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**The role of UNESCO in the global governance of
education**

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ACRONYMS

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALECSO – Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
CAME – Conference of Allied Ministers of Education
CCNGO – Collective Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations
CONFINTEA – International Conference on Adult Education
CRESALC – UNESCO Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
CSO – Civil Society Organization
ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education
EDUCAIDS – Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education
EFA – Education for All
EFA I – Education for All 1990 – 2000
EFA II – Education for All 2000 – 2015
EFA-FTI – Education for All – Fast Track Initiative
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization
FRESH – Focusing Resources for Effective School Health
GEFI – United Nations Secretary General’s Global Education First Initiative
GEM – Global Education Meeting
GEMR – Global Education Monitoring Report
GMR – Global Monitoring Report
GPE – Global Partnership for Education
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBE – UNESCO International Bureau of Education
ICT – Information and Communication Technology
IESALC – UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
IGO – Intergovernmental Organization
IICBA – UNESCO International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa
IIEP – UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
IITE – UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education
ILO – International Labour Office
INGO – International Non-Governmental Organization
IO – International Organization
ISCED – International Standard Classification of Education
ISESCO – Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
LDC – Least Developed Country
LIFE – Literacy Initiative For Empowerment
MDG – Millennium Development Goal
MGIEP – Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
ODA – Official Development Assistance
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD/DAC – OECD/Development Assistance Committee
OWG – Open Working Group
PISA – Programme of International Student Assessment

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
SDSN – Sustainable Development Solution Network
SEAMEO – Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SIDS – Small Island Developing States
TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIE – UNESCO Institute for Education
UIL – UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS – UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN – United Nations Organization
UNCCA – United Nations Common Country Assessment
UNDAF – United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDESD – United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
UNDG – United Nations Development Group
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESS – UNESCO National Education Support Strategy
UNEVOC – UNESCO Technical and Vocational Education Project
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund
UNGA – United Nations General Assembly
UNGEI – United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
UNLD – United Nations Literacy Decade
UNTT – United Nations System Task Team on the post 2015 UN Development Agenda
WCEFA – World Conference on Education For All.
WFP – World Food Programme
WHO – World Health Organization
WTO – World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization,
there is a need for research which explains
the cause and importance of transnational phenomena
that affect people's lives.

Poul Duedahl

The United Nations Organization (UN) was founded in 1945, after World War II, for the purpose of “sav[ing] succeeding generations from the scourge of war” (UN, 1945, p. 1), and on 16th November of the same year forty-four States of the UN met in London and adopted the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which came into force the following year. This Constitution established the specialized agency of the UN with the mandate “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the Nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 17).

UNESCO's contribution to the development of education has evolved over the 70 years of its history. From the outset, UNESCO's approach was, above all, intellectual, in a context in which everything such as schools, universities, libraries and museums had to be rebuilt in war-torn countries. In education, its approach was directed towards fundamental education, which expressed the idea of an education which could be built on further. During the 1950s, UNESCO aimed to overcome the obstacles of the Cold War by organizing joint projects between East and West and providing a neutral platform for intercultural dialogue and international cooperation in its fields of competence. The decolonization processes of the 1960s led to twenty-seven newly independent African States joining the Organization which became truly “global”. UNESCO thus oriented its efforts towards capacity building and development assistance in order to meet the specific needs and expectations of newly independent countries. In the 1970s, UNESCO developed a laboratory of ideas and clearing house functions in the field of education as is witnessed by the creation of the International Commission on the Development of Education under the chairmanship of Mr Edgar Faure. In 1972, the Commission published the Report “Learning to be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow” (UNESCO,

1972) which introduced the notions of “lifelong education” and the “learning society”. The 1970s were also characterized by an intense standard setting activity, with the approval in 1974 of the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education and in 1976 the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The 1980s also bore witness to how UNESCO was acquiring an increasingly relevant position in international education cooperation, through the promotion of conventions and treaties, as well as with the organization of international conferences and plans of action. The 1990s constituted a real breakthrough in UNESCO’s approach and relevance in education. Indeed, several drivers of change, whose impacts are still visible today, marked these years. On the one hand, the multifaceted processes of globalization have drastically altered the relationship between sovereignty and territoriality in the education policy landscape. Thus, globalization affected and changed the education policy spaces, content, the governance processes and structures, as well as the actors’ role within the governance of education. As a consequence, UNESCO, and more broadly the UN, began to reflect on their efficacy in a changing global context and started an ongoing process of reform in order to respond more effectively to current realities.

On the other hand, the acceleration of societal and technological changes deeply affected the ways in which learning takes place and how learning opportunities are organized. UNESCO, as a laboratory of ideas and a clearing house, was sensitive to these issues. In fact, the Organization ideated several strategies to address these challenges such as the establishment of the International Commission of Education for the 21st Century, which produced the Delors Report “Learning: The Treasure Within” (UNESCO, 1996c) and proposed the four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. By means of these functions and activities, UNESCO aimed at spreading new concepts, new approaches to governance, new tools to meet the educational needs of people, new frameworks to understand these needs, and to support Member States in their efforts to guarantee the right to education in a knowledge-based society.

Moreover, the 1990s were years in which an increased demand for education was promoted and favoured by the global attention to basic education resulting from multiple

projects and international programmes. Of these, the creation of the Education for All (EFA) movement with the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) and the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action marked a crucial step in the field of international cooperation in education, establishing the first international education agenda on basic education. This international agenda framed the goals of the international community in education for the next twenty-five years and ended in 2015.

Thus, UNESCO's work and approach to international education development has evolved over decades in the light of major societal and educational changes. From its existence, and in particular due to the modifications brought forth during the 1990s in the field of educational governance, the Organization has attempted to respond to these changes by interpreting its mandate with the creation of specific global governance processes and mechanisms as ways of influencing and steering education with multi-local repercussions.

This thesis was written at a particular historical juncture for both educational development and UNESCO.

As a result of the EFA experience, the international community witnessed the evolution of contemporary educational principles and trends, such as the decentralization of policies, the issues of education relevance and quality, the principle of inclusive education, as well as the definition of the lifelong learning paradigm. In 2015 with the World Education Forum in Incheon, these principles and trends, together with challenges and opportunities related to education, were encapsulated within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the related Education 2030 agenda.

The SDGs have contributed towards orienting global attention to learning. Educational development is, therefore, deeply related to the organization of lifelong learning opportunities which ultimately depends on governance aspects. However, contemporary governance, with the multiple processes of relocation of authority resulting from globalization, is more complex than twenty-five years ago and it is now far beyond the exclusive control of Nation States which traditionally hold sovereignty over educational issues. Indeed, multiple sources of decision-making have affected and influenced the steering of lifelong learning systems (UNESCO, 2015*b*). These events and reflections have had important implications for UNESCO's activities: not only have they shaped

UNESCO's priorities in agenda-setting, but they have also created the necessary conditions for UNESCO to exercise its global governance role.

Although this is a time in which UNESCO's role in education has been widely criticized (Schäferhoff and Brunet, 2016), the Organization has, nonetheless, managed to reaffirm its global relevance in education through the leading position within the Education 2030 agenda. Furthermore, it has strengthened its intellectual leadership recalling its role as a laboratory of ideas and a clearing house, producing a third reflective landmark publication "Rethinking Education: Toward a Global Common Good?" (UNESCO, 2015*b*), a global call for dialogue on the purposes of education and the organization of learning.

This global context of change shows the urgency to understand more deeply the ways in which governance takes place in a contemporary and interconnected world. This understanding could shed light on complex power relations and it is instrumental for finding effective solutions to educational problems, and for meeting the aspirations of people wishing to have their right to education recognized and fulfilled. The historical turn for international cooperation characterized by the efforts of achieving SDGs, sets the context and confirms the timeliness of this research as it examines new perspectives for the future of educational studies, which might be useful for re-orienting educational policies in the light of sustainable development.

The theoretical and methodological frameworks proposed attempt to produce new taxonomies and analytical constructs that are original and prototypical in order to study the global governance role of IGOs. These frameworks, which required an interdisciplinary approach, taking into consideration findings and theories from different fields of study, have been tested in this thesis for the first time. Due to the complexity of the topic studied, the theoretical and methodological frameworks draw from international relations theories, political economy, philosophy, pedagogy, sociology, and global education studies.

The first chapter aims at developing the theoretical framework of this thesis. It describes how the multifaceted processes of globalization have changed the context in which governance of education occurs, reshaping its actors, arenas, processes and structures. It problematizes the traditional ways in which education governance can be defined and analysed and proposes the utilization of global governance theory, developed by

international relations theorists, for the study of contemporary education governance. This angle, based on the global governance of education, has been instrumental in overcoming methodological nationalism and in looking for other sources of power in education, particularly IGOs. Through a literature review, agenda-setting has been construed as a specific process of global governance for which a taxonomy of five mechanisms and related activities has been developed. In addition to this taxonomy, the relations between the programmatic activities of a global governance actor and its notion of education have been traced and linked to the global challenges that are envisioned and framed within a given IGO. The taxonomy of agenda-setting mechanisms, as well as the theoretical assumptions of interdependence between agenda-setting, notion of education and global challenges, constitute the basis for the development of the analytical categories of the analysis.

The second chapter presents the research aims, objectives, and questions. In order to investigate the complex landscape of the global governance of education, and the specific role played therein by IGOs, the twofold aim of the thesis and the methodological choice are explained. The main objective was to analyse the evolution of UNESCO's priorities in the agenda-setting process, and to examine the growing relevance of one specific mechanism in UNESCO's global governance role. This section also sets the challenge of identifying the dialectic relationship between UNESCO's priorities and those of the agendas set, connecting it with historical and institutional contexts.

The third chapter illustrates the methodology of the analysis. It presents the case study of UNESCO and the international education agendas it shaped: EFA and SDG-4 Education 2030. It also collocates the research in a particular timeframe which encapsulates the timeline of the aforementioned international education agendas that is marked by the rise of globalization and its effects on the governance of education. After presenting the selection of working documents, the third chapter elucidates how a mixed methodology of discourse and content analysis of UNESCO's main political and flagship publications has been useful in order to find meanings from text and to identify the evolution of UNESCO's priorities in the agenda-setting process.

The fourth chapter delves into the case study and the broader context of the analysis. It presents UNESCO's origins, structures and membership, as well as the historical

milestones and approaches to fulfilling its mandate. It also describes its main governing bodies - the General Conference, the Executive Board and the Secretariat - and its working procedures, including the Medium Term Strategy and the Programme and Budget documents. The chapter analyses the evolution of international education agendas from 1990, with the WCEFA in Jomtien, through the World Education Forum in Dakar of 2000, to the establishment of the SDGs and the Education 2030 agenda in 2015. These agendas have been analysed in terms of their priorities, achievements and shortfalls, illustrating their specific evolution and development, as well as the role that UNESCO has played in supporting them. This chapter also explains the processes of interpretation of international education agendas which make them global.

