



THE EFA ACCELERATION INITIATIVE “BIG PUSH”

THE LUANDA RECOMMENDATION

Background

At the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, sub-Saharan African countries (SSA) unanimously adopted the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework for Action and agreed to achieve the Six EFA goals by 2015. Since then, the countries have made significant progress in EFA. However, with less than three years to go until the target year of 2015, an overwhelming majority of countries will not achieve the Six EFA goals. The data on the status of EFA clearly indicates that from the 45 countries in SSA for which data is available, at least 32 countries will very unlikely achieve all the six EFA goals, while 12 countries still have a good chance of attaining them if progress is accelerated.

Therefore, urgent and strategic actions are needed to accelerate the EFA progress, through mobilizing stronger political and financial commitment and translating into action at the country, regional and global levels. For most countries, acceleration would mean increasing the opportunities to attain more (if not all) of the six goals.

The final recommendation of the Global EFA Meeting (Paris, November 2012) urged countries to show commitment and make an additional effort to improve the EFA indicators within the remaining years before 2015. UNESCO was urged to mobilise partners and take the lead to assist countries in the efforts for the “Big Push” for EFA.

In order to respond to that task, UNESCO and partners launched an initiative aiming at supporting Sub-Saharan Africa countries to accelerating EFA progress towards the target year of 2015. The implementation of this Big Push Initiative is based on a partnership of the Steering Committee members of the Sub Saharan Africa Regional EFA Coordination (ADEA, ANCEFA, CONFEMEN, FAWE, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA) and the concerned UNESCO Field Offices.

Launched in Dakar in March 2013, the *Big Push* Initiative has so far involved the following countries: Angola, Chad, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Niger, Senegal, Swaziland, and Zambia, which have been developing the respective national EFA Acceleration Frameworks.

Seven months on, the 2nd Regional Meeting that consisted of a 3-day Technical Segment and a 2-day Ministerial Segment was convened by the Government of Angola and UNESCO in Luanda, Angola, from 18 to 22 October 2013, to take stock of the progress made so far by the first phase countries, while providing an opportunity for experience sharing and training on the Acceleration Framework development to a second group of countries that are in the process of joining the Initiative, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo; Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Gambia, Togo and Uganda. Representatives of all countries except Madagascar, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and The Gambia, attended the Technical Segment of the 2nd Big Push Regional Meeting.

The Luanda Regional Meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the Sub Saharan African roadmap for the EFA National Reviews in preparation for the World Education Forum to be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2015, to help shape the Post 2015 Agenda for Education, and to launch the second Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE).

The Big Push Initiative: Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities

The Ministers and Vice Ministers of Education and Representatives from 15 participating countries and the EFA Partners recognize the added value of a focused acceleration initiative as a booster for their existing education plans. They noted that strong foundations in the development of the Acceleration Frameworks have been laid in countries where there exists: (1) strong political will at the highest level; (2) internalization of the need to accelerate the attainment of EFA goals; (3) commitment to action; and (4) broad based partnership engagement from the onset.

However, despite the progress in the initiative so far, some challenges were highlighted as follows:

1. Limited restitution and involvement of internal and external education stakeholders, leading to insufficient understanding on the objectives and modalities of the EFA Acceleration Initiative;
2. Weak coherence and continuity in the coordination arrangements at country level
3. Insufficient attention in designing the National Acceleration Frameworks, particularly with regard to the Advocacy, Partnership Mobilization and Communication components and especially looking at innovative and creative approaches.
4. Delay in the finalization of the Acceleration Framework and the mobilization of all stakeholders through official launching exercises.
5. Weak high level leadership in the Big Push EFA Acceleration Framework design and monitoring process in several countries.

Several countries, however, highlighted the existence of exciting opportunities at national level that are worth pursuing:

1. High level patronage at the country level leads to increased mobilization of governmental bodies, private sector, parliament and civil society organization among others;
2. Increased recognition and broader understanding of the EFA goals, both within and outside the Education Sector;
3. Resource Mobilization Component of the Acceleration Framework fostering reduction of external financial dependence through the mobilization of non-traditional partners;
4. Engagement in the EFA Acceleration design process in countries can lead to the adoption of decentralized planning modalities.

Recommendations

The EFA Acceleration Initiative “Big Push”

Recognizing the above mentioned achievements, challenges and opportunities, and considering that the EFA target year of 2015 is just two years away, the Meeting of Ministers

of the EFA Big Push countries bring forward the following recommendations for consideration by the Ministers of Education in Africa:

1. Endorse the acceleration framework for the Big Push and provide effective leadership for its implementation at country level;
2. Put in place systematic monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the EFA acceleration process at national level;
3. Endorse and submit the progress reports to the EFA Coordination Committee at Continental level for further submission to the Global EFA Steering Committee;
4. Provide and sustain leadership for a participatory and inclusive top-down, bottom-up, approach to partnership for the development and implementation of the EFA acceleration frameworks at country level;
5. Mobilise domestic resources from traditional and non-traditional partners at country level;
6. Contribute to the documentation of best practices for EFA database in order to foster South-South cooperation among African Countries and beyond;

Recognizing that the success of the EFA Acceleration Big Push Initiative hinges on efficient and effective coordination amongst the various stakeholders at the national, regional and continental levels and taking cognizance of the current situation which has shown several challenges, the Meeting recommends:

At the National level:

The Ministries of Education shall

1. Ensure that the EFA Acceleration Initiative is under the patronage of the highest authority of the country;
2. Ensure that the Initiative is embedded within existing coordination structures and/or mechanisms with a specific focus on acceleration of neglected goals;
3. Provide the coordination entity with adequate human and financial resources to enable it to successfully perform its mission.

At the Regional level:

UNESCO and EFA Partners through the Regional Coordination entities shall

1. Take the necessary measures to mobilize partners and provide technical support for the achievement of the objectives of the "Big Push";
2. Be operational and work in harmony with the national coordination entities;
3. Mobilize appropriate resources to perform their mission;
4. Collect and disseminate best practices through various channels.

At the Continental level:

The Sub Saharan Africa EFA Coordination Committee¹ shall

1. Ensure an effective and efficient communication flow among the three levels of coordination;
2. Ensure that members are fully engaged to mobilize necessary resources to perform its mission.

EFA National Review & Post 2015 Education Agenda

1. Lead the EFA national assessment processes and submit the national reports by mid-2014 in preparation of the World Education Forum in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2015; and
2. Recognize that education is a fundamental human right and ensure that the expanded vision of Education for All encompassing all levels of education and modes of delivery remains a priority in the post 2015 agenda.

Adult Learning and Education

1. Strengthen adult learning and education by mobilizing resources, engaging and sharing responsibilities with the civil society and beneficiaries;
2. Continue to prioritize adult learning and education in government programmes and make sure that adult literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning is consistently addressed within the EFA framework.

The Ministers, Vice Ministers and Representatives from 15 participating countries and the EFA Partners express their sincere appreciation to the Government of Angola for the warm hospitality and generosity, and commend the Government of Angola for the high level commitment to moving forward with the EFA Acceleration Initiative.

Luanda, Angola, 22 October 2013

¹ADEA, ANCEFA, CONFEMEN, FAWE, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA

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