cases (e.g. Angola, Kenya, Cambodia, Pakistan, Indonesia) where UNESCO's support for participation has included decentralised agencies and forums. UNESCO has supported EFA planning for decentralised structures in Pakistan, Indonesia and Viet Nam.

**B.1.3 Role of other development partners**

The case studies include countries in which the DPs and the government of the MS are working to change the modalities and tenor of the development relationship. Characteristics of the changes are increased harmonisation of DPs' procedures; common monitoring procedures; financial modalities moving towards budget support; and clearer partnerships with government that encompass sector-wide programming. The rationales, challenges and progress of these changes have been widely covered elsewhere, for example in *Local Solutions to Global Challenges* (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003). The evaluation notes that these trends strive to empower governments in their relationships with DPs and increase the priority attached to transparent policy-making, financially grounded planning, and common monitoring procedures. They have also provided a route to introduce the developmental agendas of the DPs into educational plans, and as such they have provided a mechanism and set of imperatives that are supportive of improved educational planning and follow-up. The progress towards harmonised sector-wide programming varies but the objective has been espoused by

<sup>24</sup> The complexities of countries seeking to decentralise and/or deconcentrate functions are acknowledged but are beyond the scope of the evaluation.

all the major international agencies with the momentum increasing over the period since 2000. Countries in which there have been significant steps include: Burkina Faso; Kenya and Viet Nam (Tier 1) and Cambodia; Ethiopia and Tanzania (Tier 2).

There are several implications for UNESCO in this changing national aid architecture. Firstly, it reduces the uniqueness of UNESCO's special relationship with the government, because the lead agencies in a harmonised DP group have similar interests in the sort of policy interactions that have been in UNESCO's domain of activity, including educational planning towards the international targets.

Furthermore, changing relationships are usually driven by the funding agencies, because financial procedures are central to them. UNESCO's mandate and capabilities argue for it to have a seat at the table where educational policy is being discussed, but its place is at risk where the grouping is organised around finance: case studies (Ethiopia, Bangladesh) show UNESCO having a restricted role because it is not a funding partner.

The in-country working relationships between agencies are complicated, organic and highly dependent on the personalities of individuals. However, the ways in which other agencies are formalising new procedures and relationships is a significant and rapidly changing context for UNESCO, bringing its own opportunities and challenges (see box). UNESCO's role in Cambodia as Chair of the main working group of the DPs is one example.

#### **Burkina Faso: UNESCO mediates**

There was a high degree of consensus in Burkina Faso over the potential contribution of UNESCO to national coordination as member of the partnership framework for education, not only for its technical expertise but also as a mediator between the different partners. There is "endless debate" between bilateral donors and multi-laterals (specifically the World Bank) over the application of conditions and the most appropriate approaches. Additionally, there is constant negotiation between funding partners and government. UNESCO can play a valuable interface role between the different partners and in particular highlight the need to consider national experience.

## **B.2 Policy and programming**

### ***B.2.1 A National EFA Plan or national planning for EFA***

The evaluation confirms that, following Dakar, UNESCO actively promoted the development of separate stand-alone National EFA Plans and that this resulted in some confusion and duplication of action. A 'reality gap' opened up between the preparation of the National EFA Plan and the continuing education planning, action and monitoring within the MS. In some cases it led to EFA planning being undertaken in separate, and less appropriate, parts of the government. For example in Viet Nam the task was allocated to the separate Continuing Education department, perhaps because UNESCO was so strongly associated with adult and non-formal education.

UNESCO's main input to help countries understand the way forward after Dakar was *EFA: Preparation of national plans of action: Country Guidelines* (UNESCO 2000), which certainly uses the terminology of national plans but also emphasises the importance of an "integrated plan" with "other plans and strategic instruments" and being "owned by those other mechanisms of strategic design and planning". What is telling here is that the integration refers explicitly only to those planning frameworks that are driven by external agencies (the UN system's UNDAF/CDF/CAS and the PRSP). There is no reference to the language of sector-wide planning or recognition of how EFA planning could integrate into national sector-wide plans, or the issues that might arise.

Additional guidance was provided in material, published by Bangkok and Dakar RBx, for example, which also promulgated exemplary plans in Regional meetings. Several case study countries (Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Angola) cited these examples of plans as indicating a “one-size-fits-all” approach and they again suggested separate National EFA Plans.

The contents of the second wave of the planning support guides, such as that developed by Bangkok RB (with financial support from the ADB), *EFA Planning Guide for South-East and East Asia* (UNESCO 2001), was found useful to MS, and to individuals, seeking to understand EFA planning. ED/EPs’ *Development of a Plan of Action for Education: Methodological Brief* (UNESCO 2003) shows that UNESCO had started to recognise and move away from separate plans. It also provides a very strong guide to the methods, data and structure that UNESCO sought to encourage in EFA planning.

UNESCO pursued the goal, established at Dakar, for countries to complete National EFA plans in two years, so that MS would be able to unlock promised financial support. In many countries this immediately put EFA planning out of synchronisation with national planning cycles, and the problem was compounded because EFA takes a fifteen-year perspective whereas many countries use five-year planning cycles with annual or biannual adjustment. In Burkina Faso, Mongolia and Nigeria the lack of synchronisation between EFA planning and the national planning timetable is noted:

*“Burkina Faso, like a number of other African countries, had already begun the process of elaborating a ten-year plan for education, Plan Décennal de Développement de l’Education de Base, when they were required by UNESCO, post Dakar 2000, to elaborate a separate national plan for EFA.”*

The negative outcomes of the early conceptualisation and rush towards separate National EFA Plans are widely recognised inside UNESCO.

The other effect of UNESCO’s initial guidance is the priority that it accorded to support for participation in planning. The case study findings, which provide such mixed messages on support for planning *per se*, all show UNESCO’s lobbying and direct support to National EFA Forums and national advocacy actions for EFA with particular importance attached to UNESCO support in Angola, Kenya, Namibia, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Mongolia and Costa Rica.

### *B.2.2 Planning for EFA, for MDG or for education?*

#### **MDGs**

**Goal 2** is to achieve universal primary education and the target for 2015 is to “Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school.”

**Goal 3** is to promote gender equality and empower women and the targets are to “Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.”

Many of the case studies, and UNESCO respondents, have focused on the interplay between EFA planning and the education-specific MDGs for Universal Primary Completion and Gender Equality (see box)<sup>25</sup>. The MDGs incorporate other poverty-reduction goals and have become central to the policy commitment of agencies

(including the World Bank, UNDP, DFID and other bilaterals).

There are findings from many of the case study countries (including Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Guatemala and Pakistan) and from other respondents that describe how EFA priorities and EFA planning initiatives have been affected by the policy priorities of the MDG goals. That the MDG goals have focused the attention of policy-makers on universal primary

<sup>25</sup> [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)

completion and gender equality is widely recognised: the evaluation also reveals the strong views of UNESCO personnel, which may be characterised as:

*“The MDGs put all the attention on Universal Primary Completion (UPC) and gender and leave the other EFA goals, including Early Childhood and Adult Literacy, on the margins. But the EFA goals are inter-dependent; they have to go along together. Now we have the PRSP that must address the MDGs but paying lip-service to the other EFA goals.”* (Evaluator’s synthesis of comments made by UNESCO HQ staff)

To the extent that there is a critical interdependency between the EFA goals, it is a serious concern if the EFA project is being undermined by imbalances in policy or implementation.

There is evidence from the case studies (Costa Rica, Mongolia, Viet Nam and others) of how UNESCO is perceived as the champion for “All Six EFA Goals”, maintaining its Dakar mandate and its intellectual commitment to interdependency and consequent importance of all the goals). There is also evidence of UNESCO’s continuing advocacy, support and discussion leading to recognition and strategic approaches for the ‘other’ EFA goals within planning documents (Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Viet Nam). In other countries, the government’s stated priorities are to UPC, (e.g. Kenya, Tanzania) and their dealings with the international community are based on commitments to the MDGs.

This polarisation is often expressed in institutional terms, particularly towards the World Bank (WB). However, the case studies show other dynamics including, as mentioned above, the moves towards sector-wide approaches to planning and shifts in funding modalities. Over the period under consideration, in many of the case study countries (including Cambodia, Pakistan, Viet Nam, Burkina Faso, Tanzania) the moves towards a sector-wide approach has also conspired against ECCE and NFE. SWAp-like approaches usually work with a single ministry and where the ministry responsible for education does not have responsibilities for other EFA goals (e.g. ECCE and NFE) they are immediately marginalised. This is compounded for ECCE and adult learning in which NGOs play such a major role in implementation, by definition outside the control of government. In Tanzania, for example, UNESCO cannot find the entry point for policy work on ECCE, as it is the responsibility of five different ministries. It used NGOs as an entry point but was unable to carry the work further because the Ministries could not make the requisite resource commitments.

SWAp trends have also seen agencies reducing their budgets for small project-like activities within a country, including those of NGOs providing ECCE and NFE services. The exception is UNICEF, which has pursued its mandates for ECCE delivery by resources and partnerships with NGOs (Angola, Cambodia, Ecuador, Namibia, Viet Nam). UNESCO has also played a catalytic role on top of its advocacy for ECCE and Literacy EFA goals with direct support to projects, usually in partnership with specialist NGOs (for example in Angola, Kenya, Mongolia, Cambodia).

### *B.2.3 Planning focus and priority areas*

Since Dakar increased priority and attention has been given to those parts of the system that are not explicitly addressed by the EFA goals. In Kenya, Tanzania, Viet Nam and Colombia there is concern to improve the secondary sector that is feeling the pressure of increased primary completion. In nearly all case studies there is policy concern to strengthen higher education for teacher education and preparation of education professionals. It is a characteristic response of a complex system that attention to one part exposes the needs of others and these are the rationales for a sector-wide approach to development.

Within its support for EFA planning and, particularly for implementation, UNESCO has exploited its areas of perceived comparative advantage including literacy, adult education, teacher



education and HIV/AIDS. There are examples in the African case studies. The finding from the evaluation is that priorities can change relatively quickly, in response to changing national or international priorities. UNESCO has maintained a broad range of expertise and should not focus on priorities to the extent that it weakens this breadth.<sup>26</sup>

#### *B.2.4 Are plans real?*

The evaluation shows that in a number of countries there is a tacit understanding that planning towards the international goals (EFA or MDG) is not ‘real’ – that everybody knows that the EFA targets, and the MDG targets, cannot be met (e.g. in Burkina Faso, Guatemala, Pakistan, and, possibly, Angola). The concern is that there will be a significant shortfall: not that there will be a struggle for the last 5% of enrolment or continuing debates about “quality”, but that the main targets for completion and gender equality simply cannot be reached with current resources and growth constraints. The evaluation coincided with reports that the 2005 targets for gender equality were not being met. This suggests that EFA targets, and targets in general, may not be as constructive a contribution to policy and planning as the international community seems to believe. As well as the risk that targets may distort policy away from other valuable national aims (most obviously in the tension between enrolment and quality), there is the risk to the veracity and credibility of the national discourse on EFA.