The fifth chapter addresses the historical evolution of UNESCO's priorities in global governance and analyses each of the periods marking its work in the global governance of education. It presents the results of the content and discourse analyses of UNESCO's flagship and programmatic documents so as to highlight the major changes in the educational themes it has covered, the global challenges perceived, the notion of education held, the agenda-setting activities performed, as well as the budget allocated to them. These changes have also been linked to the endogenous and exogenous events and changes which help frame the context in which these global governance activities have taken place.

The research addresses the formulation and operation of agenda-setting mechanisms by utilizing theories of the global governance of education. It proposes innovative theoretical and methodological frameworks for analysing IGOs activities; it identifies the evolution of UNESCO's role in the global governance of education connecting it with the changes of the period; it explains how a specific mechanism of agenda-setting has gained relevance in UNESCO's global governance role, and it illustrates the dialectic relationships between UNESCO's priorities and those of the global education agendas that the Organization has helped shape. In so doing, this thesis has aimed to make a meaningful contribution to the global studies in education.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Governance of education and globalization

Governance in general, and education governance in particular, is nowadays one of the most debated issues related to the organization of learning opportunities and to the enabling factors for guaranteeing the right to education. Its importance is clearly stated by the Education For All Global Monitoring Report (GMR), “an independent publication commissioned by UNESCO on behalf of the international community” whose aim is to monitor the implementation of the EFA goals, which affirmed that “education provision is affected by wider governance conditions” (UNESCO, 2009a, p. 129).

The debates around education governance are focused on a wide variety of aspects: from its dimensions to its processes, reforms and results. Although there is a vast literature on governance and education governance, there seems to be no agreement on a single approach to the meaning of governance, to what it entails or its elements. Moreover, the changing context for governance, with the increasing interdependence and interconnection among stakeholders in education at different levels, has posed important questions on the ways in which education governance can be defined and analysed.

1.1.1. Governance and education governance

Governance is a multi-faceted and vague concept. The ever-growing number of its definitions in the different scientific disciplines witnesses its complexity and elusiveness. In fact, the term “governance” has been used throughout time in different fields of study to describe diverse phenomena, and only recently has it seen an increment in its use in the political sphere (Iacovino, 2005). Even within political science literature and in policy documents, there are several ways of approaching the concept of governance. As a matter of fact, the ideas and phenomena that are defined and explained with the term governance represent a variegated ensemble which makes it difficult to discern a unique meaning of what governance is. Thus, a working definition of governance, and education governance, is required.

Etymologically, one of the first roots of the term governance can be found in the Sanskrit word “*kubara*” which denoted the helm of a boat. Origins can be found in the Greek verb “*κυβερνάω*” (“*kybernao*”), whose meaning can be related to the process of steering,

guiding and managing (again related to the practice of sailing), and “κυβερνέτες” (“*kybernetes*”) defining the pilot or helmsman. Subsequently, the Greek term was translated into the Latin verb “*gubernare*” which meant “to govern” and was related to the exercise of functions by administrative institutions at that time. From a political perspective, it can be appreciated that government and governance not only have similar semantic roots, but also for a long period they did not have a separate meaning. This has been explained by the fact that before the 20th century, governance practices were not seen as being distinct from the practices put in place by governments (Arienzo, 2013).

During the second half of the 20th century, governance started having a separate meaning from government and its uses denoted various, and sometimes contradicting, phenomena. While part of literature still associates governance practices with those of governments (Peters, 2002; Fasenfest, 2010), other scholars highlight how governance indicates something beyond, which exceeds governments’ practices (Rhodes, 1996; 1997; Mayntz, 2006). Particularly significant in this regard are the theoretical contributions developed by Rosenau who expressed in various works the idea that “governance is not the same as government in that the rule systems of the latter are rooted in formal and legal procedures, while those of the former are also marked by informal rule systems” (Rosenau, 2003, p. 13).

Despite the multiple uses of the term throughout history and in the different fields of study, governance has always been related to the processes of *steering*. Among the different definitions and uses of the term governance, two common elements can be identified: 1) governance is related to the *exercise of power and authority* in order to *steer* a given system; and 2) governance entails both *processes and structures* by which that particular system is steered. It thus entails formal and less formal processes for exercising power and authority which are not necessarily implemented by governments through their structures taking into account non-hierarchical forms of control (Mayntz, 2006; Rosenau, 1995; Zürn, 2013).

Like the term governance, there are multiple approaches to the understanding of what governance of education is and what it involves. One of the most common approaches used to understand education governance, is to analyse the governance of national education systems. This approach is grounded on what was called the methodological

territorialism or methodological statism (Brenner, 1999; Robertson, 2009). Indeed, for a long period the exercise of power and authority in education has been an almost exclusive competence of Nation States, which tried to hold their sovereignty over educational matters. In fact, “public education has always had an important social, civic and political function” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 65) related to the development of national identity, the creation of a sense of shared community. Therefore, Nation States were naturally in charge of steering this social, civic and political function.

An interesting distinction was also made by the UNESCO General Education Quality Analysis/ Diagnosis Framework (UNESCO, 2012*a*, p. 42), which distinguished two levels of education governance: system level and institution level.

At the system level, governance determines what education policies and priorities will be put in place; how much funding will be available to education and how these resources will be distributed, used, managed and accounted for; how the powers and functions of governing education will be distributed across the different layers and actors *within the system* and to what extent the rule of law and transparency will be maintained so that those who hold powers are accountable for their performance.

At the institution level, governance ensures the deployment of qualified, motivated and accountable personnel (e.g., teachers/facilitators and leaders/managers). It ensures that learners are provided with high quality and relevant curriculum materials and they are engaged in learning and get adequate support from their teachers/facilitators.

The GMR (UNESCO, 2009*a*, p. 129) also provided an important description of what education governance is. After highlighting that governance “is about power relationships in society” (*ibidem*), it affirmed that:

Education governance is not simply the system of administration and management of education in a country. In its broadest sense, it is concerned with the *formal and informal processes* by which policies are formulated, priorities identified, resources allocated, and reforms implemented and monitored. Governance is an issue not only for central government but also for *every level of the system*, from the education ministry down to the classroom and community. It is ultimately concerned with the distribution of power in decision-making at all levels.

Thus, it seems clear that the governance of education has to do with the distribution of power within the system in a country and it comprises the formal and informal processes of defining policies and priorities and resource allocation, implementing and monitoring reforms, taking into account the principles of rule of law, transparency and accountability. At the institutional level, it concerns the administration, management, and effective working of the structures put in place for education. Hence, the descriptions of education governance provided embrace a significant theoretical assumption: the governance of education is approached as the governance of national education systems, which begin with classrooms and communities and end with the ministry of education.

However, this assumption fails to take into account the broader context in which power and authority are now distributed and exercised in education. Indeed, we are seeing a multiplication of *loci* of authority beyond national level whose impacts on national education systems are undeniable (UNESCO, 2015*b*). In fact, other relatively recent approaches to the governance of education analyse it considering the different governance processes occurring beyond Nation States. These approaches seem to agree that education governance cannot be confined to the territory of a State and to the authority of governments which represent only one, albeit important actor in the governance of education.

For the purposes of this thesis, governance of education can be defined as *the manner in which power and authority are distributed and exercised through different (formal and less formal) processes and structures for the steering of education systems*. It may entail the processes of policy formulation, the pursuit of priorities, allocation of funds, the issuing of directives, rules and norms, the implementation and monitoring of reforms, the administration and management of the system resources, ensuring transparency, rule of law and accountability, and it may also entail processes for influencing such policies, opinions and practices. The structures through which it occurs may be of different types - public or private - and of different levels - from the local to the international or global (Mundy et al., 2016; Leuze et al., 2007; Robertson and Dale, 2016; UNESCO, 2009*a*; 2012*a*; 2015*d*).

1.1.2. A changed context for governance: globalization and its impact on education governance

As previously mentioned, the context and the ways in which governance takes place has changed dramatically over the past three decades, mainly due to the profound global transformations occurring from the 1990s onwards. Literature seems to agree to attribute, explain, and date the origin of these changes in the multiple processes of globalization. This complex and multi-faceted concept has been approached and interpreted in a vast number of ways in order to shed light on and explain the changes in economic, cultural, and political aspects of Nations (Stromquist and Monkman, 2014).

“Globalization” is commonly referred to as a set of processes of intensification (widening, deepening and speeding up) of interdependence, interconnection, relationships and exchanges of capital, goods, information, ideas, people and forces across the world (Held et al., 1999; Kehoane and Nye, 2000; Hewson and Sinclair, 1999; Scholte, 2002; Verger et al., 2012; Mundy et al., 2016).

As Rizvi (2017, p. 3) stated: “little consensus exists with respect to its definitions and its implications for policy. It has divided theorists and practitioners alike, and major disputes have emerged surrounding globalization’s historical origins, its various forms and its political and cultural consequences”. The multiple debates on globalization have focused on several different issues, some of them concern its originality, some its understandings, some the different effects that it has had on society, and these debates have been grown since it came into existence (Scholte, 2002). In a convincing work, Held et al. (1999) divided three broad schools of thought related to globalization: i) hyperglobalizers, who see contemporary globalization as the new era in which people are all subject to the global economy; ii) sceptics, who see globalization as a myth and believe that global interconnectedness has always existed; and iii) transformationalists, who see “contemporary patterns of globalization as historically unprecedented such that states and societies across the globe are experiencing a process of profound change as they try to adapt to a more interconnected but highly uncertain world” (*idem*, p. 2). Although it is a contested concept (Popkewitz and Rizvi, 2009), it seems that there is unanimity in recognizing the importance of globalization in relation to the changes in all spheres of

people's life and that "the impact of globalization can occur at different levels of national societies" (Dale, 1999, p. 3).

Education is one of the fields in which globalization has had a considerable impact. Scholars have identified the origin of some of the visible, and less visible, changes in education in globalization. As Carnoy (2014, p. 35) observed: "education has been significantly affected by globalization even though we may not necessarily observe these effects in most of the world's classrooms". It is important to underline that some of the changes in education that have occurred over the past few years cannot be related directly to the processes of globalization. However, globalization has been referred to as "the context of contexts" (Peck and Theodore, 2010). Hence, any change has been influenced by its context with varying degrees of relation to it.

While it is widely accepted that globalization has changed and has had a significant impact on education governance, there is no universal agreement as to its actual consequences. In fact, the empirical changes in education governance have been explained starting from different interpretations of globalization. As a result, there are different approaches to the study of the impact of globalization on education governance.

In addressing the impact of globalization on education, Verger et al. (2012) pinpointed two main approaches: the neo institutionalist approaches and the international political economy approaches. Starting from this division, we can identify three ways for studying the impact of globalization on education governance which have three different interpretations of globalization. The first approach interprets globalization from an economic viewpoint, the second studies the cultural aspects of globalization, and the third focuses on the spatial implications of globalization.

ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION

The first approach draws from reflections of hyperglobalists and the theories of international political economy. It interprets globalization as the growing interdependence and integration of economies across the globe, and the predominance of market logic in all aspects of social and political life. Indeed, a number of theorists assume "that globalization is largely an economic phenomenon" (Rizvi, 2017, p. 3).

