

SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee defines the roadmap of its work

8-9 December 2016, Paris, France



In their meeting, members of the SDG Education 2030 Steering Committee discussed developments related to the SDG follow up, activities for SDG-ED 2030 implementation, and the 2016 Global Education 2030 Monitoring (GEM) Report.

Members of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meeting met at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to further define the roles and activities of the Steering Committee (SC) in terms of advocacy, reviewing progress, financing, and regional strategies and coordination. Discussion were held on developments related to the SDG follow up at the global level; updates on activities for SDG-ED 2030 implementation; a report on the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity; the main features of the 2016 Global Education 2030 Monitoring (GEM) Report; Updates from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics on the SDG indicator setting processes and the recommendations of the Technical Cooperation Group on the thematic SDG4 indicators.

A representative of the President of the UN General Assembly (PGA) participated in the meeting and offered remarks in the meeting's opening and closing plenaries. The participation of someone from the office of the PGA was strategic towards forging greater interaction and linkages between the Steering Committee and the broader SDG follow-up architecture. The next meeting of the Education 2030 Steering Committee is scheduled to take place in New York, close to the High-Level Political Forum in mid-2017 with an education-focused event jointly convened with the Office of the President of the UN General Assembly.

The SC discussed their internal ways of functioning with a recommendation to create working groups to facilitate work around communication and advocacy, financing, policy and strategy, and monitoring. The issues of financing, equity and inclusion, quality, and participation/governance were highlighted as important. It was agreed that the SC should promote above all peer learning, so countries benefit from each other's experiences in the implementation of the full agenda.



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In reporting on CSO initiatives so far to follow up on SDG4, GCE highlighted joint efforts to disseminate information of the SDGs, in particular SDG4, in building capacities, especially at the country level to advance the SDGs and SDG4, as well as to participate in existing international, regional, and national SDG architectures and mechanisms. GCE and other civil society representatives also highlighted risks, such as the rise of standardised testing, profit making in education, and student criminalisation. GCE also emphasised the urgent need for youth and student representatives to be present in decision-making spaces such as the Steering Committee.

Thematic indicators were adopted, although most need further development. The Technical Cooperation Group created working groups to further its work on indicator development (for thematic indicators adopted but requiring further development) and on capacity building.

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CSO representatives in the SC were sceptical about the push from the Financing Commission towards an emphasis on measurable learning outcomes, a 'super' indicator of learning, and the articulation of international banks to finance (via debt) the investment gap in education worldwide.

Regarding the Financing Commission's Report recommendations, a number of SC members expressed concern that there could be duplication of education agendas and priorities (leading to a dilution and narrowing of SDG4), as well as duplication of architectures. The concern stemmed from the fact that the Financing Commission recommended that the UN approve a resolution putting forward a new (and parallel) global education architecture. Civil society representatives in the SC were sceptical about the push from the Commission towards an emphasis on measurable learning outcomes, towards a 'super' indicator of learning that is being discussed with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and the articulation of international banks to finance (via debt) the investment gap in education worldwide.

There will be a review of the implementation of SDG4 in 2019 at the United Nations and a Global Education Meeting of ministers of education will be organised in 2018. It will be important for CSOs to actively participate in these review processes to promote CSO perspectives. The World Meeting of the UNESCO Collective Consultation of NGOs will be in Cambodia in May 2017. The umbrella theme will be the implementation of the 2030 Education Agenda. This will be a crucial space for CSOs to jointly strategise on effective ways to intervene in the processes to concretise and implement SDG4 and the SDGs.

The CSO representatives who participated in this SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meeting are Camilla Croso of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), Maria Khan of ASPBAE and Monique Foulhoux representing Education International (EI).

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