This matters because unless targets are embedded in a planning cycle, and, for example, shortfalls are used to inform future actions and resource allocations, then they risk setting up countries to fail on the international stage and in internal political accountability. A conspiracy to pretend that targets and plans are achievable reduces the seriousness with which countries undertake planning, and leads to the temptation to manipulate reporting. There is some suspicion of over-optimistic reporting of data by governments eager to be seen to meet international commitments, or to present a positive picture to their internal constituencies.

UNESCO is put in a difficult position where EFA targets and planning lose credibility: it has commitments and responsibilities to the MS government and to the international community. UNESCO is working to encourage commitment to the EFA targets but also to ensure honesty and accuracy about reporting progress. It is a position that requires long-term engagement and the capacity to help countries respond to signs that targets will not be met.

#### *B.2.5 UNESCO and country programming*

##### *CCA & UNDAF*

As part of the United Nations’ efforts to articulate a coherent vision, strategy and approach towards common development goals, the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) were introduced in 1999.

The CCA is the “*common instrument of the United Nations system to analyse the national development situation and identify key development issues. Both a process and a product, the CCA takes into account national priorities, with a focus on the MDGs and the other commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and international conferences, summits and conventions*”<sup>27</sup>.

As the common strategic framework for the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level, UNDAF provides “*a collective, coherent and integrated United Nations*

<sup>26</sup> There is a lesson UNESCO learnt in maintaining expertise in Higher Education during the 1990s, when other agencies were diverting all resources to Basic Education. This expertise has become increasingly important.

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrls/ohrls/cca\\_undaf\\_prsp.htm](http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrls/ohrls/cca_undaf_prsp.htm)

*system response to national priorities and needs within the framework of the MDGs and the other commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and the declarations and programmes of action adopted at international conferences and summits and through major United Nations conventions. UNDAF emerges from the analytical and collaborative effort of the CCA and is the foundation for United Nations system programmes of cooperation”<sup>28</sup>.*

The evaluation considered how the CCA and UNDAF process articulated with the provision of support to EFA planning and follow-up. Staff from HQ have joined UN missions to undertake CCA and prepare UNDAFs in the period under consideration but the involvement of field staff is sporadic.

Ten of the case study countries have completed the CCA process. In most cases, UNESCO offices have not been significantly involved in the processes although they may have signed the final document. UNESCO staff at field level made the point that they lack personnel to contribute to the UNDAF processes, especially where the country is served from a CO.

***Viet Nam: role of the UNDAF***

The UNESCO Hanoi Office reported that the UNDAF for Viet Nam gives some overall framework for cooperation but has little detailed coverage of education. In practice, UNICEF and UNESCO work together in education through ongoing discussion and negotiation. Overall, UNICEF tends to take a more decentralised, programmatic approach, while UNESCO’s work is strongly focused on partners within the central Ministry of Education and Training (MOET).

In none of the case study countries was the UNDAF seen by UNESCO personnel as providing the definitive guide for country programming and action. Neither is it serving to organise and coordinate activities with other UN agencies, such as UNICEF (see box).

***UNESCO programming***

The evaluation found that UNESCO’s support to EFA is rarely embedded in an explicit country strategy and programme. There are statements of aims and approaches, for example on websites and in the reporting to HQ, but there is little evidence of UNESCO FOs making or taking the opportunity to prepare the strategy or programme prior to the biennial budgeting round. One exception is Nigeria, where the FO has set up formal and regular ‘task force’ programming meetings with MS stakeholders.

In fact, country programming happens during the biennial budgeting round in a game that tries to match demands to the priorities that are delineated and budgeted in the MLAs. FOs push the MLA budget lines as far as possible in the knowledge that budgets are likely to be reduced in an essentially unpredictable way. Budget allocations are then used in response to demands, if necessary allocating from available budgets to other areas in a process known throughout the organisation as “creative labelling” of activity. EFA is a flexible budget head, which has been used to cover activities as wide-ranging as in-country technical assistance, Regional and national forums and advocacy activities. At least half the UNESCO FO respondents were open about using creative labelling; indeed the terminology is institutionalised. Examples include funding Regional workshops and meetings under the label of “capacity-building” (South East Asia); funding a food supplement programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children and translating and printing HIV/AIDS curriculum materials under the EFA Planning MLA (Africa). These examples show that “creativity” may be used to good effect in response to real needs: the concern is that these RBM processes obscure accountability and attempts to improve Results-Based Management (RBM) of this work.

This evaluation experienced the impact of institutionalised creative labelling when trying to use SISTER (UNESCO’s information system for strategies, activities and evaluation of results)

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ohrlls/cca\\_undaf\\_prsp.htm](http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ohrlls/cca_undaf_prsp.htm)

reports to provide information about activities in the case study countries. In the best cases the SISTER entry gave a very general description of the activity, tailored to fit the budget line. In the case studies it often proved difficult to match these SISTER records with activities as described by participants. The risks to internal accountability and financial probity are evident.

*“By entering the country education programme under one budget line of EFA, the representative is able to respond flexibly to the needs of MINEDUC, Ministry of Education. The small amount of funds available is used mostly as seed funding to lever additional funds from other donors.” (Guatemala country report)*

UNESCO offices can often respond at short notice to newly identified needs by creative use of budget lines. Countries value this responsiveness especially as alternative sources would require more processing time, for instance UNESCO Cambodia provided TA to support drafting of urgent education legislation when alternative TA sources were delayed

UNESCO is sometimes driven to identify acceptable activities to disburse unused funds. This encourages the programming of simpler generic activities, with broad appeal but less specifically serving technical needs.

## B.3 Partnerships

### B.3.1 Partnerships with MS governments

UNESCO is a membership organisation that can, and does, claim a special relationship with MS governments, and through its representative processes it builds a sense of ownership analogous to that felt for the United Nations itself. It is an international organisation with all the attendant faults, but for many respondents in MS its uniqueness is that it is “ours”. The UNESCO NatComs in each country are the mechanism that reflects and operationalises that relationship:

*The UNESCO NatComs are national cooperating bodies set up by the Member States for the purpose of associating their governmental and non-governmental bodies with the work of the Organisation.<sup>29</sup>*

In practice the expectation is that the NatCom can facilitate communication and dialogue between UNESCO and the MS and local civil society, and provide a point of coordination and coherence for activity.

In several of the case study countries there is evidence that NatComs are not always able to fulfil that function as efficiently and effectively as intended. In some of these cases the NatCom does not have the capacity or political support to undertake the role. In others (at least three of the Tier 1 case studies), NatComs have inappropriately qualified or ineffectual staffing, with suspicions that appointments are influenced by patronage or other external factors. UNESCO has no influence over appointment processes, and the operating costs of NatComs are the responsibility of the MS although NatCom personnel do benefit from the investment made by UNESCO for meetings, consultation and involvement in the UNESCO network. It is UNESCO's effectiveness that suffers if local communication and coordination of activities is weak.

In other countries the NatCom is described as marginal to the political structure and therefore providing poor communication channels to government for UNESCO (Colombia, Guatemala and Ethiopia).

<sup>29</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=3448&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3448&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

There are several examples where HQ, Institutes or RBx have by-passed the NatCom (and in some cases the relevant FO) by making direct arrangements with officials or NGOs in the country, for example in Burkina Faso, where the RB has occasionally made direct approaches to government to set up activities, by-passing the CO and the NatCom. (It is understood that since the start of the evaluation UNESCO has strengthened the coordination role of FOs.)

There are also examples in which the NatCom takes an extended role by providing and brokering services within the country, managing or administering projects, local technical assistance personnel and events. Such operational roles for NatComs have increased where there is no NO and was found, for example, in Angola and Burkina Faso.

An example of a successful NatCom is that in Mongolia, where it is active, represents the government in interaction with all levels of UNESCO and works well with the CO Beijing to ease communications. Facilitating factors in Mongolia include the close relationships and level of understanding between government officials there, and the feeling of importance and empowerment that has developed within the NatCom as the channel for UNESCO in the country.

The evaluation found two countries (both in Latin America) in which national attitudes distanced the international community and rejected its ‘interference’: a stance driven by regional political feeling and, to some extent, frustration with the demands made. In one of the case study countries (Guatemala) UNESCO was able to move from an initial position in which a new government was distancing itself from the politically-tinged legacies of previous international relationships, to one of confidence and openness in the relationship by providing

#### ***Guatemala: diplomacy and influence***

In this case it is clear that the over-riding factor that has contributed to UNESCO’s success has been the experience and skill of the UNESCO Representative. His high level diplomacy and influencing skills have enabled him to move UNESCO to a position of being needed by the Ministry for ideas and policy support, as well as a source of practical solutions for the way forward, and to UNESCO being perceived as an ‘agency of intellectual cooperation’.

responsive support to specific planning and public awareness needs. The relationships owed a lot to the diplomatic and negotiating skills of individuals (see box). There are similar examples of UNESCO personnel creating and exploiting good personal relationships with senior politicians and officials, in Angola, Cambodia, Pakistan and Namibia, for example.

The evaluation also found cases where personal relationships between key players in UNESCO and the MS were strained and communication was only happening at the most formal level.

### ***B.3.2 Partnerships with CSOs and NGOs***

In all the case study countries UNESCO has taken a lead in facilitating the role of CSOs and NGOs within the EFA planning process, often advocating and financially supporting their participation in consultations and national and regional forums on EFA. UNESCO has supported NGOs to develop their role in advocacy at country, regional and, through collective consultation with NGOs (CCNGOs), at international levels.

The rationale for this work is the Dakar agreement to broaden participation and consultation for EFA planning and to forge links with partners outside government such as NGOs so as to “develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management” (UNESCO 2000). The evaluation suggests that UNESCO’s actions have been successful in building new links and consultations for EFA, building consensus and mobilising previously disenfranchised voices. Case studies from Angola, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Kenya, Viet Nam and other countries describe processes that opened up the politics of education planning to civil society voices, particularly those of education NGOs.

UNESCO often has an established relationship with educational NGOs, particularly those concerned with ECCE and with Literacy. In most countries these are two sectors in which NGOs play an important role in delivery of services but have not necessarily had the organisation, platform or perceived legitimacy to engage with policy issues. They have common

**Bangladesh: consultation, but only in Dakar**

UNESCO FO tried to widen the scope of involvement in the EFA national planning process in the early days of the preparation through arranging for representatives of NGOs and CSOs to attend. The Campaign for Primary Education (CAMPE, the established umbrella NGO) was on the Steering Committee as were other NGOs. One interviewee observed that the consultation could have been wider. The representatives of CSOs tend to be from Dhaka and be intellectuals and academics. Stakeholders in EFA are far wider – schools, unions, etc. He also observed that the language of the Plan is necessarily technical and not accessible to most stakeholders. One draft was translated into simple Bangla and made concise.

cause with UNESCO to maintain the policy focus on these areas. In the context of UNESCO support to EFA planning this is a fertile relationship, with opportunities for UNESCO to work to improve the capacity of the NGOs to undertake a role in education planning and policy-making, and it has targeted them in its support for forums and participation in planning in Bangladesh (see box), Cambodia, Ecuador, Tanzania, Kenya, Pakistan, Viet Nam and elsewhere.