This globalized economy has favoured the spread of neoliberalism as the dominant economic and political ideology. Neoliberalism has been explained as “the extension of competitive markets into all areas of life” (Springer et al., 2016) and neoliberalization as the “tendency of regulatory change that prioritizes market-based, market-oriented or market-disciplinary responses to regulatory problems; it strives to intensify commodification in all realms of social life; and it often mobilizes speculative financial instruments to open up new arenas for capitalist profitmaking” (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 196).

According to various theorists, the globalization of the economy has “demanded new ways of thinking about education” (Rizvi, 2017, p. 2) since it is “the driving force of globalization [that] seeks to establish its effects on educational systems” (Dale, 2000, p. 428). From literature, two interrelated impacts of economic globalization on education can be perceived: i) impact on the purpose of education; and ii) impact on the management of education. Thus, globalization has profoundly changed and influenced the policy needs, ideas, and objectives of education.

i) Impact on the purpose of education. With the spread of neoliberalism and the “idea that markets ought to be allowed to play a foundational role in determining educational priorities and policies” (Rizvi, 2017, p. 3), the very purpose of education has been altered. Education has been treated more as a positional good (Marginson, 2004) rather than a public or common good. It thus narrows the scope of education which is conceived as a private business rather than a collective social endeavour. It helps individuals to pursue private returns from their educational ‘investments’. From this perspective, curricula should focus on the development of skills for the job market rather than child-centred and personal fulfilment aims (Stromquist and Monkman, 2014), and education may be treated as a “marketable commodity” and not as a social service (*idem*). Economic and work-related needs have pervaded and are dominating the purposes of education: performance, productivity and efficiency have become powerful ideas and the criteria for measuring a successful education (*idem*).

ii) Impact on the management of education. Economic rationalism has also influenced the ways of approaching and solving public problems. During the second half of the 20th century, with the rising demands for quality in education, but a shrinking budget, market

logic offered a solution: raising efficiency in order to sustain the cut in costs. Based on the strong argument of efficiency, since the 1980s a “new” public management for the public sector has been proposed, advancing finance-driven reforms and competitiveness-driven changes in education systems (Mundy et al., 2016). Thus, it has favoured the involvement of private sector organizations in the (more efficient) delivery of education opportunities and the creation of a transnational private market providing education (Verger et al., 2012).

Therefore, the interpretations of globalization focused on economic aspects point out that globalization has shaped and created new policy needs and policy options in education. Various authors have explained, very clearly, that economic policy imperatives and logic have “colonized” education policies (Ball, 2010, p. 122), that globalization has generated new inputs and defined new problems, and that neoliberalism has framed many of today’s education policy ideas (Verger et al., 2012).

CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

The second approach focuses on the social and cultural interdependence that has been encouraged by globalization. It draws from transformationalist approaches and world society theorists. Central to this approach is the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) which have contributed towards spreading ideas, images, models and lifestyles around the globe.

With this approach, scholars argue that what has been globalized is discourses and ideas (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009). These discourses and ideas can be related to a particular model of education, as well as particular policies for education. Thus, the terms “global policy-speak” on education and “a common framework for global educational policy discourse” (Mundy et al., 2016, p. 6) have been coined. Through the international circulation of ideas (Popkewitz, 1996), three interrelated phenomena related to education governance have been explained: policy travel, global policy convergence, and education isomorphism.

The diffusion of discourses and ideas has furthered a “globalized thinking” on education (Carnoy, 2014, p. 25). Nowadays, there are common sets of education policies that are applied and implemented throughout the world by countries with different cultures and history. Countries are adopting similar education reforms to apparently similar

challenges. This movement of educational ideas and policies has been referred to in many ways such as, for example, policy travel, policy borrowing and lending, and education transfer (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Thus, “educational transfer is interpreted as a process in which certain educational ideas or institutions exist in a given context (generally a nation state), and they are transferred through different mechanisms to another context” (Beech and Artopoulos, 2016, p. 254).

For world society theorists, this process reveals the convergence of global policy on a particular set of global education policies and that a single global model of schooling has been promoted (Mundy et al., 2016). Interpreted in this way, globalization, “has also produced an increased emphasis on teaching science and mathematics and on educational measurement. The high value of information technology and other science-based industries has pushed countries to increase emphasis on science and mathematics education” (Carnoy, 2014, p. 24). Similarly, Dale (2000, p. 428) argues that the “development of national educational systems and curricular categories [is] explained by universal models of education, state, and society”. Thus, the international travel of policies and the global policy convergence has given rise to a fear of homogenization in education (Lingard and Rizvi, 1998) and education isomorphism.

SPATIAL INTERPRETATION

The third approach highlights a particular consequence of globalization that has significant implications for the ways in which policies are formulated. Through this approach, scholars have focused on “space”. In fact, globalization has also been interpreted “as the spread of transplanetary connections between people. [...] Used in this way, globalization refers to a shift in the nature of social space” (Scholte, 2002, pp. 13 – 14) and has changed the “spatial organization of social relations and transactions” (Held et al., 1999, p. 3) leading to a shift in the notion and uses of “space”.

At the basis of this interpretation, there are two important interrelated assumptions: i) the distinction between “space” and “place”, and ii) the relational notion of space. Drawing from the reflections of Castells, Beech (2009, p. 349) argues that

‘Place’ refers to the physical setting of social activity as situated geographically (Giddens 1990). ‘Space’ is the material support of time-sharing social practices (Castells 2000a). Traditionally, time-sharing social practices could only occur between people that were

situated in the same place. Thus, space was attached to place. In current times, it is quite obvious that social interaction does not need territorial contiguity and, consequently, space is dislocated from place.

In his considerations, space is socially constructed, and it assumes relational significance as “a set of relations that transcend the territorial location of the nodes that constitute a given network” (Larsen and Beech, 2014, p. 199). Thus, with the relational notion of space, it is easier to understand that social connections transcend territorial geography, giving birth to supranational and supraterritorial spaces (which are not linked to the territory, nor to the nations) (Scholte, 2002).

Following these reflections, the terms “global” and “local” have acquired new significance. They are “mutually embedded” (Verger et al., 2012). “This spatial perspective implies accepting that the global is implicated in the local, and the local in the global” (Larsen and Beech, 2014, p. 199) because the global is produced and has manifestations in local settings. “Global” cannot be used as a synonym of “international”, nor can it be solely interpreted as a “level”, it is something *spatially* different (Robertson, 2012). This approach highlights the non-territoriality of spaces, the possibility of the existence of spaces that transcend places.

As to the changes in education, Beech (2009, p. 349), adopting this approach in his analysis, argued that “much of the agenda-setting in education is defined in the space with the aim of influencing place-based education policies and school practices” and that this space “is constituted by a series of networks of interaction and exchange of information in which global discourses about education are produced and reproduced”. Education discourses and policies are thus set and sent into global space (De Souza Santos, 2010). Hence, globalization has created global education policy spaces (Mundy et al., 2016). This interpretation of globalization recognizes and reveals that education policy-making is now acquiring a global dimension (Verger et al., 2012).

It implies substantial changes in policy-making structures and processes in education, and therefore on education governance. It highlights the loss of relevance of territory in the policy process, a phenomenon explained by scholars with the term “deterritorialization” (Rosenau, 1995) which questions the role of the State because, as Held et al. explain, “sovereignty, state power and territoriality thus stand today in a more complex

relationship than in the epoch during which the modern nation-state was being forged” (1999, p. 9). Traditional hierarchies and forms of organization transcend national and territorial frontiers (UNESCO, 2005a), and power and authority over education are no longer confined within the Nation State boundaries.

1.1.3. New arenas, actors, and processes of education governance require new methodological tools

All three approaches to the study of the implications of globalization on education governance agree on the fact that “processes of globalization have drastically altered the education policy landscape across the world” (Verger et al., 2012, p. 2). In particular, “globalization has deterritorialized the spaces in which decision-making takes place” (Vargas Tamez, 2016, p. 15). There is a shift in structures, actors and processes through which policies are defined and created and priorities set. At least three interrelated aspects that have been analysed and subject to changes can be identified: i) policy content; ii) governance processes and structures; and iii) governance actors.

i) Policy content. As the first and second approaches argue, the global policy discourses, and the dominant logics that are affecting societies, are creating new policy needs and objectives. Globalization dynamics have implications on policy choices. With the growing emphasis on principles of efficiency and performance worldwide and a greater importance of work-related training (Stromquist and Monkman, 2014), the purposes of education have been re-directed towards the preparation of highly skilled workers ready to contribute to the knowledge based economy. Moreover, global education policy-speak is advancing similar education policy solutions which have acquired the status of Global Education Policies (Verger et al., 2012).

ii) Governance processes and structures. With the change in the notion of space, new arenas for policy-making have been opened. Global education policy spaces imply new processes and structures through which governance can take place. The policy-making process is thus deterritorialized. “Deterritorialization implies the redefinition of the scale, the space and the dynamics through which education policy is being negotiated, formulated and implemented” (Verger et al, 2012). Much of the literature related to “the spatial turn” focuses on policy lending and borrowing but it has also highlighted how this new conceptualization of space overcomes a methodological *cul de sac* in the analysis

of education governance. In addition, globalization has favoured the creation of multilateralism with education at the centre of these agreements.

iii) Governance actors. The new arenas for education policy-making have led to the increase of stakeholder participation in education governance. As stated by Stromquist and Monkman (2014, p. 2): “the unfolding dynamics of globalization have brought several major players into the economic and political decision-making process”. Particularly relevant in this regard is the work of Leuze et al. (2007) who highlighted the relevance of new policy actors such as the market, transnational corporations and IGOs. The authors explored further the growing governance capacity of IGOs, which expanded their actions and activities in education policy-making from the 1990s. A number of other scholars, based on constructivist approaches, stressed the growing capacity of IGOs to develop an autonomous source of power influencing education policy-making (Finnemore, 1996; Meyer and Benavot, 2013; Verger et al., 2012). “Constructivists observe that even when international organizations are created to serve member states, with the passage of time, they evolve into autonomous sources of power” (Mundy and Verger, 2014, p. 10). As several authors have explained, although “education policies, programmes and practices have been and continue to be located in national territorial spaces” (Robertson and Dale, 2016) underlining the continuing importance of the role of the State in education governance, “education policy-making is no longer an exclusive affair of the nation state” (Moutsios, 2009, p. 478). Indeed, IGOs do not replace Nation States but “create an additional and informal structure of authority and sovereignty besides and beyond the state (through providing) means of communication, socialisation, institutionalisation and integration” (Overbeek 2004, cited in Dale and Robertson, 2007, p. 222). Besides IGOs, private sector engagement in education policy-making has also grown (Macpearson et al., 2014), as can be witnessed in interesting research developed, for example by Menashy and Dryden-Peterson (2015) on the role of transnational advocacy coalitions in setting policy priorities.

It appears clear that globalization has altered the unit of analysis for education governance (Verger et al., 2012; Lingard, 2009). Indeed, the consequences of these reflections have led scholars to reflect upon the ways in which governance can be understood and analysed. Non-state actors are relevant political agents in the governance of education and global governance spaces cooperate with classical state-centred governance

processes within the same territory. The State no longer has the monopoly over political and educational authority within the borders delimiting its territory. Thus, methodological territorialism in education governance can no longer give a full picture of the governance of education (Verger et al., 2012).