There is some evidence of UNESCO working to support representative “umbrella” organisations to channel the voices of a disparate and diverse community (e.g. Bangladesh, Nigeria, Tanzania). UNESCO has also supported representatives of NGOs

in regional forums and contributed to the regional networking of NGOs. These are relatively low-cost activities with a good return in the empowerment of people to engage with education.

However, in too many case study countries the first round of participation in consultative meetings/forums has not been followed up; UNESCO has not, for example, provided a clear role for the NGOs in subsequent planning cycles, or in monitoring and evaluation rounds. In countries where there is some evidence of NGOs moving into a more institutionalised role in policy and planning (for example in Cambodia, Costa Rica, and Nigeria, the impetus and support has come from joint action by the DPs as part of the imperative for participatory consultation, for example in the PRSP processes.

The evaluation has no evidence of UNESCO helping NGOs move to the next level of engagement in the political discourse by, for example, improving their internal representativeness and accountability which would strengthen the legitimacy of their voice in policy-making and monitoring.

The evaluation also found less evidence of UNESCO support to those CSOs, other than educational NGOs, that bring a more politicised voice to the table, such as the unions and representatives of the private sector (including private sector education providers). An exception is Nigeria, where representatives of teachers’ unions and private sector stakeholders have a place on the planning task forces. Where the scope of discussion included non-formal vocational education, employers and chambers of commerce have also been involved. In Costa Rica, for example, there was participation by private sector and industry in regional forums that contributed to and catalysed an increasing level of societal participation in education politics.

*“National and local forums (20) in Costa Rica were well perceived and coincided with a time when the society wants change and the civil society pushes to participate more in tomorrow’s decisions.” (Costa Rica)*

**B.3.3 With other agencies and its Development Partners**

The changing architecture of the development partnerships characterised by harmonisation, SWAPs and budget support has been discussed above. It has created new opportunities for

UNESCO to exercise its mandate and exploit its comparative advantages as an organisation and source of expertise.

In some case study countries UNESCO is perceived as marginalised in the policy and planning dialogue. This means that UNESCO is not active in policy and planning or in follow-up to annual plans and monitoring or in identifying capacity-building and technical assistance needs. This applies to: Bangladesh, where UNESCO is not invited to the main Development consortium group for the five-year education sector programme that covers much of the EFA agenda; and Kenya and Tanzania where UNESCO lacks the capacity to take a role in the developing sector planning.

In other countries that are proceeding rapidly towards new development partnerships UNESCO has been more successful in establishing a coordinating role. These include: Nigeria, in which UNESCO has established itself as a broker with the Federal Government, in a context in which much development cooperation is working at the State level; Viet Nam, in which UNESCO established and maintained a lead role in the planning; Guatemala and Cambodia (see box). In these cases UNESCO has taken a role within the DP groups, chairing joint meetings or leading the facilitation of consultation exercises in which they are involved. UNESCO has played a similar role in Burkina Faso, Pakistan and Indonesia, positioned above the cut and thrust of negotiation between the financing DPs and the government, and arbitrating and building bridges:

*“It’s the role of partners to accompany the government in its choice. It’s the role of UNESCO to help the government make a good choice. Otherwise the partners will push their own agenda”.* (Burkina Faso)

The evaluation suggests that UNESCO’s acceptance in such a role is less likely when it is perceived in the same terms as a funding agency, in which it is perceived as a small player, with short commitment times and rather *ad hoc* approaches. Yet just such a perception remains in MS, and to some extent even within other agencies. This perception was apparent from respondents in Angola, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Kenya, and Viet Nam (Tier 1) and to some extent in Bangladesh, Namibia and Tanzania (Tier 2). It obscures the vision of a possible ‘higher’ role. One of the responses from UNESCO is to seek the funds, for example for EXBF or other projects, to “buy a place at the table”, not always successfully (see following box).

#### **Cambodia: chairing the partners**

The Head of Office of UNESCO has been the chair of the Education Sector Working Group (of DPs) since 1999, and thus presents their deliberations at the joint meeting with the Government. Roles include the organising of meetings, needs assessment and policy dialogue.

A key role for UNESCO is identifying the resource gap, advocating for more funding and greater prioritisation from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

#### **Bangladesh: US\$400K not enough?**

In 2002 work began on the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) II, supported by a consortium of development partners. In the early stages there was a link between PEDP-II preparation and EFA planning.

Efforts were made by UNESCO to join the PEDP-II consortium and a sum of \$400k was available to assist with capacity development. Eventually UNESCO was informed that they may attend the meeting for PEDP-II but only for agenda items dealing with the targets of its capacity building. This half membership decision was never implemented.

UNESCO’s relationship with other international agencies may derive from international agreements that are beyond the scope of this evaluation. At the field level the most complex relationship is that with UNICEF. UNICEF is present in all the case-study countries; its

mandates overlap with UNESCO's, most obviously in the area of ECCE. UNICEF takes a mandate that extends into the primary education and on a wide-ranging front that includes: EMIS; textbook production; management; teacher-education; school-building; gender; inclusion, quality etc. UNICEF is able to bring significant resources to these tasks.

UNESCO officers tend to characterise UNICEF as being able to implement and be effective in the field, and the case studies show UNICEF in that role. However, in many countries UNICEF is providing significant input to management capacity, organisation and policy support, working much more closely with government, often within a group of DPs. For instance, in the case of Bangladesh, UNICEF is one of a dozen DPs in the primary sectoral program which UNESCO was not allowed to join.

## B.4 Activities in support of EFA planning and follow-up

### B.4.1 Advocacy

#### **Pakistan**

UNESCO representatives have a visible presence in development forums, speaking out on UNLD, at launching international and national development reports and in supporting the Ministry of Education in their public role. Media are more aware of EFA and issues involved in achievement of EFA goals. EFA dissemination activities are published in national and local newspapers that have generated debate on EFA issues on television especially on the private channels. There is increased discussion and debate of EFA policies including critique of the Government's approach and programmes. Almost all newspapers carry information and news on the EFA goals on a daily basis.

The major 'calendar' events for which UNESCO is responsible, such as *Literacy Decade*, *EFA Week*, *Teachers' Days* and so on are best understood and recognised by UNESCO personnel and the NatComs, and that there are instances of them stimulating a national event that attracts media attention or similarly raises awareness of the relevant issue. In that respect there is a temporal focus in 'weeks' and 'days' that can be exploited in a country. The evaluation found examples of events for EFA week, including newspaper reports, TV coverage, and Ministerial visits to schools.

For example:

- In Mongolia, EFA weeks were part of the global campaign on mapping children missing in school. Children drew maps in all *sums*<sup>30</sup> and about 360 are now at the Ministry.
- In Kenya, the EFA week is now used by UNESCO to promote national debate about a key issue. This year an open day was organised around literacy with exhibitions of the work of education NGOs.
- In Pakistan, there was a strategic UNLD launch with the Director of the Bangkok RB; there was also a lobby in the EFA week that attracted media coverage and gave a strong voice to school children (see following box).
- In Nigeria, CSOs recognised the need for greater coordination and integrity in their input to education and "*the support of the Commonwealth Education Fund to Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All and other civil society groups to promote engagement on policy and planning issues has been a clear boost for the profile, confidence, competence, and capacity of civil society to engage*".

<sup>30</sup> Sums: The smallest administrative unit in Mongolia.

Information support to underpin and follow up on advocacy is an area in which UNESCO has an international responsibility and, through its publications, websites and newsletters, it works to fulfil it. This evaluation saw that these resources are used and that, particularly at country levels, the depth of information and data available on the Internet does promote better understanding and knowledge of EFA, education development and UNESCO activities.

The activity in the Arab Region to provide media kits and provide regional training for media professionals is recognised as part of the process of moving from advocacy to a more rounded public information role. Other instances of UNESCO drawing on its expertise in Communication and Information, which informed this work, include:

- UNESCO in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) has launched a workshop-ready training kit “Education Makes News” for writing and reporting on Education for All, (2004);
- Teacher Education Guidelines: Using Open and Distance Learning and Teaching (2002). Guiding principles for planners in education ministries and teacher-training colleges about when and how distance education can be used successfully to expand and upgrade the skills of the teaching force.
- UNESCO ICT in Education Asia-Pacific programme - ICT in education is a website developed by UNESCO Bangkok with funds from JFIT.

The evaluation asked what information is seen as most useful and how to make it accessible. The Burkina Faso study noted, in connection with the *Pole de Dakar* web resource that is targeted at educational professionals in French speaking Africa, that there needed to be awareness-raising about this resource and discussion about what would be most useful to the intended audience. The evaluation did not determine the extent to which UNESCO pilots and reviews the use of websites that it supports, but notes that there is duplication of web resources with similar material sourced through different offices’ sites. This is characteristic of the development of the web but risks wasting resources and making it more difficult for users to find what they need, and to share experiences from other Regions.

The evaluation notes that the evidence of utilisation and impact of UNESCO advocacy initiatives is not representative of all the target audiences as respondents are mainly drawn from educational or education development professionals. Wider public awareness surveys were also beyond the scope of the evaluation. However, there is some evidence of impact from initiatives in Guatemala, where a public relations company:

*“has successfully helped build a positive, well-informed perception within the public of what the Ministry is trying to achieve. The company is now going to train Ministry personnel in dealing with Media and Perception management. Through responding rapidly to this need, the UNESCO Rep was able to establish the start of a strong cooperative relationship with the Minister.”* (Guatemala)

#### *B.4.2 Regional and sub-regional forums*

The evaluation was reminded by respondents of the historical importance of regional cooperation and understanding within UNESCO, and found genuine appreciation both of these political ideals and at the more practical levels. The positive response applied to all regions but was particularly strongly stated in the African countries and those of South East Asia, where it perhaps resonates with other regional political initiatives.

Officials from MS welcome opportunities for regional cooperation, or to benefit from friendly competition between neighbouring countries and the opportunity to present a different country



image to its neighbours. These rationales were strongly put forward in Palestine (see box) and in Guatemala, Kenya, Mongolia, Pakistan and Indonesia.

#### ***Palestine: overcoming regional isolation***

Involvement in regional forums is seen as useful: they maintain the profile of the Palestine Authority in the region and help to overcome the current problem of isolation. Meetings are sometimes dominated by country presentations, which are interesting but a greater opportunity for discussion of specific initiatives would be appreciated.

Communication through regional meetings is an “eye opening exercise” as the Palestine Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education seems to be less donor-driven than many other governments.

Sub-regional forums were reported to offer better opportunities for professional exchange and more detailed comparison of approaches to critical problems.

Respondents in Angola sought other opportunities for similar links with Portuguese speaking countries and with the French speaking countries of West Africa, to learn from the different educational heritages and practices. Respondents in Burkina Faso looked for the possibility of increasingly practical cooperation, in curriculum and textbooks, for example, and also suggested breaking out of the traditional regional groupings to learn from other countries’ experiences, such as those in East Africa.