Education policy scholars have developed new terms and explored new theoretical and methodological frameworks and approaches in order to examine the current complex dynamics of power and governance processes in education (Mundy et al., 2016). One of these approaches applies to education the global governance theory leading to the creation of a relatively new term “global governance of education”.

1.2 Global governance theory applied to education

1.2.1 Global governance theory: origins and approaches

The global governance theory tries to explain how power and authority are now distributed and exercised in today’s world and how they can (and do) have global repercussions. This theory originated from international relations theories and acquired importance and resonance during the 1990s. It was developed for the purpose of finding order in disorder (Rosenau, 1995) in international politics from the traditional paradigms of international relations theories (e.g. realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Walt, 1998), a “tool for understanding global change” (Hewson and Sinclair, 1999, p. 2). There is no one single meaning or use of the theory of global governance. International relations scholars have provided multiple definitions of the theory and, in addition, the number of definitions seems to grow whenever it is applied to specific fields such as economics, environment and education.

The studies on global governance focus on different aspects: from its existence to its structure, the most efficient forms of global governance, the methodology for analysing it, the limits and problems related to it and so on. In general, it refers to new theoretical lenses to look at international relations, and to give sense to new governance practices that are occurring in the world (Bevir and Hall, 2011).

Similarly to ‘globalization’, although there is no consensus on a single definition, its use is widely accepted and recognized. Particularly relevant for the acceptance of this theory was the creation of a Commission on Global Governance in 1992, with the support of the

former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, which produced an important document in 1995: “Our Global Neighbourhood. Report of the Commission on Global Governance”. In 1995, a dedicated scientific journal was also published, and literature on global governance flourished. Recently UNESCO also explained its view on global governance (UNESCO, 2011*d*).

Literature adopted global governance theory to describe a variety of phenomena. It is possible to identify at least five main interrelated approaches to and interpretations of the global governance theory. Global governance has been interpreted as: i) governance of the global commons; ii) governance at/of the global level; iii) governance from the global level; iv) multilevel governance; and v) governance in the global.

i) Governance of the global commons. Globalization has increased interdependency between States. This interdependency has favoured the identification of issues that are of common concern: a phenomenon that has also been called the internationalization of problems (Finkelstein, 1995). In addition, literature has documented how there are “phenomena or issues that seem to be of special salience from a global perspective” (Latham, 1999, p. 26). Some of these are called global commons: “resource domains that do not fall within the jurisdiction of any one particular country and to which all nations have access” (UNTT, 2013, p. 3). Examples of these are global warming, international migrations and rainforests. Thus, the problem of the governance of these global commons has been posed: “stewardships of the global commons cannot be carried out without global governance” (*idem*, p. 5). To this end, the solutions to challenges and problems that do not fall within the jurisdiction of one State require coordinated actions and agreements. As Zürn (2013, p. 408) pointed out:

Global governance refers to the entirety of regulations put forward with reference to solving specific denationalized problems or providing transnational common goods. The entirety of regulations includes the processes by which norms, rules, and programs are monitored, enforced, and adapted, as well as the structures in which they work. Governance activities are justified with reference to the common good, but they do not necessarily serve it. Global governance points to those sets of regulation which address denationalized problems, that is, problems which reach beyond national borders.

In this sense, the approach of Keohane and Nye (2000) can also be interpreted. In their considerations of how globalization has an impact on governance and how governance may affect globalization, they proposed some examples of global governance. One of these is the “formal global governance through multilateral institutions, in which states create international regimes and cede some power to intergovernmental organizations to govern specific issues” (*idem*, p. 20).

Thus, in this perspective, global governance refers to the multiple ways implemented for “governing” global issues of common concern. *Global* governance is introduced because of *global* issues.

ii) Governance at/of the global level. In the second approach, there are no global issues that need to be governed or managed. It ‘simply’ extends the notion of governance to the global level. Therefore, if there is national governance at national level, there must be global governance at global level. The “domestic analogy” (Bull, 1977) is clear and it helps explain how “sovereignty free actors” (Finkelstein, 1995) are involved in world politics. Finkelstein (1995, p. 369) accurately stated that “global governance is governing, without sovereign authority, relationships that transcend national frontiers. Global governance is doing internationally what governments do at home” (for a better understanding of this approach see Weiss, 2000 and Stiglitz, 2006).

This approach is also shared by the UN Commission on Global Governance (1995, pp. 4 - 6) which stated that:

Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest. [...] At the global level, governance has been viewed primarily as intergovernmental relationships, but it must now be understood as also involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs), citizens' movements, multinational corporations, and the global capital market. Interacting with these are global mass media of dramatically enlarged influence. [...] [The UN] may serve as the principal mechanism through which governments collaboratively engage with each other and other sectors of society in the multilateral management of global affairs.

In this perspective, the focus of global governance is on the global/international arena and it refers to the mechanisms implemented at the global level to manage global affairs. *Global* governance is so called because the level at which it takes place is *global*.

iii) Governance from the global level. The third approach focuses on the governance processes that occur at the global level and whose repercussions can be seen at bottom levels. The agents of global governance are thus global and transnational actors. The global governance understanding of this approach is not to be confused with “global government”, “world government”, nor a “global governor” that ensures global order as some scholars have argued. It is not governance of the globe. Studies undertaken with this approach mainly concentrate on the role of International Organizations (IOs) in governance.

In addition, there are scholars who have examined the legitimacy of such activities. For example, Zürn (2000) questioned the legitimacy of global governance institutions in carrying out their control activities and exercising an increasingly autonomous, unaccountable power. Therefore, this approach sees global governance as the governance that is carried out by actors who, from a global level, operate on a global scale. *Global* governance is utilized because the scale and scope of the actors is *global*.

iv) Multilevel governance. The fourth approach focuses on the existence of different structures that bear authority. At the basis of this approach, there is the assumption that governance *loci* are now relocated. As Hooghe and Marks (2003, p. 233) stated, there is now a “dispersion of decision-making away from central states. [...] Modern governance is—and, according to many, should be—dispersed across multiple centers of authority”. The relocation of authority from the States has been possible through different processes such as the formal delegation of authority to an IO. In this way, organizations operating at different levels have the same *kind* of authority as Nation States: a political authority. Therefore, Zürn (2012, p. 731) pointed out that “global governance can indeed be described as a specific form of multi-level governance”, in which authority over a determinate issue is shared by different actors at different levels.

In an interesting work Brühl and Rittberger (2002, p. 2), while differentiating between international governance and global governance, equated global governance with multilevel governance:

Global governance is the output of a non-hierarchical network of international and transnational institutions: not only IGOs and international regimes but also transnational regimes are regulating actors' behaviour. In contrast to international governance, global governance is characterized by the decreased salience of states and the increased involvement of non-state actors in norm- and rule-setting processes and compliance monitoring. In addition, *global governance is equated with multilevel governance*, meaning that governance takes place not only at the national and the international level (such as in international governance) but also at the subnational, regional, and local levels.

This approach focuses on the dispersion of governance across multiple levels. The majority of scholars have used the case of the European Union as an example, in which there is formal delegation of authority from the State to a superior level over particular issues. *Global* governance is utilized because governance is dispersed among all the levels from local to *global*.

v) Governance in the global. The fifth and last approach sees global governance as the governance that is occurring throughout the world. It is concerned with understanding how power and authority are exercised in a context of global interdependence. This approach is the one that has generated discussions on global governance. It is based on the assumption that the world is now interdependent and is not constituted by a national or an international arena for governance. It is a global space in which the processes of integration and fragmentation taking place in the world have led to continuing processes of relocation of authority. According to Latham (1999, p. 28), in this approach there is

...a powerful shift in the meaning of 'global' in the phrase global governance. We move from governance that is global to governance in the global, with the latter meaning subsuming the former. Governance that is global refers to the steering at the global level. Governance in the global refers to all the governance that occurs throughout the global order.

Rosenau (1995, p. 13) stated that global governance can be conceived "to include systems of rule at all levels of human activity – from the family to the IO – in which the pursuit of goals, through the exercise of control has transnational repercussions". In this theorization, global governance knows no boundaries and levels and hierarchies are no longer applicable. Any "pursuit of goals through the exercise of control" that has transnational repercussions has global governance significance. This approach redefines

the geography of power relations which are now more complex and less hierarchical. It sees global governance as the sum of all the activities of governance that are happening in a global world. *Global* governance is so called because the world is *global*.

1.2.2 Global governance of education: two approaches

As demonstrated, the power relations between the various stakeholders in the governance of education constitutes a complex, multilevel and dynamic system of rule (Wilkozewski and Sundby, 2014; Rosenau, 1995). In order to understand it, some scholars have proposed and applied the theory of global governance to education governance. The global governance theory was developed in the early 1990s, while the term “global governance of education” was first used at the beginning of this century.

“Global governance” was already applied to education during the first meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All in 2001, in which the Assistant Director-General for Education, John Daniel, addressed fundamental questions on global governance: “he distinguished between governance (generating political will and momentum) and management (day-to-day organization of the work), and asked whether a global governance structure for education is necessary or desirable” (UNESCO, 2001*a*, p. 19). However, only recently has this been developed in literature to discuss the involvement of non-state actors and IOs in education governance.

Many scholars have used this theory, while others have produced works adopting similar assumptions and approaches without referring explicitly to global governance. In fact, the phenomena arising in the context of governance of education can be explained through various theoretical and methodological approaches. The application of this theory to education differs among scholars who have investigated some aspects rather than others. These different views can be explained by the ‘dual ambiguity’ (Dingwerth and Pattberg, 2006) of the terms ‘global’ and ‘governance’ and by the numerous approaches to the global governance theory itself. This is witnessed by the multiplicity of terms used to describe it such as global governance of education, global governance in education, global education governance, global educational governance and governance of global education.

In literature, two different approaches to the global governance of education can be identified. These approaches assume two interpretations of the global governance theory. Although distinct in this analysis, these approaches have more commonalities than distinctions. The first approach sees global governance of education as the governance carried out from the global level. The second approach focuses on considerations of the global as a condition of the world.

i) Governance *from* the global. Many discourses on global governance of education consider the governance processes that are carried out by global actors and are influencing national education governance. This is by far the most common approach to global governance of education. Studies based on this understanding of global governance of education have a particular approach to global governance theory (governance from the global) and they are focused mainly on the policy-making aspect of governance. An example of this approach can be found in Mundy and Manion (2014, p. 39) who, in their introduction, define global governance in education as “the work of global institutions and transnational actors with educational mandates”. In another passage, the authors used the term “global level governance in education” (Mundy and Manion, 2014, p. 48) referring explicitly to the activities carried out by the World Bank in the governance of education.

The same approach is used by Robertson and Dale (2016, p. 14) who, distinguishing a “thin” and “thick” global governance of education, refer to the degree of involvement of “global players (such as OECD, World Bank, McKinsey and Co., Pearson Education, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation)” in a global policy-making activity, exercising power, authority and influence over framing policies.

Similarly, Meyer and Benavot (2013, p. 10) explored the role of the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in global education governance. In their introduction, the authors highlight how “state sovereignty over educational matters is replaced by the influence of large-scale international organizations” (*ibidem*). Therefore, in the approach used by Meyer and Benavot global governance of education defines the ways in which IGOs can orient national policies.

The approach used in Mundy et al. (2016) is slightly different and has another interpretation of the global governance theory (governance of the global commons), but it reaches the same conclusions. In fact, the authors explain how from the mid-20th century, “education was recognized as an appropriate and important domain for multilateralism” (p. 3). Education became an important “common” in which all States are called to intervene in the international arena. For this purpose, an appropriate IGO has been created (UNESCO, the sole UN institution with educational mandate) which has a recognized, albeit limited authority over education.

This approach highlights how global, international or transnational actors carry out governance processes in education. This global level policy-making activity (therefore a governance process) results in a “progressive shift in the locus of authority from the state to the global level where it is promoted not only by intergovernmental organizations, but also increasingly by civil society organizations, corporations, foundations and think tanks” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, pp. 67 – 68).

ii) Governance *in* the global. A second approach to the global governance of education takes the global governance theory from the perspective of global governance as “governance in the global”. It sees the ‘global’ as a condition of the world (Robertson, 2012). There is a global space for governance and the boundaries of countries and education systems are blurred. Any governance process in education with repercussions that go beyond national boundaries and involve different institutions has global governance significance.

This approach has been used by King and Palmer (2014, p. 12) who defined global governance of education as an “organising framework for discussing how state and non-state actors ‘gain political authority and presence’ (Verger et al., 2012, p. 7) in education”. In their conceptualization of global governance of education, there are no distinctions between actors of global governance. In fact, the “stakeholders” involved are “all the education-related actors” (*ibidem*). Their ways of enacting global governance are through formal and non-formal mechanisms which have transnational impact. As the authors state: “there is now a multiplicity of actors, state and non-state, involved in global governance, and their influence and impact can be analysed in many different sectors, such as climate change, health, education and migration” (*idem*, p. 14).

Other scholars, such as Mundy et al. (2016), use this approach when referring to the creation of global policy spaces for education. As already stated, through the processes of globalization, new global policy spaces are created. Global education policy spaces define new processes and structures through which policy-making can occur. The policy-making process is thus deterritorialized. “Deterritorialization implies the redefinition of the scale, the space and the dynamics through which education policy is being negotiated, formulated and implemented” (Verger et al, 2012). Within these new spaces a wide range of actors, from IGOs to individuals, have the possibility to influence the choice of priorities with transnational repercussions.

This approach highlights a particular dimension of education systems: education systems are complex systems and all education systems are connected. Education systems are not isolated islands as in an archipelago, but they exist in a common global space, therefore, changes in one education system might have implications on the other systems. Moreover, this approach underlines that the world is now a single entity and each governance process in education that has transitional repercussion has global governance significance. The global is now the arena for education governance. National boundaries are blurred and non-traditional/informal processes of governance taking place in the world may and do have transnational repercussions.

1.2.3 Defining global governance of education

Although there is no agreement on the understanding or the use of the global governance theory, it highlights a changed notion of the world and a changed structure of power relations within the world in a context of increasingly global interdependence. This context is characterized by the presence of issues of global concern, by the growing importance of multiple actors and stakeholders at different levels assuming more power and authority, and by the possibility of governance processes that have transnational repercussions.

From the global governance perspective, the world is not simply constituted by Nation States and IOs, but conceived as a global space, in which multiple actors are exercising their power and authority in order to steer certain systems. Rule systems coexist at different levels in the same arena. The authority is relocated on multiple levels and scales. Global governance processes happen simultaneously within and beyond the Nation

States' authority, sovereignty, structure and territory. Global governance may involve different actors at different geographical and institutional levels, and any exercise of authority that has transnational repercussions (geographical and institutional) is a manifestation of global governance. These ways of steering certain systems with multi-local repercussions are global governance processes.

Global governance of education can be defined as a methodological and theoretical framework which highlights the broader global space in which governance in education now happens. Global governance of education defines and entails all processes and structures for exercising power and authority in order to steer and influence education in the global, with multilocal repercussions. All education stakeholders, regardless of their status (private or public) and level (local or international), can be actors of global governance of education. This theory has been used to explain how governance in education implies actors beyond Nation States since governance processes happen simultaneously, within and beyond their traditional authority, sovereignty, structures and territory. The theory has also been adopted to examine the influence of global/international/transnational actors in education policy-making. Analytically, it helps to overcome methodological nationalism, to look for other sources of power in education such as IGOs, private actors and civil society organizations (CSOs). It has contributed towards focusing research on less formal and non-traditional processes and structures. In education, global governance theory “aims at capturing this increasingly complex policy landscape” (Verger et al., 2012, p. 7).

1.3 Agenda-setting: a process of global governance

As previously explained, one of the areas of governance that has been changed by globalization is policy-making. In particular, the processes and structures of formulating and setting policy priorities have been drastically transformed. It will be shown how IGOs have gained growing importance in this new policy landscape, and especially in the agenda-setting process. Indeed, “agenda-setting” is the process of setting policy priorities. “Agenda” etymologically comes from the Latin verb *agere* (to do) in the gerund form, and it literally means “things that have to be done”. Therefore, in its broad sense, it refers to an array of priorities.

1.3.1 Three approaches to agenda-setting

In the specialized literature, it is possible to distinguish three approaches to the study of agenda-setting and the role of the different actors involved in it: 1) the content approach, 2) the multilevel approach, and 3) the political approach. This categorization is based on the different *foci* used by scholars in their analyses. It reveals different conceptualizations of the nature of the agenda, of who is responsible for it, and of the arenas in which agenda-setting takes place. As this differentiation is artificial and not so clearly expressed in literature, some scholars may have developed works whose mixed positions take into consideration elements of all three approaches.

CONTENT APPROACH

The content approach starts from the consideration that IGOs hold a political agenda which they try to disseminate. This approach sees agenda-setting as the main goal of IGOs, and it focuses its attention on the content of the agenda promoted. Several analyses have been made revealing the similarity of IGOs' agendas to neoliberalism and the fact that they may lay their roots in market logics. In particular, several studies have developed analyses on the following correlated set of issues: i) the ideological basis of the agenda; ii) the discourses promoted by IGOs; and iii) the historical origins and causes of the birth of such an agenda.

i) The first issue of investigation is the ideological basis of the agenda and how it has been constructed in the work of IGOs. Of particular relevance in this sense is the work of Moutsios (2009), who showed how the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the OECD and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have an impact on education. He showed what asymmetrical and non-democratic transnational education policies are like and how they are formulated within these organizations. The focus of the study is on the objectives of such policies that are rooted in neoliberal ideology and in human capital theory. According to his analysis, these organizations are “the main promoters of the neoliberal agenda in discourses, in policies and organizational practices of educational institutions” (*idem*, p. 475).

ii) The second related issue that has been examined by scholars, and categorized by the author under the content approach, is discourses and concepts promoted in the work of

IGOs. Of great relevance are the works of Dale and Robertson, who explored the influence and importance of “discourses of competitiveness, the knowledge economy, entrepreneurialism, knowledge transfer, innovation and intellectual property” (Dale and Robertson, 2007, p. 4). For example, in one of her analyses, Robertson (2008, p. 9) argued that

The [World] Bank’s reinvention of itself in the 1990s (as a knowledge bank), was aided by a new array of concepts [...] that included the idea of ‘public private partnerships’ (Linder, 2000). The idea of ‘partnership’ enabled neo-conservatives, neo-liberals and also progressives to commit themselves to this new governance agenda.

Moreover, Coffield (1999) argued that a determined, simplified version of human capital theory is incorporated in contemporary discourses of lifelong learning.

iii) A third issue is the historical perspective that explains why a common, neoliberal agenda is promoted. In this regard, Mundy (2007*a*, 2007*b*) explored the evolution of educational multilateralism, looking at how education became a focus for multilateralism from the second half of the 20th century, and how it was firstly guided by the vision of the right to education as a responsibility of an “embedded liberal state” (Mundy, 2007*a*, p. 30).

MULTILEVEL APPROACH

The multilevel approach sees agenda-setting as a particular domain of the work of IGOs. This approach sees the world as multiscalar, multilevel and multipolar where different agendas are constructed and set by a wide range of actors and forces. Agendas are set at national, regional, subregional and international levels in many arenas. IGOs are just one actor amongst others and they have their preferences as to how the agendas should be. Scholars investigating this approach to agenda-setting have developed their ideas on the following elements: i) the multiple actors playing in the field of agenda-setting; ii) the mechanisms by which they influence agenda-setting; and iii) the correlation between actors’ activities and their mandates in education.

i) A good example of this approach can be seen in the reflections of King and Palmer (2014). The word ‘agendas’ is always used in the plural and the “steering of agendas” (*idem*, p. 13) is conceived as one of the results (they categorized it as an “impact”) of

different global governance mechanisms put in place by a variety of stakeholders. In addition, the authors developed their work on the basis of these global governance mechanisms dividing them into formal and informal mechanisms. These mechanisms are adopted by a wide range of stakeholders including, among others, IGOs (*ibidem*).

ii) As to the analysis of the mechanisms of agenda-setting at different levels, the works of Leuze et al. (2007) and of Jallade (2011) are of relevance. As already mentioned, in the introduction to their book, Leuze et al. explored the growing governance capacity of IGOs at the level of agenda-setting, providing a list of activities undertaken by IGOs in this domain. On the other hand, Jallade (2011, p. 7) attempted to highlight the “mechanisms, achievements and shortcomings of education cooperation” through a mapping exercise of programmes and objectives of selected IGOs. The author gave examples of six different modes through which IGOs can influence national education systems. These six modes, which can be summarized as setting values, setting goals, developing standards, disseminating good practices, providing financial aid and capacity building, and promoting student/staff mobility and networking, are witnessed by concrete programmes and are provided with examples of activities for each of the modes.

iii) In several works (1998, 1999, 2006, 2007*a*, 2007*b*), Mundy correlated the different activities of IGOs in the field of agenda-setting with the specific mandates of the Organizations. The author underlined how different solutions and programmes put in place are results of, and are generated by, a political mandate and according to different governing structures. Particularly interesting are the analyses performed on UNESCO’s attempt to “fill in the gap between the organization’s wide mandate and limited budget” (Mundy, 1999, p. 48), and on how political mandate can be “borrowed” by other IGOs. As affirmed by Mundy (2007*a*, p. 347):

Initially, the idea of information sharing across member states was mandated to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and related clearly to the liberal internationalist ideal of creating equality of opportunity through enhanced provision of education (Jones, 1988). Later, however, scientific contest between the Soviet Union and the United States also helped to produce strong strategic interest in information sharing and standard setting in education, stimulating some of the first education work undertaken by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) and some of the earliest bilateral funding for cross-national testing and comparison.