Respondents in Nigeria (see box) made the point that for large countries the UNESCO Region and sub-region do not match the real geographical scale of professional activity, which is either internal or that which links them to the other large countries. The E-9 grouping of the nine most populous countries has provided a forum in which the issues of scale and internal organisation facing these countries have been shared.

Respondents in nearly all of the case studies had criticisms based on their experiences of regional and sub-regional forums. These include:

- Targeting the right personnel: information given to ministries to allow them to identify the right people for meetings is not adequate;
- The balance of demands on ministry officials: there was a widely expressed concern that the international community makes excessive demands on busy officials, taking them away from their core tasks;
- Interpretation and translation: these are inadequately considered and resourced, compounding problems arising from the above issues;
- The pertinence of regional forums: they tend to be over-general with too little technical “meat”;
- Reporting back: where no mechanisms exist to report back to the home institution, momentum and outputs are lost.

Several respondents, in all Regions, felt that forums often do not use enough alternatives to plenary talking. Others joked that regional forums “*often feels like UNESCO arguing with UNESCO*”. Respondents from HQ departments described how their planned inputs to regional meetings intended to cover technical matters have been eroded by extended protocol inputs, plenary sessions and entertainment events.

Respondents, particularly in Africa, cited as important developments those instances where UNESCO has built and exploited links with political and professional regional groups such as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the Southern African Group of Education Ministers and the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, (SACMEQ) and the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (FAPED). The perceived gains are in supporting these groups by providing UNESCO’s

expertise and stimulus for professional dialogue and giving a legitimate steer to UNESCO's planning for the Region.

The evaluators note that regional and sub-regional forums and events present the most difficult challenges for disaggregating activity and cost data to country level, sometimes compounded where forums are described as "capacity-building" activities. The traditions of regional dialogue and cooperation in UNESCO could justify forums on their own terms but this may no longer be adequate as UNESCO seeks to manage activities by results.

***Nigeria: a region of its own***

UNESCO's regional programmes for EFA planning and support are not well known among Nigerian stakeholders. From the Nigerian perspective, sub-regional and regional forums, strategies and exchange of EFA planning experiences are of limited value. Many commentators pointed out that the size, diversity and complexity of Nigeria makes it analogous to a sub-region or region on its own. Nigerian policy makers and planners feel that EFA partnerships and forums among the E-9 countries are of considerably greater value.

***B.4.3 National forums***

The case study countries show the differences in the role that UNESCO played to encourage participation in consultation for EFA planning. Some MS needed persuasion as well as other help to make such consultation a meaningful process (e.g. Angola and Bangladesh), while others had already recognised the importance of participatory processes to ensure political buy-in from civil society or from parts of the country (e.g. Cambodia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Pakistan, Palestine, Kenya, Nigeria and Viet Nam).

***Mongolia: Collective Commitments***

The high-level meeting "Our Collective Commitments for Dakar Action Framework for Mongolia" was organised in April 2001 by Ministry of Science, Technology, Education and Culture in cooperation with and joint assistance from UNESCO Almaty, UNESCO Beijing and UNICEF Office for Mongolia in order to determine national goals and strategies for education for all, to develop a national action plan for EFA (2001-2005) and its implementation mechanisms, and to examine issues on organising the national EFA forum. The meeting has involved major partner organisations for EFA such as Ministry of Finance and Economics, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other relevant international and non government agencies.

UNESCO has helped to facilitate national EFA forums in all the case study countries, seeing this as a central part of its mandate. At a minimum, EFA forums have served an advocacy role, raising awareness about EFA commitments in a wider community of educational stakeholders. The case study countries include those in which forums have clearly served this advocacy aim successfully and are locally perceived in that way.

For example, the EFA Forum in Angola was a major event that combined supportive inputs from IIEP with an inclusive meeting that included local NGOs, CSOs and development

partners. It took place in 2004 when the country was tackling the reconstruction of its education system in the post-conflict context. For many involved it was an empowering opportunity to be involved and to understand the government's planning approach and the implications of EFA for Angola.

Not all of the countries in which there have been forums for participation in early planning have established a continuing mechanism for participation in the follow-up, monitoring and review of planning and implementation. Such participation is a continual process that needs organisation

and resources over time. Where UNESCO was the sole facilitator of the original forum, as it was in the Angola example cited above, it would need to plan support during each biennial plan. Where there have been repeated forums and increasing participation in planning processes (e.g. Cambodia and Viet Nam), support and facilitation has come from DP groups seeking a civil-society voice in education policy dialogue.

In all cases EFA forums have drawn substantially on representatives of active educational NGOs: organisations that have used the opportunity to share their expertise and to further their educational agendas. The call for participation can be problematic in that it is difficult for governments to avoid the dominance of single interest and lobby groups.

#### *B.4.4 Technical support to planning and follow-up*

Following Dakar, UNESCO provided a wide range of technical support for planners, including: international and regional workshops; and technical assistance and support materials. Support included personnel mobilised from HQ (particularly ED/EPS), RBx, IIEP, UIS and other Institutes; EPS provided courses on planning and systemic modelling; IIEP provided short-term training and continued to receive regular cohorts of personnel to IIEP training; and Regional Bureaux provided workshops at country or regional level.

##### *Technical assistance*

In all regions, ED/EPS organised workshops that provided technical training on planning and modelling. ED/EPS also provided computer-based modelling tools - Education Policy and Strategy Simulation (EPPSim) - to assist countries preparing demographic and financial projection scenarios.

Similarly cluster and national workshops were provided, for example:

- Monitoring and evaluation training workshops offered by Santiago RB with beneficiaries in Colombia and Ecuador;
- In Nigeria, a six-day workshop on EMIS, policy formation and strategic planning;
- In Burkina Faso, IBE held workshops on curriculum coverage of HIV/AIDS.

TA to address specific identified needs for individual countries is found in the case study countries including:

- Inputs on drafting EFA plans and reviewing them in: Indonesia, Viet Nam, Pakistan, Kenya, Egypt, Yemen;
- Training and policy-oriented TA for EFA-related policy including ECCE (Kenya, Burkina Faso, Indonesia), Gender (Pakistan, Mongolia, Viet Nam), Inclusive Education, Non-Formal Education (Viet Nam), Teacher management (Angola) etc;
- In Mongolia, training modules on planning and supporting the Review and Reformulation of National EFA Plan, provided by ED/EPS and the Korean Education Development Institute (KEDI);
- In Cambodia, HQ responded to requests for assistance to review draft education framework legislation for EFA;
- In Viet Nam, UIS's local implant in the Bangkok RB has helped develop a pragmatic approach to integrated data-systems.

### *IIEP training and TA*

IIEP provides<sup>31</sup>:

- Intensive Training Courses and Workshops (one or two weeks in a specific country);
- Advanced Training Programme (in Paris, leading to the International Diploma in Educational Planning and Management, or the Professional Master's Degree in Educational Planning and Management);
- Visiting Trainees Programme, focusing on particular topics for education specialists, government and NGO staff. Topics include for instance Education in poverty reduction strategies; Education budgets; Resource leakage and corruption in education; Education in conflict and post-conflict areas; strategic planning etc;
- Distance courses for a specific audience, as part of the virtual institute. They aim to build both individual and institutional capacity, as Ministries or institutions themselves decide who the course could benefit and select participants. 106 countries and territories have been offered Distance Education Courses over the past ten years.

#### **Tanzania**

A couple of officials from Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar participate in IIEP courses every year. These courses are highly valued and have indubitably helped building capacity of the Ministries, especially in Zanzibar where participants stayed in post after completion of the course.

IIEP's approach to training is different from UNESCO's training workshops and looks at the institutional systems people are working in.

The case study countries have benefited from IIEP training opportunities, for example, in Angola, Costa Rica, Egypt, Mongolia and Tanzania (see box). IIEP's move to distance education offerings is seen as providing the option for more people to benefit.

In addition IIEP staff have provided important TA including:

- Angola: a two-day planning workshop was conducted by staff of IIEP in advance of national coordination meetings in 2004;
- Burkina Faso: strengthening institutional capacities for EFA implementation;
- Palestine: a series of capacity-building for planning in which an IIEP consultant carried out a formulation mission.

UNESCO's TA support to EFA-related policy issues, including teacher-education, ECCE and literacy, has been continuing throughout the period, as has the staff training associated with projects and other activities. The evaluation acknowledges the difficulty of differentiating all the activities that can be considered as TA for EFA planning and follow-up during the period, and would argue to include the significant policy TA on EFA issues, such as the work on ECCE, and on related educational issues, such as teacher management.

There is a difficulty in the term "Technical Assistance", which is used in UNESCO for a range of activities, many of which are training. The defining characteristic seems to be that the activity draws on the services of an expert. So, for example, when a representative of IIEP speaks to an EFA forum on "educational planning", the technical level will be suited to a general audience and might best be considered as awareness-raising but will be recorded as "Technical Assistance".

In the period there has been significant TA offered within the context of EXBF projects, some of which is relevant to EFA planning and follow-up, such as that for planners working alongside UNESCO for the Education Sector review in Nigeria. One EXBF initiative, funded by Norwegian

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/iiep/>

Funds-in-Trust, was the Mobile Team of Experts (MTE) providing technical assistance and capacity-building support for EFA. The programme was externally evaluated<sup>32</sup> and the findings include:

*“Maximum benefit from the MTE model will accrue where the beneficiary country identifies clearly the need for assistance, the most appropriate expert is selected and the product from the consultancy is well integrated into the mainstream EFA effort.*

*In some cases, assessment of products or outcomes was made more difficult by the lack of record keeping”.*

This evaluation raises similar concerns about UNESCO’s targeting and delivery of TA. UNESCO TA was described as being inadequately prepared and not making enough effort to understand the technical or training needs of the country. Often it did not provide follow-up either to evaluate the TA or to build on its achievements.

*It is open to question whether UNESCO’s ‘scatter gun’ approach to TA and capacity-building, - short workshops and training inputs on specialist and technically demanding subjects involving participants with widely differing backgrounds and capacities, followed by wide but unstructured dissemination of reports and publications – was the most effective way of increasing national capacity to plan and implement for EFA. (Nigeria case study)*

In many cases, TA inputs were perceived as driven by the provider and insufficiently based on assessments of local needs and contexts, especially where the outcomes need further resources. This point is made rather forcefully in the Burkina Faso study with the suggestion that the TA that is “*apparently relevant*” in its coverage could be characterised as “*top-down and theoretical*” in not taking into account the country planning context.

Other detailed concerns expressed in the case studies include:

- Lack of expertise of international consultants (e.g. in Indonesia, Nigeria);
- One-off workshops do not allow people to build their capacity. In the case of repeated workshops, delay between workshops may be too long and people forget what they have been told from one session to the other (Nigeria);
- Increasingly, the needs for education planning lay at provincial/district levels and UNESCO lacks resources to tackle this (several countries including Viet Nam, Nigeria, Cambodia, Indonesia and Pakistan).