POLITICAL APPROACH

A third approach studies agenda-setting in two ways: as a dimension of power as well as a process. This approach is based mainly on the work of Dale, who has published extensively on agenda-setting and the ways in which educational policies are formulated, shaped and directed. In one of his early works, Dale (1999) reflected on how globalization affects national education systems and, in particular, he focused on “the mechanisms through which the external effects on national education systems are carried and delivered” (*idem*, p. 1). He indicated eight mechanisms of external effects: borrowing, learning, teaching, harmonization, dissemination, standardization, installing interdependence and imposition. Roger Dale conceives agenda-setting not as a mechanism, but rather as a process as well as a particular dimension of power. In fact, in his reflection on mechanisms, Dale distinguishes mechanisms from processes. The importance of mechanisms “exceeds the processes they embody” (*idem*, p. 7) and each process could even be used under other mechanisms. Agenda-setting is thus one process among others such as establishing collective agreements and conditions for memberships, persuasion, leveraging, and borrowing/imitating policies. As an example of this process, Dale proposed the work of the OECD which “works with an agenda-setting strategy” (*idem*, p. 13). With a quotation of George Papadopoulos (a former OECD education secretariat), Dale shows that the OECD’s work is focused on “new policy issues... which might call for priority attention in countries” (Papadopoulos, 1994, in Dale, 1999, p. 13).

Dale also refers to agenda-setting as a ‘dimension of power’. The author used the theorization of Lukes (1974) on the forms of power. In this theorization, power can be exercised in three ways: the first is a conscious decision, the second is through agenda-setting means, and the third is the ability to control the rule of the game. The power of setting an agenda lies in deciding what the issues at stake are, excluding the others. This form of power is much stronger than the first as every conscious decision made is subordinated to the agenda set. This approach to agenda-setting is also shared by other authors, such as Cobb and Ross (1997, p. 3) who characterized agenda-setting as “the politics of selecting issues for active consideration”.

1.3.2 Agenda-setting as global governance process

In these three approaches, there is no consensus on one single meaning of agenda-setting. However, common reflections can be found on the different processes and activities that IGOs put in place in order to set agendas (content approach), to work in the domain of agenda-setting (multilevel approach), and to decide what the issues at stake are (political approach). Based on these analyses, agenda-setting is conceptualized here taking into consideration elements of all three approaches.

For the purpose of this thesis, *setting an agenda means the process of collectively identifying and pursuing policy priorities for global commitments that shape and influence education*. It is conceived of as a process as the political approach proposes; it implies multiple spaces in which it occurs as the multilevel approach suggests; and its aim is to set determined policy priorities as the content approach delineates. Therefore, it is possible to conceptualize agenda-setting as one process of global governance. Indeed, *a 'global governance process' can be seen as the particular way in which one or more institutions (be they local or international) utilize their power and authority in order to shape, influence, and create changes in a determined domain (in this case education) with multilocal repercussions*. Building on the three approaches, agenda-setting is a process, as well as a domain of work, in which different actors present their own policy preferences with the ultimate goal of influencing education according to their notion of it, and their mandates.

Agenda-setting works at the policy level, which is an important, but not exclusive part of global education governance. In fact, other processes of global governance can be identified outside the policy issue and can influence more directly or indirectly the education domain. Among the direct influences, there are the action-oriented processes such as the provision of education opportunities (building a school, opening higher education institutions overseas, etc.). The indirect processes include, for example, the development of new technologies in education that shape the way in which learning takes place and is organized. Within the agenda-setting process, each actor involved has developed some mechanisms, over time, to shape the settlement of the agendas, or, simply, to set agendas.

1.3.3 Mechanisms of agenda-setting

While some scholars have tried to explore specific mechanisms of agenda-setting, others have made efforts to categorize them. Building on the works of Dale (1999), Barnett and Finnemore (2004), Jallade (2011), and King and Palmer (2014), this thesis analyses their sets of mechanisms contributing to setting agendas (see table 1). By re-articulating the “modes of cooperation” of Jallade (2011) and the inclusion of other “global governance processes” (King and Palmer, 2014), a taxonomy of agenda-setting mechanisms is developed (see table 2). This taxonomy has been used as the basis for the development of the analytical framework of the thesis (see § 3.4).

Table 1: Examples of agenda-setting mechanisms in literature

		Authors			
		Dale (1999)	Barnett and Finnemore (2004)	Jallade (2011)	King and Palmer (2014)
Mechanisms	Policy travel and borrowing			Enhancing a policy dialogue and disseminating good practices at country and regional levels	Dissemination of best practices
	Harmonization		Fixing meaning in the social world	Promoting the European dimension of education through student/staff mobility and institutional networking	
	Dissemination		Articulating and disseminating new norms, principles and beliefs	Promoting universal, normative values among the education community	Agreements compacts partnerships initiatives
	Standardization		Classifying the world	Developing comparable quality standards and performance indicators	Law convention rules charters Data from assessment and testing Rankings
	Installing Interdependence			Setting and monitoring common (or shared) goals for education systems	Goals & targets
	Imposition			Providing financial aid for system governance	Education and skills strategies for grants and

			through institutional development	loans. ODA conditionality
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The different mechanisms of agenda-setting have been categorized herein according to five lines of action: 1) value setting, 2) capacity building, 3) goal setting, 4) standard setting, and 5) financial leveraging. These mechanisms of agenda-setting are not specific, in the sense that they do not belong exclusively to one actor in the field of global governance of education. However, these mechanisms belong predominantly to IOs, and more precisely IGOs. These mechanisms may be implemented through sub-mechanisms involved in pursuing the goal of the mechanisms they belong to.

Agenda-setting mechanisms are constituted by activities. These activities are concomitant, interdependent, and ambivalent. In fact, some mechanisms entail a multiplicity of different activities in order to pursue their goals. Many activities require complementary activities to be successful in their mechanism's specific aims. Moreover, there are activities whose functions and effects lie within multiple mechanisms. The ambivalence of activities is clear once looking at a concrete example. In the biennium 1992-1993, according to its Programme and Budget, UNESCO performed the following activity: "technical assistance to Member States in revising primary-school curricula to meet local learning needs" (1992, § 01129). At first glance, this activity aims to build capacity in Member States through the technical expertise of UNESCO. However, this activity also enabled UNESCO to convey a strong concept in educational planning. In fact, by focusing on assistance with revising curricula to meet local needs, UNESCO affirmed that local learning needs should be taken into account in designing primary school curricula. Therefore, the concept of relevance of education is promoted through this activity.

VALUE SETTING

One of the mechanisms by which IGOs work in establishing agendas is through setting values. This mechanism is performed mainly through the promotion of particular values, concepts and principles, and through expanding the knowledge base on a particular issue. Values, concepts and principles constitute a particular notion of education and such a notion can concern different aspects of education such as its purposes, its organization, the ideological basis, the structural system and so on.

This notion of education has a great impact that can be witnessed in different ways. In particular, these values, concepts and principles influence education policy-making by creating a web of influential concepts and “creating political trends” (Kuroda, 2014, p. 2). It then constitutes a soft power by providing the bases for discussion on the visions and aspirations of education, as well as providing the “rationales and justifications for new educational investments” (King and Palmer, 2014, p. 25). According to Jallade (2011, p. 8) this ‘value setting’ mechanism creates a normative and “institutional framework for action”. It is worth underlying that promoting values does not have influencing policy-making as a unique goal. In fact, it has multiple desired outcomes and rationales, for example orienting practices, or just fostering dialogue and reciprocal understanding (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004).

The aim of creating a web of influential concepts can also be traced in the expansion of the knowledge base on a particular issue. In fact, a research activity not only promotes the issues and concepts that are selected as being worth researching, but also provides the organization performing it with a comparative advantage over the others. In fact, in the context of the knowledge based economy and the knowledge societies, all research activities whose purpose is to expand the knowledge base on an issue enable that issue to be placed under discussion. This issue (value, concept, principle, idea...) has been appreciated as worthy and deserving attention. In addition, clearinghouse activities empower an organization with substantial analytical tools that improve their ability to create the right framework for action.

As to the activities that constitute this mechanism, two main lines can be distinguished. Setting values has been done by: a) direct promotion and b) indirect promotion. These two categories have a very thin line of distinction. The direct promotion category includes activities that have these values, concepts and principles at their core, as a subject or the main theme. For example, producing publications, organizing conferences and promoting policy dialogues around a particular concept. Other activities of direct promotion are the dissemination of guidelines for Member States focusing on that principle, the institution of celebrations and prizes, global advocacy campaigns and the creation of specific projects with these themes as an area of work, and the creation of specific international commissions or networks to debate the themes. Activities of indirect promotion are activities that, although they are not directly concerned with the promotion of specific

values, convey values through the process of selecting some aspects over others. These promoted values can then be derived by looking at the ideological bases forming and shaping the activity.

This fact is what makes this mechanism the most complex. Indeed, all activities entail and convey a particular notion of education. For example, international treaties have underlying values and principles which are promoted through the creation, recognition and ratification of international norms, charters, rules, covenants, declarations, and conventions. Other activities of indirect promotion are setting goals, in which the selection of the actual goals can indicate the values to be promoted, creating standards, as well as instituting priorities that are embedded in its work programme.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The second mechanism by which IGOs work in the agenda-setting process is through capacity building. This mechanism aims at providing Member States with specific policy solutions to perceived common problems. This is done by highlighting policy challenges, indicating technical solutions and/or by examples from others' experiences. Capacity building entails two sub-mechanisms. The first one is the promotion of 'best practices' and information sharing, while the second is through the provision of technical guidance, and assistance.

Known also as the 'what works approach', "best practices have promoted policy and priority shifts" (King and Palmer, 2014, p. 20) based on results achieved in other similar situations. According to Jallade (2011, p. 16), this approach builds up "a professional consensus in the international community over key issues" and thus a form of 'social pressure' to follow and to adopt common policies. This mechanism is not new in the field of education policy-making. In fact, forms of policy dialogues, in which practitioners share their experiences and advance successful policy options, have been organized for a long time. These policy dialogues are the source of the phenomenon now called 'policy borrowing' in which a policy maker 'borrows' a particular political solution from another in order to adapt it to its specific context and solve its problems.

Moreover, an issue of credibility and attraction is associated with this mechanism. According to Verger et al. (2012, p. 19), "evidence-based policy has been welcomed by

many policy-makers and donors as a superior way of taking decisions”. Being ‘evidence-based’ means having the guarantee of being credible, and so it is considered to be a good policy solution. Furthermore, with the international travelling of these evidence-based policies, they acquire a ‘global status’ becoming more attractive to policy makers who can demonstrate that they adapt a global model to their local situations (*ibidem*). In addition to this, literature shows that the social recognition and legitimacy of IGOs also influence the perceptions on the particular policy promoted. In fact, a technical consideration on an education sector plan given by a World Bank official and another one given by a scholar from a local university, do not have the same sway even if they have the same objectives; the World Bank’s would have more influence than the latter (Verger et al., 2012).

Vast knowledge and technical expertise are also prerequisites to be mandated in order to conduct training activities or technical assessments. Through these training activities and technical assessments, the organization which performs them is enabled to orient practices and to identify policy priorities. The multiplicity of purposes and the indirect steering of agendas through this mechanism is vibrant. The same example of UNESCO’s “technical assistance to Member States in revising primary-school curricula to meet local learning needs” is emblematic. UNESCO identifies as a policy priority, in a given Member State in which the technical assistance is performed, that primary-school curricula should be revised in the light of educational relevance. In addition, the various ways in which the revision could be done will orient the practises of revision in that particular Member State. Another example can be found in the activity immediately following the latter (UNESCO, 1992, § 01130) “development and dissemination of methodological guides for head teachers on management and improving school quality”. With these methodological guides UNESCO is building head teachers’ management capacity, orienting the practices of head teachers in managing schools and conveying the idea that school quality needs to be addressed, and that it is to be addressed by empowering head teachers.

This mechanism is constituted by various activities including the promotion of different forms of policy dialogue at different levels such as international, regional or national conferencing, thematic conferences, and ministerial meetings. In addition, there is the development of comparative frameworks on a specific issue in which shortcomings are

comparably analysed and policy solutions are advanced. A third activity is an official review of national education policies. This review is often requested by Member States from IGOs in order to receive an external vision on national policy. A fourth activity is running training sessions for practitioners and officials, based on solutions ideated for diverse localities. Finally, another activity that constitutes the mechanism of promoting best practices is the production of knowledge, in particular with the writing of policy briefs, scientific papers and technical reports.

GOAL SETTING

A third mechanism has gained prominence and become widely used over the last three decades. By establishing an agreed set of goals, targets and frameworks, IGOs wish to install coordination among stakeholders in order to work towards a desirable common future. These goals are set through diplomatic negotiations among Member States, in which IGOs are not only observers, but very much involved in the development of the goals. This mechanism provides a good example of the direct influence of IGOs in shaping the agenda and putting forward their own preferences.

This mechanism builds consensus on a desirable future. It is made possible by a shared consideration of the interdependence of Nations and common challenges to be faced together. In fact, the development of forms of international agendas often focuses on either a concern “for issues (such as environmental, human rights, and peace) that extend beyond the scope of any nation state” (Dale, 1999, p. 14), or on a vision for the future.

This process has become more important and more widely adopted particularly at the UN level. From the 1990s onwards, this mechanism has evolved in education with the experience of the EFA movement. In fact, with the Jomtien Declaration (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990a), States agreed on a single aspirational goal (“to meet the basic learning needs for all”) and some precise areas of work. Within this soft framework, IGOs were asked to support their Member States in achieving this goal. This mechanism reached its peak of success in the year 2000, when, with the Millennium Declaration and the Dakar Framework for Action, two broad international agendas were set. These international agendas were constituted by a strong set of goals and targets, indicators to monitor processes. Therefore, the global goals approach not only sets educational

priorities, but also shapes the ways in which these priorities need to be addressed, orienting programmes and practices for both national and international players.

As Fukuda-Parr (2013, p. 3) argues:

Global goals create incentives for national governments and other stakeholders to take action. The incentives they create are arguably weak; they are an international agreement on an idea, and compliance does not bring many direct rewards. They rely on the power of numbers to gain traction in promoting behaviour change and in reshaping thinking. Global goals set priorities, frame debates, create a language for mobilising financial and human resources, strengthen accountability, and create peer pressures for aligning national policy with the global goals.

Within these agendas, IGOs have managed to establish their roles as coordinators of efforts, trying to maintain the momentum and holding States accountable for their promises. This mechanism builds consensus on a set of political issues, and States develop their cooperation strategies within them. As examples, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) would not have been created without the EFA movement, nor would the UN Secretary General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) without the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition, these international agendas helped shape regional and national cooperation, providing a framework of reference for IGOs, which, by working on and referring to these goals, also gained visibility and legitimacy to enter this arena of policy-making (Jallade, 2011).

This mechanism can be divided into two sub mechanisms: 1) the actual development, negotiation, design and establishments of goals, targets and standards, and 2) the work towards their implementation. These two sub mechanisms are supposed to be consecutive since the implementation can take place once the goals are established. However, a target redefinition process is always in place in the implementation phase through the translation of international goals to regional, national, or sectoral contexts. The degree of involvement of IGOs varies within these two sub mechanisms, and throughout the agenda according to their specific mandate, their financial capacities and their programme of work.

The activities constituting the first sub mechanism include negotiation phases usually encompassing the organization of international conferences, expert or ministerial

meetings, the production of specific knowledge to analyse particular issues and reviews of past experiences. The work for the implementation of the agenda, on the other hand, sees two kinds of activities: the work on project delivery and the coordination work. In fact, while some IGOs focus their efforts on collaborating with local authorities to implement plans with the delivery of projects, a great deal of effort is made at Headquarters to coordinate the different activities developed by all stakeholders. By way of an example, the creation of the UN Country Team, which develops the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), is a coordination activity that helps in the delivery of projects and enhances the effectiveness of implementation. Having said this, activities of implementation may involve the creation and delivery of projects, as well as the creation of the political architecture to coordinate the various efforts, for example, enhancing existing regional strategies, or convening ministerial conferences of specific regional areas.

STANDARD SETTING

The fourth mechanism of agenda-setting is identified as setting standards. This mechanism entails two sub mechanisms which have different lines of activities, but respond to the same aim of providing a model which all Member States should compare themselves to. The two sub mechanisms are 1) creating treaties, and 2) producing benchmarks, data, standards, ranking and assessments.

According to the UN (2012*a*, p. 71): a “treaty is a generic term embracing all instruments binding under international law, regardless of their formal designation, concluded between two or more international juridical persons”. Treaties can be signed between States, IOs and States, and IOs. Treaties can then take the form of declarations, conventions, recommendations, agreements, charters, and protocols. Each of them can be legally binding or not. All these treaties constitute a normative framework. States decide independently whether to sign a treaty. Once a State signs, it is included in the list of State Parties to that treaty. According to the nature of the treaty, different obligations and legal instruments need to be used. Through these treaties, IOs establish standards, with State parties. States then have an internationally agreed standard “to assess the compatibility of their national education laws and policies” (UNESCO, 2014*d*, p. 5).

Promoting treaties has manifold purposes for IGOs. Firstly, even if they are not legally binding, treaties always convey a set of values. With a non-legally binding treaty, states are also setting forth “universal principles to which the community of States wished to attribute the greatest possible authority and to afford the broadest possible support” ([UNESCO website: standard-setting instruments of UNESCO](#)). IGOs, which participate in the process of drawing up a treaty, are thus promoting those values and principles. In addition, treaties also constitute an accountability framework. States become accountable for their actions to the international community and all rights holders. This accountability framework gives IGOs some forms of power over State Parties. In fact, for some treaties IGOs have the power to make recommendations to State Parties, acting directly in a country context. Finally, IGOs are accustomed to using these frameworks in order to develop their guidelines and all the other instruments, grounding their programmes on these standards. Creating treaties has both a soft and hard power dimension. The aim of this mechanism is thus to hold States accountable through legal instruments and through the promotion of the values conveyed.

The second sub mechanism, known also by the terms ‘governing by numbers’ (King and Palmer, 2014; Grek, 2009), ‘governing by standards’ (Jallade, 2011), and ‘governing by comparison’ (Martens, 2007), has multiple impacts on education policy-making. This mechanism works with the production of data and indicators with the primary aim of keeping track of development in a particular area, and to classify the world (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004). The relevance of this mechanism can be understood within a context of the rise of an accountability regime, the importance of evidence based decision-making (Meyer and Benavot, 2013; Sellar and Lingard, 2013) and a “scientific approach to political decision-making” (Martens, 2007, p. 42), in which data assumes a legitimization role for a particular policy reform (King and Palmer, 2014). In literature, two elements appear to be debated and contentious regarding this mechanism: the production, selection and development of data and indicators, and the international comparison of the results.

The first concern raised is about the political dimension of the production, selection and development of data and indicators. In fact, IGOs using this mechanism claim that these indicators are “politically and ideologically neutral, presumably producing disinterested data” (Meyer and Benavot, 2013, p. 11). However, “data are politically and socially constructed” (King and Palmer, 2014, p. 22), they have political biases and are far from

being neutral. Indicators are now used for evaluating educational policies (Kuroda, 2014) by establishing what counts in education (Morgan and Shahjahan, 2014). Determining ‘what counts’ in education used to be a domain of nation states, which are ceding some of their power mandating IOs to develop indicators and conduct assessments. In addition, while referring to the OECD PISA, Martens (2007, p. 43) argues “the direction of the actual carrying out of this task would nevertheless remain outside the hands of nation states. The OECD as an institution and its staff as implementers receive power to apply self-created aims and goals for rankings and ratings in education”. Finally, according to Jallade (2011), these data and indicators are developed in a comparable and easy to consult way, in order to be understood by a non-specialist audience, capturing media and practitioners’ attention.

The second issue concerns the afore-mentioned practice of international comparison. Firstly, being tested, or rated and ranked puts social and peer pressure on whoever is being tested to conform to the agreed model (Grek and Ozga, 2008; Martens, 2007). This model, once it is applied internationally, then becomes a worldwide model which is predetermined and influences policies. In fact, following Meyer (Meyer et al., 1997 cited in Dale, 1999, p. 13) “worldwide models have become especially important... as cultural and organizational development of world society has intensified at an unprecedented rate [they] define and legitimate agendas for local action”. With these standards and models, which every country is called to adapt to, “we may gain comparability and transparency, but lose diversity” (Meyer and Benavot, 2013, p. 21). Standardization is one of the effects of this culture of testing and comparing results and it is exemplified in educational isomorphism (*ibidem*), which is the phenomenon of educational systems which are becoming more and more similar in content, purposes and structures.

Standards, rankings and, more broadly, an international comparison of results constitute a soft mode of governance or a soft power (Sellar and Lingard, 2013; Woodward, 2009) in which those who promote particular standards are thus promoting their policy preferences without legal instruments, nor financial levers (Grek, 2009). Finally, international comparison is used to show different policy solutions, with a ‘what works’ approach, often displaying best practices and promoting them. While the primary aim of this mechanism is to keep track of development in a particular area, it is promoting a particular model with which to compare. Furthermore, its real impact resides in the

creation of peer pressure in order to have states conform to standards based on what the developers think counts in education.

In the case of the sub mechanism for creating treaties, the activities constituting this sub mechanism are highly articulated and vary among the different kinds of treaties. Due to the strong power of the mechanism itself, a treaty is usually produced after a long process of consultation and negotiation. Once it has been drafted, it is the responsibility of the parties to sign it. Each of the treaties has its own procedural rules to be followed. Other subsequent activities involve the production of knowledge related to it in order to disseminate and promote the treaty and then to hold states accountable for their promises through social mobilization or through legal instruments. Regarding the sub mechanism for producing benchmarks, data, standards, ranking and assessments, the activities firstly entail the production of data, often through assessments and tests, their analysis and the development of indicators. These indicators may be used in order to compare States, or policies, producing rankings and league tables, thus their dissemination is fundamental.