Overall, the evaluation finds that UNESCO’s position as a lead technical agency and resource is not adequately reflected in its delivery of effective TA. Shortcomings are weak analyses of the countries’ needs and assessments on the quality and type of input required, compounded by inadequate capacity to follow up TA and to evaluate outcomes and impact.

#### *B.4.5 Capacity-building*

The international community has recognised that the capacity of developing countries to plan, to collect and process system data, to budget and to monitor and evaluate plans, is the most serious threat to achieving EFA. Changing aid modalities are shifting the planning, budgeting and implementation responsibilities to individual governments but with increasing scrutiny from the partners. Capacity-building for these purposes is therefore a priority.

Many of the technical support activities considered above contributed to capacity-building by training personnel and effecting technology transfer. UNESCO as an intellectual agency has

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<sup>32</sup> Report of An Evaluation of The ‘Mobile Teams of Experts For EFA’ Project (2003)

acknowledged strengths in delivering knowledge and understanding. The case studies repeatedly acknowledge the impact of the courses on educational planning provided by IIEP. Beneficiaries, and their line managers, expressed satisfaction with the substantial courses and hoped that more opportunities might be available of the same quality but delivered in a more accessible way.<sup>33</sup>

The evaluation is also aware of the initiatives by UIS to support capacity-building for the collection of data and the use of system information. UIS is increasing its resources for capacity-building; it has mobilised EXBF for a series of regional support initiatives. The annual data-collection round provides the opportunity for UIS to engage with countries on problems with data-collection and to offer valuable support that contributes to the capacity to collect data. Appreciation of the technical quality and impact of UIS capacity building was expressed by respondents in Colombia, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

The term “capacity-building” is used too loosely in UNESCO (as in much development discourse). When it is taken as synonymous with “training” it underplays the organisational and political factors that so often constrain capacity for policy-making, planning and implementation. The evaluation finds that UNESCO’s capacity-building is most often planned as short inputs for training personnel either in-country or at Regional/international workshops: there are few instances in the case studies in which UNESCO has taken a lead in organisational capacity-building.

The instances where UNESCO has been most successful in capacity-building are associated with larger (EXBF) projects that have had the time and the resources to assess and address capacity-building needs more holistically. Examples include Capacity-building for EFA Action Plans at provincial and district levels in Pakistan which mobilised US\$180,000 EXBF through UNESCO HQ and helped provincial and district level educational planners and managers in planning and implementation of EFA plans. Other parts of the Capacity-building for EFA Extrabudgetary project provided funds for:

- Capacity-building programme for local NGOs/CSOs) involved in EFA in sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, Benin, Gambia, Ethiopia, Tanzania)
- Capacity-building of South Asian Countries for Implementation of EFA-Dakar Goals (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan)
- Strengthening National Capacities in Implementing Gender Responsive EFA Plans in Asia and Pacific (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Viet Nam)

A dilemma not unique to UNESCO but common in the capacity-building associated with EFA planning is captured in this comment:

*A vulnerable aspect of EFA technical support appears when a consultant has the double task of contributing to capacity-building and producing a plan. As a trainer he or she is supposed to leave the composition of action plans to the professionals of the Cambodian education sector. In practice EFA consultants also delivered action plans within that limited period. It would be wiser to contract experts with that task under longer-term contracts than what EFA's Technical Services Provision can offer (UNICEF representative, Cambodia, quoted in UNESCO evaluation report).*

The evaluation did not explicitly consider UNESCO’s approach and practices in support of capacity-building of local expertise, for example that which developed the professional skills and organisation of national and regional consultants/firms. Practices for the selection, employment and performance management of consultants are discussed elsewhere.

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<sup>33</sup> IIEP is already offering distance-learning versions of its longer planning courses.

## B.4.6 Information and information systems

### Data and data-collection

The case-study countries have had some direct input from UIS, reflecting that UIS's TA and CB role has expanded over the period of the evaluation. MS appreciate the support in the processes of the annual data-collection round for the protocols, validation and completeness of data. A secondary effect, cited for example in Burkina Faso and Colombia, has been the effect of the data-collection in keeping the EFA commitments on the annual agenda of politicians and officials (see box).

UIS capacity-building has been appreciated and the value of its methodological support is acknowledged (e.g. in Colombia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Viet Nam).

#### Colombia

UIS's requests for data and reports appear to be where UNESCO has the most significant impact on progress towards the EFA goals.

MoE staff provided conflicting views about these requests. All considered them a chore and agreed that there were too many requests. However, while some considered them a waste of time and an external interference in the countries' affairs, the majority thought they were important, and provided as a reminder to the government of their international commitments. They also helped to catalyse action. One example cited was the renewal in efforts towards adult literacy. The literacy programme had virtually ended, but the UNESCO requests for information was one of the major catalysts for a new literacy programme.

*Pole de Dakar* has provided capacity support and input to the six-monthly evaluation mission in Burkina Faso as part of its mission to follow up EFA planning and implementation. The case study provides a reminder that the founding of the *Pole de Dakar* was, in part, driven by recognition amongst the partners that UNESCO lacked the capacity to undertake the technical (statistical and economic) work needed on the region<sup>34</sup>.

The case studies for South East Asia identify the important role that has been played by AIMS (Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit) in Bangkok. AIMS has developed a helpful conceptualisation of data-collection that moves away from the single overarching system that is implied when people talk of an EMIS (Education Management Information System), towards the idea of integrating data sub-systems. This is practical and allows for incremental development and testing (Viet Nam, Cambodia).

The Angola case study describes the concerted attempts by the government and its main development partners, the EU and UNICEF, to build up systems for collecting, organising and using data from scratch. The lead partners sought inputs on a consultancy basis both from Dakar and from UIS. The advice was not consistent between the two agencies nor well matched to the country's circumstances.

There is as yet no quality assurance check on the data where there is suspicion that the shortcomings are political rather than technical. This should not be played out at the technical level but at the political level.

In most of the case-study countries, government officials and DPs expressed the opinion that the scope and reliability of system data are improving whilst taking a realistic view about the methodologies, for example, for collecting reliable data on literacy. The risk of political influence over sensitive data may be heightened by its wider availability through UIS statistics and the GMR. In all countries the UIS data-collection exercise, and publication of results, has at least provided a single source for data.

<sup>34</sup> The *Pole de Dakar* is attached to, but maintains some independence from, UNESCO Dakar.

### *Using information*

Additional attention to planning has raised interest in national data, and its increasing availability and reliability has helped to inform, and stimulate, an annual round of debate within government and within society (Guatemala, Indonesia). The stimulus for this is often cited as the country tables in the GMR in which officials seek to assess their position in comparison to neighbouring countries. It is the country league table rather than progress against the plan that ignites the discussion.

The case studies provide circumstantial evidence of the impact of the EFA process on commitment. At least two countries suggested that the annual round of reporting to UIS and then GMR, and of receiving comparative data, has helped to move education into the political and public discourse, and to spice up the discussions.

However, it is also apparent from the case studies - undertaken in mid-2005 - on Pakistan, Burkina Faso and Angola amongst many others, that the failure of many countries to meet the 2005 gender equity targets and growing recognition that the 2015 targets are fragile, have not caused strong reaction at country level.

*After this failure at Dakar+5, where is the discussion and what are we going to do?*  
(Burkina Faso)

Whilst the evaluation finds that improved information about education has contributed enormously to understanding, planning and open dialogue with partners, it is less clear that international targets are contributing the same clarity to the EFA mission.

## **B.5 Organisation, operation, and communication within UNESCO**

### *B.5.1 Organisation*

The evaluation has had the opportunity to work with and communicate with UNESCO agencies at all points of the system, and to seek to study their roles, inter-relationships and strengths. It has sought to look at them in the context of UNESCO's decentralisation and take due account of the implications of that process. An early finding of this evaluation was how difficult it is to make an analysis because in every part of the organisation things are happening that are outside the biennial plans, outside the stated mission and are not obvious from the internal records of activity, including SISTER.

Which part of UNESCO undertakes research and policy studies? Which part provides planning support? Which part manages projects? For each of these activities the evaluation finds action within HQ, within Institutes and within RBx, COs and NOs.

The fragmentation of institutional roles is exacerbated by the system of EXBF. EXBF cuts across the organisational logic within UNESCO by attracting staff to the opportunities it offers for increased activity, influence and professional development. The internal networks used to find personnel for consultancy tasks compound confusion. Such invitations are addressed to individuals and cut across the organisational structure.

From the country level, looking upwards at the organisation, respondents see people and communications from various different parts of the organisation, and feel similar confusion about the roles of the parts of UNESCO. It can be difficult to identify the contact points other than by building and exploiting personal networks.



However, there is a clearer picture from the country level on the roles of the proximal agencies such as the NOs and COs and RBx.

The NO, when sited in-country, acts to identify country needs, plan and facilitate UNESCO's responses and evaluate them, and to work closely with government to identify technical and policy support. The role is both diplomatic and facilitating of the technical and intellectual dialogue. The evaluation finds many examples of the way that UNESCO has fulfilled and built on this role. In Pakistan, for example, senior UNESCO staff have regular policy meetings with the federal government; in Guatemala, the country office has acted for the government as a broker to help match USAID funds; in Viet Nam, UNESCO has facilitated and managed consultants to assist planning, using World Bank and CIDA funding; in Nigeria, UNESCO has established a reputation as an effective 'facilitator' of policy and planning forums ('task forces') that command the respect and collaboration of national stakeholders, and provide a sound basis for the development of UNESCO's own programme.

### Kenya

UNESCO Nairobi identified priorities through cluster consultations. Two cluster meetings were held early 2002 and early 2003. UNESCO Nairobi's approach, in line with the UNESCO decentralisation policy, is based on the concept of cluster. The cluster approach is also driven by the shortage of staff and budget. Feedback from UNESCO staff suggests this approach has been working well at country level, with interesting exchanges among participants. It appears that the joint-commitment at cluster level acts as a driver to implement activities as well as a point of reference for all countries.

The role of the CO is developing and the evaluation suggests that COs are working to make the role effective (see box). One stated aim is that COs, as well as working to develop sub-regional interchanges between cluster countries, should be viable in terms of in-house capacity to address the technical and policy needs of the cluster countries. This is an impossible aspiration: COs can only hope to be able to identify the needs of a MS (or to validate the NO's assessment) and to broker the correct sort of response from within UNESCO.

The role of the RB is consistent with its position in the structure: to take strategic initiatives that recognise and address common needs of countries within the Region, and to respond to technical enquiries from the COs or NOs. The

evaluation finds examples in which RBx have exercised this role proactively and effectively. Bangkok, for example, developed strategic support for gender policy and for ECCE policy with identified focal points in governments, active websites and so on. Dakar made similar initiatives with *Pole de Dakar* and with strategic support to inclusive education and mother tongue language work.

The implications are that there is a critical mass of technical capacity and competence and logistical support to allow RBx to fulfil both their reactive and proactive roles. The evaluation suggests that the RB in Bangkok has been more able than the RBx in Dakar or in Beirut to fulfil the role as evidenced by the number and scope of publications, innovative initiatives, number of staff supporting the work and recognition within the regional MSs. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to identify the contributing factors but they may include the favourable location for travel and communications, the level of resources associated with the regional countries, and staffing.

## B.5.2 Operation

### *Managing consultants and projects*

Much of UNESCO's work involves the mobilisation of individual consultants (for TA or other inputs) or organisations to implement projects. The evaluation suggests that too much of this

mobilisation of consultants, whether it is sourced internally or from outside, is based on personal networking using a mix of incentives. UNESCO offers below average fee rates, and seeks to ameliorate this disadvantage by offering possible future opportunities. Internal consultants are less expensive and may be more easily motivated by professional interest and career development.

UNESCO personnel have explained the approach to the selection of consultant personnel and organisations as one way in which they can build relationships and increase the impact of limited resources. Furthermore, personnel who have made other, voluntary, commitments may be recompensed by being given consultancies. The Nigeria country study describes this as “*increasing the impact of the available resources*”.

These mechanisms to identify sources of expertise are too *ad hoc*. Although this kind of networking will always exist in the business of identifying the professionals to undertake an important piece of work, in the current climate it is a risk for UNESCO to accept procedures for appointment that lack transparency and encourage patronage. It produces situations in which the organisation may lose managerial control over its consultants:

*“Some of the senior consultants working for UNESCO ‘drive’ UNESCO when UNESCO should be leading and ensuring that the consultants are responsive.”* (Freelance consultant)

Loss of transparency and risk of patronage are compounded where NatComs take a lead role in the identification, appointment and management of consultant or project services. The evaluation has found that the role of the NatCom in identifying national consultants or organisations may have increased as a result of the closure of the CO. The MS and in-country stakeholders prefer national consultants to be used as much as possible, to draw on regional expertise or create transnational consulting partnerships. UNESCO staff may acknowledge the strategic need to develop local capacities for expert services: it is equally important to develop the local capacity to procure and manage such services with transparent financial and performance criteria.

Similar concerns apply to the processes of managing projects. Project design, management and evaluation tools are not consistent or used to build the sort of framework of performance indicators that foster understanding and facilitate monitoring and evaluation of projects. In general, monitoring and evaluation of UNESCO projects is less formalised than is the norm in other agencies.

Implementation services to be procured for a project are likely to include services from within the MS. The FO and the NatCom are, therefore, even more exposed to the risks of patronage and self-interest in the recruitment/procurement processes than is the case with individual consultants.

### *Administration*

Nearly all country case studies report the perception that they are hampered by administrative inefficiency such as the turn around of request or approvals that need a response from HQ. Even making due allowance for the fact that field offices in any organisation always have reason to complain about HQ, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that approval

#### *Ecuador*

UNESCO offices are sometimes frustrated by the low level of funding for COs, and especially the 13% overhead that goes to Paris. In Ecuador, the CO has negotiated high levels of funds for specific sub-regional activities, such as the ART project and has sought for UNDP to manage the project in order to avoid the high overhead.

delays, for relatively small amounts of spending, have jeopardised responsiveness and operational efficiency.

Equally predictable, but perhaps requiring more financial analysis, is the complaint of FOs about the overhead (approximately 13 per cent) that HQ levies on projects that are arranged by the FOs. The evaluation has not assessed the value-for-money that HQ offers to the FOs; but these overheads are not *a priori* unreasonable. The issue may be that UNESCO FOs are seeking forms of EXBF work that do not explicitly draw on the organisation's resources, and feel they are disadvantaged in competition for funding opportunities with other agencies' FOs (see box).

### *B.5.3 Financial procedures*

#### *Regular Budget*

The evaluation acknowledges the efforts of UNESCO staff in making things happen with limited resources and within an unpredictable biennial budgeting cycle. In ways that are accepted and sometimes celebrated there is very creative use of funds to meet new needs, mapping activities onto established budget lines and MLAs. The loss of accountability and risk to financial management are evident. The evaluation is not suggesting any financial impropriety, but does stress that the loss of information precludes any meaningful financial auditing or results-based management.

Creative use of funds has become necessary in order to cope with budget processes that reduce action line budgets below the level of viability: the evaluation records many UNESCO activities with total budgets of US\$5,000-US\$10,000, where biennial budgets have been spread thinly.

#### *Extra Budgetary Funds*

EXBF are funds provided to UNESCO by other organisations, most typically by development agencies. EXBF are secured and administered at all levels of UNESCO. HQ manages contributions for internationally agreed priorities through central machinery: contributors include the Italian, Japanese, Nordics and US development agencies. The evaluation heard secondary evidence about these processes but identified activities funded through centrally managed EXBF Funds-in-Trust (FIT). Centrally identified EXBF projects have funded activities in the case-study countries that include:

- *Technical support to EFA planning* in Indonesia (US\$9,000, Norway FIT)
- *ICT in NFE* in Burkina Faso (US\$483,000, Italian FIT) and in Namibia
- *Capacity building for EFA Planning* in Pakistan (US\$180,000)
- *Support to Education Sector Analysis* in Nigeria (US\$1,125,000)

EXBF is also secured and utilised by Institutes and all levels of UNESCO offices. These are negotiated and contracted at local level and support a range of activities in which UNESCO provides or manages a service. Locally identified EXBF projects are manifold, often mobilising relatively small sums from another agency or company to complement a UNESCO activity or simply because UNESCO is the most competent and flexible agency available to undertake the task. Examples include:

- *Support to the National Text Book Policy* in Tanzania (US\$10,000)
- *Support to the National EFA Plan* in Viet Nam (US\$197,000)

- *Provincial workshop on EFA Plan in Viet Nam (US\$49,000)*
- *Communication strategies for EFA by Costa Rica CO (US\$2,200)*

Whilst this evaluation is critical of the processes around EXBF projects it is important to acknowledge that many of these projects are valuable and are valued by the beneficiaries. In many ways it is only through EXBF that UNESCO personnel feel that they engage in “real” work with adequate funds.

It is perhaps a consequence of unpredictable biennial budget systems and limited operational resources that EXBF has become so important to UNESCO. EXBF projects are ways to achieve more significant goals and also opportunities for career development, professional development, additional staffing and sub-contracting options. There is guidance on the appropriateness of projects, and their fit with UNESCO’s overall or national strategies, in that they must fit the broad policy lines. However, UNESCO has experience of fitting activity to policy headings, and the risk is that EXBF projects are driven by the agendas of the funding agency, disconnected and distracting from the overall strategy of the FO or the MS concerned. The initiative described in Burkina Faso (see box) is an example, and is mirrored in Cambodia.

The evaluation notes that some parts of UNESCO participate in public tendering for educational implementation or preparation projects, for example Bangkok RB has bid on such calls from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This practice raises several issues above and beyond those of UNESCO’s unfair commercial advantage: for example it risks compromising relationships with the concerned MS and with the financing, contracting body which is by definition one of the DPs in that country. Inasmuch as commercial contracting draws on UNESCO’s resources it weakens professional and managerial capacity for the duration of the contract.

The evaluation has compared UNESCO’s approach to EXBF (and other) projects with a typical implementing NGO. UNESCO is eager for resources, to be active in the field, piecing together and stretching resources to maximum effect. These characteristics do not fit well with UNESCO’s claim to the upstream, policy role.

#### *B.5.4 UNESCO’s internal communication and corporate information*

##### *Communication and coordination*

The evaluation has found many small, and some more significant, instances by which lack of communication between parts of the organisation has weakened UNESCO’s response. The examples are often where HQ or Institute-led initiatives have not been well integrated into national action, leading to overlap, failure to coordinate events and loss of opportunities to learn from experiences (Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Viet Nam):

*The Nigeria Education Sector Appraisal was a major activity to support federal government initiated by HQ. It lacked coordination with national events. (Nigeria)*

*“The opportunity for complementarity with the cluster office work is lost. The Regional office sets things in motion but they are weak on the micro-details - they don’t understand how people work together on the ground”. (Burkina Faso)*

*Planning and Section Analysis Unit in Bangkok and the international UNESCO consultants to Viet Nam attended selectively to gender parity and ignored the integration of the goal of gender equality by 2015 into the national planning and provincial rollout processes. This occurred despite the resources offered through the UNESCO-Paris funded project “Strengthening National Capacities to Develop Gender-responsive EFA Plans.” This is a missed opportunity at best; at worst it is an*

*undermining from within of UNESCO's own priorities to advance gender equality. (Viet Nam)*

Coordination, for example of visits and demands on MS officials, may be improved by proposals that give FO directors stronger coordinating responsibilities for initiatives in their country. However, in the absence of country programmes, and with the different centres and mechanisms by which activity is initiated, there remain the potential for conflicting demands. The evaluation identifies the difficulty and the factors that drive HQ and Institutes personnel, especially when they are involved in projects. A common UNESCO response is for even the most mundane emails to be copied to everybody who might possibly be concerned, which may serve to cover the individual's back but is not a route to clear efficient communications.

### *Information and dissemination*

Many respondents, particularly DPs, commented that UNESCO is not always active or efficient in sharing information, for example consultants' reports, evaluations and other documents. DPs in particular (Bangladesh, Kenya, Indonesia) recognise that UNESCO has contributed significant reports on EFA and policy, but that these are hard to find. UNESCO is an organisation of intellectual dialogue and one that seeks to identify and respond to MS needs. Perhaps more than any comparable agency, UNESCO works at the centre of a knowledge industry. It could be better at it.

UNESCO creates an enormous wealth of information and knowledge through its actions, research and evaluations; it also has access to other international expertise and other sources of research and development documentation. NatComs in some countries maintain an historical record, at least of UNESCO documents, but not in an accessible or organised way. Information dissemination is one area in which UNESCO's remit could be made more effective, especially with the use of new technologies.

The evaluation notes instances where UNESCO has played a particular role, consistent with its intellectual mission to support and oversee research actions for education within MS. In some countries (Bangladesh, Nigeria and others), the range and sources of educational research are wide, but their utilisation by policy-makers is limited because research documents are unavailable or badly catalogued. UNESCO is especially effective when it helps the MS to manage and consolidate the research and makes it more widely available and understood.

### *Management information*

This evaluation itself has encountered the extent to which UNESCO is unable, or unwilling, to provide coherent information about what it has done, how much it has cost and how effective it has been. With the help of the Education Sector, Executive Office (ED/EO), the evaluation sought to consolidate data about country activity using SISTER, until it became clear that SISTER records of budgets do not reflect the reality of activity. They are incomplete and misleading. There is the systematic problem of disentangling beneficiary countries from a budget for regional or international actions and there is no meaningful measure of results.

In pursuit of information application to the FOs revealed a similarly chaotic situation. In several cases an overall description of EFA planning activity over the last few years was simply not available or was created from scratch by backward reference to the files. Some offices were unable to respond.

The movement of personnel compounds this lack of organised institutional information, as is the case in many international agencies. A consequence is that there are continuing demands on staff, after they have moved, to answer questions, join teams or in other ways offer their experience of the place that they have left. The evaluation was advised to track key contacts to their new offices and did so where possible. There were examples of two or more key members

of staff leaving at the same time, compounding the loss. Personnel movements cannot be avoided but their impact on continuity and institutional memory could be mitigated.

## PART C: Lessons and recommendations

### C.1 Overview

The evaluation has identified a number of lessons and ways forward. UNESCO is a reflective organisation that is willing to consider how to do things better and the evaluation has heard some of those discussions. It has also had the opportunity to triangulate them with the views of others in MS and partner agencies.

The evaluation had only limited opportunity to assess the practicality of suggestions within the changing political or administrative contexts. It is difficult to predict the time needed for proposed changes but the recommendations are grounded in the timescale of the EFA process up to 2015.

The lessons and recommendations are organised into those that build on the identified strengths and successes of UNESCO's support, and those that seek to respond to challenges.

### C.2 Strengths

#### *C.2.1 UNESCO belongs to the MS...*

Relevant stakeholders, particularly the MS, recognise that UNESCO is a unique international agency that is responsive to, and accountable to, the MS themselves. The evaluation has shown examples of UNESCO working from this position to develop a special relationship with governments, characterised as its 'honest broker', intellectual partner and source of independent and robust advice.

Case-by-case, in-country relationships are more complicated, and always will be, but where UNESCO is able to demonstrate and to build on its uniqueness it can find an effective and workable role within the changing modality and architecture of cooperation.

#### *Recommendation*

UNESCO should take steps to identify its uniqueness and build on it in relationships with MS and partners. In emphasising how it differs from other agencies, UNESCO could accentuate the strengths of: its representativeness; access to international and regional expertise, evidence and research; and range of sectoral expertise.

Conversely, UNESCO should critically review activities that do not play to its comparative advantages but simply mirror the work of other agencies.

#### *C.2.2 ....the MS belong to UNESCO*

Nearly every country in the world belongs to UNESCO. The case studies are not statistically representative but do reveal the range of contexts in which UNESCO works.

The evaluation suggests that in large countries UNESCO, partially through the E-9 initiatives, recognises the need for additional support. The particular challenges of decentralised administration and remoteness that characterise larger countries remain to be overcome. In none of the case studies is the UNESCO presence proportionately scaled to the size of the

country, nor adequately supported by remote offices. UNESCO is structured to work with central government.

The case studies include Angola, a post-conflict country facing formidable challenges to rebuild its education infrastructure and organisation. Such countries need policy and technical support on a wide spectrum, including for planning, data-collection, teacher standards, curriculum and assessment; areas in which UNESCO should be well placed to assist but in which it has been constrained by resource and organisational problems.

### *Recommendation*

UNESCO should focus EFA planning and implementation support on the central government agencies and respond to the needs of the decentralised administrative areas or remote parts of the country through support to government processes, rather than by attempting to provide similar types of support to the remote regions. Particular needs include the articulation of national planning with provincial planning, data-interchange standards and facilitation of the civil society voice in remote or under-represented regions.

UNESCO should formally recognise that support to EFA planning in post-conflict countries requires one-off strategies able to address the needs of such countries. Strategies might include temporary allocation of specialist staff; and intensive capacity-building and highly responsive initiatives for planning information systems and organisational analysis. This will assist post-conflict reconstruction and facilitate the engagement of other EFA partners. It may require additional resources but offers the possibility of increased effectiveness.

### *C.2.3 Regional dialogue*

The core mission of UNESCO, to develop global, regional and national intellectual dialogue, is widely understood and appreciated. Regional and sub-regional cooperation is a mechanism for learning lessons, comparing procedures, sharing expertise and contributing to regional understanding at social and political levels. There are issues of targeting and of organisation, and some feeling that there are too many events, but there is commitment to the regional dimension for strategy and policy dialogue.

### *Recommendation*

UNESCO should ensure that regional and sub-regional events serve their purpose by having clear objectives and specification of those attending, inclusion of other stakeholders (including from other agencies) and appropriate levels of evaluation. This may lead to fewer but better events, and to the use of alternative ways of facilitating regional communication, perhaps using video-conferencing etc.

UNESCO should consider extending its support for existing political and professional partnerships by facilitating them as a preferred mechanism for stimulating intellectual dialogue and cooperation. Regional groupings of Parliamentarians would provide opportunities for advocacy on policy issues.

UNESCO should consider working with other common-need groupings that cut across cluster boundaries but bring together countries with common EFA planning needs. Examples include countries moving towards SWAps, those with significantly decentralised planning functions and those with common recent histories.



### *C.2.4 Intellectual capability*

UNESCO is a major contributor to intellectual dialogue, promoting research and evidence-based policy making. The organisation has maintained the breadth of its educational expertise at a time when other agencies have been cutting back to a minimum kernel of expertise that matches the latest policy. This gives UNESCO a comparative advantage as EFA develops a broader front. UNESCO's expertise in higher education (particularly teacher training), in secondary schooling and post-primary vocational education, curriculum design and assessment, all now look increasingly valuable to EFA implementation. Can this expertise be accessed and exploited more effectively and efficiently?

#### *Recommendation*

UNESCO should improve its systems for cataloguing and managing its internal expertise. It could develop an internal database, for example, available to those seeking to identify sources of expertise, although it might include both internal and external personnel.

On key areas of EFA planning and follow-up, the contact points need to be clearly and publicly identified to develop clearer allocation of responsibilities, and to ensure continuity and follow through.

Those charged with identifying sources of expertise need up-to-date information and professional development on how best to specify and deliver the appropriate resources.

Internal accounting of demands on other parts of the agency is informal, effectively operating as a grace and favour system. Significant intra-agency exchanges of expertise and support should be monitored and reviewed.

UNESCO needs to analyse the intellectual demands of the changing landscape of EFA planning, and predict and prepare for changing demands for research, advice and inter-agency actions (such as the Flagships). Areas for further intellectual investment may include: decentralisation; student assessment; transition from primary to secondary; teachers' careers; and private provision of education.

### *C.2.5 Partnerships with NGOs*

UNESCO has good partnerships with NGOs especially those involved in literacy, early childhood, inclusive education and HIV/AIDS. They contribute to its understanding and operational options within these areas and, in return, UNESCO has helped these NGOs to contribute to national, regional and international EFA debate.

At the regional and international level, the NGO voice has grown and is an important stimulus to governments and international agencies.

#### *Recommendation*

UNESCO needs to look at ways to promote the integration of the voice of NGOs and other CSOs within governmental approaches to EFA planning and follow-up, to mainstream the sort of participation that characterised the immediate post-Dakar period.

Towards this end, UNESCO should help to develop the representativeness and accountability that will legitimise NGO voices in the political process. This may include:

- support to developing representative umbrella organisations;
- assisting governments with mechanisms for the registration and audit of education NGOs, and in formalising the role of NGOs in review and consultation;

- identifying best practice and opportunities to scale up from innovations.

Within this work UNESCO must ensure that government and other stakeholders recognise the voice of other representative elements of civil society, above and beyond the education NGOs, including unions, parents' and children's groups, and private sector providers.

### *C.2.6 Advocacy and awareness*

The evaluation has seen and heard evidence of the impact of UNESCO's advocacy actions on officials and professionals.

The period of the evaluation has seen increasing recognition of the developmental importance of systems for providing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) about changes. Many programmes now make explicit provision for integrated supportive IEC.

There are potential synergies between UNESCO's sectors: additional expertise could be mobilised by a cross-sectoral approach.

#### *Recommendation*

UNESCO should now be shifting responsibility for advocacy and awareness about EFA to the government and civil society mechanisms in the MS. This would mean that UNESCO moved away from running events itself into helping governments to recognise that this is their legitimate responsibility, for which UNESCO would help develop the capacity and tools. Examples might include training and operational capacity-building for press officers, or technical inputs to the IEC components of educational programmes.

To support the previous recommendation, UNESCO should develop joint activities between the Education Sector and the Communication and Information and the Culture Sectors (related to EFA advocacy, education and ICT, literacy and linguistic diversity). Cross-sectoral projects should be designed in a more holistic way and on a more systematic basis.

Advocacy needs to develop beyond the promotion of access to schooling that dominated the early approaches. UNESCO should lead on building awareness around the other themes, including quality of schooling and awareness of rights.

UNESCO's advocacy role should become more focussed, informative and evidence-led, basing advocacy for ECCE and Literacy, for example, on research and international experience. UNESCO's capacity to mediate international, regional and sub-regional research and experience to inform national discussions offers a unique and important contribution.

### *C.2.7 Educational information and information systems*

UNESCO is helping to improve the reliability and timeliness of systemic information, and using it to stimulate national and international debate about education.

#### *Recommendation*

UNESCO should consider how the work of the GMR can be institutionalised after the current funding ends and that such discussions take account of plans for sustaining the capacity-building role of the UIS and include a role for an international monitoring report in future. This could extend beyond the six Dakar goals to include, for example, themes around teacher education, assessment or system management.

UNESCO offices should use the GMR more pro-actively at country/sub-regional level. It could be the platform not just to launch but to inform events around country/regional achievements and local responses to the themes.

## C.3 Challenges

### *C.3.1 Country strategy and programming*

There are weaknesses in UNESCO's approach to country programming, and MS' input to the C/4 and C/5. This reduces clarity in cooperation with the MS and with other partners. Clear country programming provides a reference point for requests for action and negotiation with the MS. It may also provide an integrated menu of programmed activities to attract other support. Country programming that builds on the requirement of the MS will tend to prioritise medium term predicted needs and is likely to reduce UNESCO's flexible response to short-term needs.

The evaluation notes commitment by UNESCO to participate more fully in the CCA/UNDAF process, which would address the need to coordinate with other international agencies, particularly the WB and UNICEF.

#### *Recommendation*

UNESCO should adopt a programming cycle that is consistent with those of other international agencies and allows for longer term planning and budgeting. The difficulty of such a change is recognised. However, the evaluation recommends steps towards more effective country programming that include:

- A formal programming cycle in which UNESCO draws up country programmes in response to country policy and priorities, in negotiation with the MS and timed to inform the biennial budget round;
- Staff resources made available, perhaps from the CO and/or RB, to support the country programming round;
- Steps to make the best fit with country planning, joint reviews or key events to which UNESCO may seek to respond.

UNESCO should give high-level commitment, including the resources necessary, to CCA/UNDAF preparation and review processes and use of the UNDAF. Where UNESCO does not have field level capacity to participate fully in the CCA and preparation of the UNDAF then an alternative mechanism needs to be considered. This might include: mobilising HQ staff; agreeing alternative timings; increasing the use of electronic communications; and similar initiatives.

### *C.3.2 NatComs*

The stated role of NatComs has not changed as a result of UNESCO's decentralisation and geographical restructuring. However, their importance as a communication channel has become more critical where there are reduced opportunities for UNESCO staff to triangulate or contextualise requests and responses.

The evaluation recognises the difficulty of making recommendations in this area, as NatComs are outside UNESCO's direct control. It also notes that HQ has taken action to persuade MS to

ensure NatComs are staffed and motivated to fulfil their role. The following recommendations may be considered on a case-by-case basis:

#### *Recommendation*

- That training programmes for NatComs (building on the experiences of Bangkok RB) be offered that develop competencies and understanding of the role;
- That operational procedures for NatComs be reviewed with particular reference to their information, communication and monitoring roles;
- That a joint review/audit and organisation development mechanism between UNESCO and MS be developed to improve the effectiveness of the NatCom;
- That the guidelines on NatComs' involvement in contractual and financial management be reviewed to improve transparency and reduce the risk of patronage;
- Where necessary, that UNESCO offers communication infrastructure support so as to ensure more reliable communications through e-mail etc.

#### *C.3.3 Coordination and leadership for EFA planning and follow-up*

The nature of the partnerships and relationships around EFA is changing fast, with increasing donor-harmonisation and changes in the disbursement, accounting and auditing of development funds. As UNESCO is not a funding agency it is not perceived to have an interest in the financial part of these discussions, but EFA planning has to be linked to the discussion of financial support and implementation.

UNESCO shows leadership in the quality and authority of its contribution to the EFA discourse and in its promotion of innovation and best practices.

#### *Recommendation*

The realities of UNESCO's role in support of EFA planning and follow-up will depend on country circumstances and the dynamics of the partnerships. The following recommendations are offered to ensure that UNESCO can take a role that not only fits its mandate but also provides a platform for it to offer the best possible support to the MS:

- UNESCO must be involved and establish a clear role for itself in the formal groups in which the DPs and the MS government meet. It has unique qualifications to chair such groups, or it may lead on areas in which it has comparative advantage;
- UNESCO should take responsibility for developing the capacity and capability of the representatives of the MS working with the donor group;
- UNESCO needs to resist any perception of it only having interests in ECCE and NFE, especially where these areas have lower priority in educational planning. It risks being compartmentalised and losing opportunities to provide support in other areas of its expertise;
- UNESCO should acknowledge that its staff involved in country-level partnership processes are managing a highly significant change that should be included in their professional development;
- Opportunities for staff to discuss strategies and tactics for working with donor harmonisation groups on a sub-regional or regional level should be explored. UNESCO should also share experiences internationally.

### *C.3.4 Evaluation and Quality Assurance*

UNESCO's internal procedures for evaluating its work are weak compared to those of similar organisations. UNESCO staff recognise this shortfall but indicated that such evaluation would demand too much time and other resources.

Improved monitoring and evaluation of activities benefits not only internal management, accountability and lesson learning; they are also a pre-requisite for increasing cooperation and financial support from other agencies.

Evaluation is often a retrospective learning opportunity. It is also the first step towards a culture and system for quality management, which would include QA procedures, use of formative evaluation in longer projects, performance monitoring and RBM.

#### *Recommendation*

The evaluation recommends that UNESCO recognise the need to develop and embed QA procedures and to demonstrate them to partners. Steps might include:

- Standardisation of QA processes and responsibilities for activities including formal processes for setting targets and indicators for TA inputs, training meetings, forums etc;
- The introduction of results-based project management tools, standards for indicators for activities; outputs and impact;
- The consideration of external evaluation of all projects whose expenditure exceeds US\$200,000;
- Improvements in the codification and reliability of internal systems to log activity and results in a practical way, beginning with the largest cost items. This work must be monitored and audited;
- Recognition of concerns about the administrative overheads of evaluation mechanisms and ensure proportionality of QA to the size of tasks: for example ensuring that small scale activities are evaluated quickly and simply.

### *C.3.5 Human resources*

UNESCO has an international staff with unrivalled experience and expertise in education. They have a complex diplomatic role that involves working at the highest levels and building personal and professional relationships. Some UNESCO personnel have the personal attributes for this role but it is not a role that suits everybody. Other analogous UN agencies have been through a process to identify the attributes required of representative staff, using skills-audits and job-profiling, and introducing training and other support, where necessary.

#### *Recommendation*

The evaluation notes the constraints on UNESCO's human resource management but recommends profiling key positions, including representative positions, and adopting staff development and human resource management policies to improve the match of personnel to positions.

UNESCO should make more active use of temporary postings of staff from Institute or HQ to FO, linking personnel to specific tasks but recognising the professional gains for individuals.

### *C.3.6 Making the decentralised structure work*

The country case studies indicate that those countries that have lost their offices in the UNESCO decentralisation feel it has weakened their relationships with MS and other agencies in-country. COs and RBx are the key in these cases to sourcing expertise and mobilising it to MS. Where geography and transport costs conspire against the effectiveness of the CO and RB, the specific issues need to be recognised and addressed.

#### *Recommendation*

To this end, the evaluation recommends that UNESCO continue to monitor the organisational impact of decentralisation as it beds down. It should retain the flexibility to experiment and consider ways to improve the operations, including:

- Improved communication, particularly vertical communication, within UNESCO. MS need to be able to access clearly identified communication channels and nodes of expertise. UNESCO should arrange to backstop key individuals when they are away, so that the established channels work and the temptation to broadcast all communications electronically is reduced;
- Consideration of a system of outreach officers posted from RBx into the CO or NO, to build expertise and provide capacity at critical times or in difficult circumstances;
- Assessment of each CO's need for language/translation services and explore ways in which they can be met, in agreement with the countries concerned;
- A periodic reaffirmation of the roles of the NO, CO, RB and the Institutes for each country, including the NatCom, officials and other partners;
- Consideration of cross-cluster approaches that bring together representatives of countries from the same Region according to other commonalities, such as of language, organisation or recent history.

### *C.3.7 Technical assistance and capacity building*

TA and CB are a major element of UNESCO's support to MS, and the main vehicle of support to EFA planning and to follow up. UNESCO aspires to be the leading source of expertise: it needs to be equally aspirational about the delivery of expertise to its MS.

Support for EFA planning and follow-up has presented particular challenges for UNESCO's TA and CB capacity. Country case studies in the evaluation have emphasised the cyclical nature of planning, implementation, monitoring and revision of plans to reflect changing circumstances and budget realities. This is a continuing process.

The evaluation found some notable successes, such as the IIEP courses, the targeted TA on modelling and planning, and UIS support on data-collection protocols and approaches. However, there is concern that UNESCO makes too little attempt to follow up inputs to optimise their impact.

#### *Recommendation*

The recommendations reflect those above and aim to improve the quality of TA and CB. For example, TA and CB needs should be identified within country programming. Specific recommendations for TA include:

- Introducing procedures and *pro-formas* for specifying the needs and TORs of TA, for identifying the intended outcomes and providing information on critical country context. Wherever possible, this should be jointly completed with the intended beneficiary and other concerned stakeholders;
- Specifying qualifications for TA consultants and implementing transparent recruitment procedures that provide opportunities for local or regional recruitment of consultants;
- Evaluating the impact of TA against the established indicators.

An outcome of improved needs-analysis and evaluation of TA is likely to be a recognition that longer, or repeated, inputs are needed, over a period of time. The cyclical nature of educational planning and the scale of the challenge involved in building capacity within government structures all argue for continuing support.

CB activities should benefit from the same performance-management and evaluation. Furthermore, CB activity should include analysis of relevant organisational, political or practical constraints, even if these are outside UNESCO's control.

Where elements of CB are provided by cluster or regional workshops, UNESCO must maintain focus to ensure that the appropriate individuals and countries are targeted.

The most visibly successful CB work has been the courses of the IIEP: they are long term, in-depth and well recognised. Other Institutes need to develop remote access to their own courses and expertise, including more ODL that could be mediated into country contexts and offered at regional centres. This might attract external funding of both development costs and students' costs. The evaluation recognises IIEP's interests and capabilities in e-learning and ODL and suggests that they be encouraged and expanded.

### *C.3.8 Management of consultants and of projects*

UNESCO's systems for the procurement and management of individual consultants and sub-contractors lack transparency and frequently rely on professional networks, inside or outside UNESCO. Approaches to procurement and management, even for significant projects, seem amateur, with inadequate resources allocated to project management.

If UNESCO is to attract more international support it has to demonstrate approaches to procurement and project management that ensure delivery, compliance and transparency.

#### *Recommendation*

The evaluation recommends that UNESCO adopt procedures for procurement of services that match those of other international agencies for transparency and openness. This will include:

- Open procurement procedures, public record of contracts awarded and amounts etc.;
- Open selection criteria and evaluation frameworks (which may, however, favour national or regional consultants);
- Systems for evaluating performance and feedback to consultants.

Similarly, the evaluation recommends a standard approach to project design, monitoring and evaluation that allows for transparent monitoring of project progress, outcomes and impact. This will include:

- Development of project frameworks or similar performance management tools;
- Open procurement of contractors;
- Identified and properly costed project management inputs, which may be from UNESCO or third parties.

- Identified and costed capacity to monitor compliance and performance during implementation and arrangements for independent evaluation of outcomes and impact.

### *C.3.9 Extra-budgetary funds: the monster in the midst*

EXBF is a lifeblood for UNESCO, it is the way it can do work on a serious scale, but the EXBF system undermines UNESCO's ability to do the things it does best. UNESCO compromises its unique relationship with the MS and its perceived difference from other agencies when it becomes the manager of projects supported by EXBF – regardless of their intrinsic quality.

It is not that UNESCO should stop seeking funds: it needs more resources to support extended policy work. Rather, it is that UNESCO should work to solicit EXBF, centrally and regionally, in support of clear, costed programmes that fit agreed programming priorities. If UNESCO demonstrated a professional approach to managing funds into activities, it would be in a position to seek funds from more, and more supportive, donors.

#### *Recommendation*

The evaluation recommends a more structured and disciplined approach to EXBF that prioritises the fit with global, regional or national programming or strategies. Steps towards this might include:

- High level consultation with potential donors on their concerns and requirement for the better use of EXBF and regular consultation to set framework priorities;
- Firm guidance to FOs on the complementarity between EXBF and the programming priorities of both UNESCO and the MS;
- More stringent criteria for field level EXBF that ensure fit with programming, viability, project management capacity and QA processes.

### *C.3.10 Communications, information sharing*

It is consistent with UNESCO's role that it takes a pro-active lead in information and knowledge management for education, and appropriate for an agency committed to intellectual cooperation. Current technologies make it increasingly possible. A pro-active information policy would allow access to official documents and research that are hard to source, serving CSOs and NGOs in particular and providing an evidence base for advocacy and policy lobbying.

A particular strain on remote operations arises from weak support for translation, to the frustration of all parties and raising the risk of serious misunderstandings.

#### *Recommendation*

The evaluation recommends that UNESCO improve its knowledge management systems and widen their scope to include internal material and that of MS and partner organisations. The target should be to make UNESCO the first point of reference for country level information about education development in general and EFA in particular. Steps might include:

- Cataloguing and other support for in-country repositories/documentation centres;
- Building electronic repositories;
- Making international and/or national protocols with other agencies on the supply and formats for documentation.