FINANCIAL LEVERAGING

The mechanism of financial leveraging has a long history in development cooperation, not only regarding educational issues, and it is commonly associated with conditionality. The term ‘conditionality’ refers to policy-based lending, or “the conditions attached to funds disbursed by international finance institutions” (Koeberle, 2005) or other international donors. The persistence of these conditionalities is witnessed by the OECD, which affirmed in its Development Cooperation Report (OECD, 2016), that 17% of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) is “tied aid”.

The forms of conditionality have varied in the history of educational aid (King and Palmer, 2014). Literature mainly divides them into two kinds: ex-ante and ex-post conditionality. Ex-ante conditionality means that the ‘borrower’ or ‘recipient’ should conform to a set of conditions before acceding to the funds, be they in the form of loans or grants. Ex-post conditionality means that the ‘borrower’ or ‘recipient’ should achieve certain results after the disbursement (Koeberle, 2005). Both forms of conditionality can be more direct or indirect providing strict rules or softer ones. This mechanism’s aim is, thus, to force actions in a certain direction. Examples of ex-post conditionality are the famous World Bank structural adjustment programmes, which pose mandatory policy

changes as necessary outcomes of a loan. These may be structured as indicative benchmarks and numerical objectives (Mundy and Verger, 2014) and are often developed according to the political preference of the Bank.

An increasing volume of [World] Bank lending in the structural adjustment era [‘70s – ‘80s] was delivered in larger loans conditioned on policy changes [...]. Certain aspects of structural adjustment loans had clear bearing on education [...]. At the same time, wherever a need for structural adjustment emerged in the context of fiscal insolvency [...], the Bank also offered borrowing countries new “sector adjustment loans” with policy conditionalities aimed at the restructuring of public sector education spending. Common policy recommendations built upon the Bank’s epistemic anchor in neo-classical economics to form what Colclough (1996) has described as the Edlib (education liberalization) agenda (Mundy and Verger, 2014, p. 12).

Dale uses the term ‘imposition’ for this mechanism: compelling “recipient countries to take on particular policies and it is the only one [mechanism] that does not need to rely on some form of learning, persuasion or cooperation to bring about its desired changes” (Dale, 1999, p. 15). As ex-ante conditionality, there are ‘rules’ to be followed in order to apply to the loan or grant schemes. As an example of this, the GPE, one of the largest multilateral funders of education, has three main types of grant. The eligibility criteria of the most important grant (the Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant), which may be up to 100 million US dollars, state the need to provide a ‘credible’ education sector plan, when credibility is thus defined by a technical publication written by GPE and UNESCO-IIEP: “criteria of credibility, refer to the Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal, which have been jointly developed by the GPE Secretariat and UNESCO-IIEP” (GPE and IIEP, 2015, p. 7).

Financial leveraging can be softer. In fact, not all the grants and aid present forms of conditionality. There are subventions and financial assistance frameworks which do not imply a change in the activities performed by the recipients. In fact, there may be possibilities of subventions that simply ask the recipient to continue working. For example, UNESCO used to provide subventions to the World Organization for Early Childhood Education for participation in the implementation of a joint mobilizing project. Another example is the provision of technical and financial support to national adult

education institutions and specialized NGOs for the renewal of their activities regarding continuing education for adults.

The activities constituting this mechanism are, thus, related to the ability to create and manage a loan or grant scheme. These often include technical structural assessment and then the production of specific knowledge and financing activities. Other activities of this mechanism are related to the provision of subventions and financial assistance frameworks. These are often accompanied by technical assistance frameworks.

Table 2: Agenda-setting mechanisms

Mechanism	Sub mechanism	Aim	Kinds of activity	Examples
VALUE SETTING	Promoting values, principles and concepts	Create political trends	Production of knowledge; Conferences; Guidelines; Celebrations; Prizes; Specific projects; Specific commissions or networks; Norms, Rules and Conventions; Goals; Standards; Global advocacy.	Publication of monographs, studies and research findings on civic education. Establishment of a commission on education for the 21st century.
CAPACITY BUILDING	Promoting best practices	Advance policy solutions for common problems and orienting practices	Capacity building and training; Sector plan reviews; Conferences; Comparative frameworks; Production of Knowledge; Production of Guidelines.	Technical assistance for Member States in revising primary-school curricula. UNESCO Technical and Vocational Education Project (UNEVOC): a network of technical and vocational education institutions aimed at fostering the international exchange of ideas, information and experience and studies on policy issues.
	Technical advice			
GOAL SETTING	Establishing or working in favour of agreed sets of goals, targets and frameworks	Install coordination of work towards a desirable future	International conferences; Ministerial/experts meetings; Creation of coordination structure; Creation of plans of action; Creation of international goals; Joint projects and plans.	EFA: Follow up of the World Conference on Education for All, periodic consultations, at regional and international levels, with other agencies of the United Nations system to initiate and reinforce joint action.

STANDARD SETTING	Creating treaties – normative actions	Create a model to which all states should conform	Consultations and negotiations; Sign, acceptance, ratification of treaties; Development of accountability framework (production of knowledge, recommendations); Production of knowledge and data production; Development of Indicators; Development of Tests; Rankings production.	Production of, and encouraging ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Production and implementation of PISA tests
	Producing benchmarks			
FINANCIAL LEVERAGING	Financial aid	Force actions in a certain direction	Production of knowledge; Grants and loans schemes; Conditions and directionality; Monitoring exercises.	Structural adjustment programme

1.3.4 Differences between international education agendas and global education agendas

As previously mentioned, “agenda” means literally “things that have to be done”, and it refers to an array of priorities. The agendas set in the agenda-setting process are “global agendas”. There are different kinds and sources of global education agendas. These education priorities for global commitments can be of varying nature, formally established or symbolically proposed. The best known global education agenda takes shape in the form of international goals. Indeed, this formally established set of goals and targets, such as the EFA goals and the SDGs, practically entails education priorities for intergovernmental commitments. These international goals and targets serve as a basis for global education agendas since a set of educational priorities for global commitments is disseminated from the formal articulation of goals and targets. For this reason, they are called “global education agendas” (UNESCO, 2016*d*). Establishing international goals is one way of setting global agendas, and this “global goals approach” has become “increasingly used by the United Nations and the international community” (Fukuda-Parr, 2013, p. 1).

However, the “global goal approach” is just one example of setting global education agendas. In fact, there are other global commitments on education priorities resulting from various processes. For example, global education agendas can derive from: i) treaties, such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education (treaty based agendas are also legally binding); ii) international decades, like the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) 2005 – 2014; or iii) widely recognized declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Certainly, the actors’ degree of engagement varies for the implementation of these diverse education agendas.

Therefore, there is an essential and fundamental distinction between international education agendas and global education agendas. An international education agenda is the formal array of education policy priorities set by multiple actors whose “owners” are Nation States. They are priorities for inter-*national* commitments. The content of these agendas is expressed mainly by means of goals, targets, indicators and tools to follow up and monitor progress. International education agendas are set through complex dynamics,

and IGOs play a role within this process. Examples of international education agendas are EFA, MDGs and SDGs.

A global education agenda is a formal and non-formal array of education policy priorities that are set by a multiplicity of actors and whose scope, scale, project and reach is global (Robertson, 2012). A global agenda is an array of priorities that has to be accomplished globally, requiring global commitments. The content of these agendas can be formally expressed through a variety of arrangements: from international education agendas, to declarations, indicators, benchmarks, treaties, conditionalities, guidelines, or technical briefs. It is the actual interpretation and use of international education agendas that make them “global”. Indeed, IGOs play a decisive role in “sending into the global” (De Souza Santos, 2010; Robertson, 2012) certain policy priorities for global commitments: it is the interpretation and the implementation of these arrangements that send the priorities of that agenda into the global. Conceived in this way, EFA, the Convention against Discrimination in Education, and PISA results, although formally different (an international education agenda, a treaty, and a league table), can all be considered global education agendas, when used and interpreted for actual implementation.

It also implies that, according to the interpretation of the users, different global education agendas may result from the same international education agenda. In fact, international education agendas may include multiple global education agendas. As will be seen from a later analysis of the EFA experience, each of the IGOs participated at the WCEFA in 1990 with its own organizational motivation. The result was different approaches to EFA. I. Little and Miller (2000, p. 20) argued that each of the Convenors “shares the vision of EFA for different reasons that relate to their unique mission and mandate”, while Torres (2000, p. 22) declared that “Education for All proposal could and would lead to most diverse interpretations”. Hence, these different interpretations meant that within (and from) EFA, an international education agenda, multiple global education agendas coexisted: each of the partners used the international agenda to send into the global determined policy priorities for global commitments, which all come from the interpretation of the same EFA international education agenda.

Finally, it can be seen that the policy priorities sent into the global may be “material” or “symbolic” policies, building on the differences outlined by Rizvi and Lingard (2009). Symbolic policies do not imply rigid or hard commitments to implementation. They pertain to the area of soft law and “usually do not have any substantial funding attached to them” (Lourie, 2015, p. 52). Moreover, they “tend to have vague, ambiguous and abstract goal statements” (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009, p. 9). However, they still have a great impact and effect within global agendas because they shape and legitimate a broader political view and approach to education. Thus, a global education agenda consists of both material policy priorities and commitments, as well as symbolic policies and commitments.

Over the decades, numerous global education and development agendas have been created and implemented. These agendas might alternate or coexist at different levels and they might not be mutually excludable. As will be seen later, although it is not possible to develop an aggregated count of the number of current global agendas with educational components, there are currently several multiscalar agendas with varying geographical and institutional coverage which are used and interpreted to create global education agendas.

1.3.5 Agenda-setting - Notion of education - Global challenges

Agenda-setting is thus the process of collectively identifying, and pursuing policy priorities for global commitment. A global agenda on education implies a global commitment on an array of priorities for education. The process of setting it may involve multiple actors of different levels and nature. In fact, international actors and local or national actors take part in this process, as well as private and public actors.

Table 3: Examples of actors involved in agenda-setting

		Level	
		International	Local
Nature	Public	IGOs, Multilaterals. <i>Example: UNESCO, OECD, World Bank</i>	Nation State, provinces, municipalities...
	Private	Transnational corporations, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). <i>Example: Pearson, ActionAid</i>	Individuals, NGOs, enterprises...

The nature and levels of the actors do not limit their actions to a determined level of competence in the agenda-setting process. This means that an international actor does not necessarily work exclusively at the global level, nor does a local actor work exclusively at the local level. In fact, IGOs not only try to shape global agendas, but they also work directly in the process of setting national and local agendas. Local actors such as cities or local NGOs can have a say in the process of establishing global agendas as well. Indeed, approached from a global governance perspective, any action of governance that has transnational repercussions, no matter the locality in which it takes place, has global governance significance.

According to the analysis of the five mechanisms of agenda-setting, it is possible to infer that there are two elements that are crosscutting and linked to every agenda-setting mechanism. These two elements are 1) the notion of education and 2) the problems and global challenges perceived by each IGO for which a policy priority is identified and pursued. In fact, looking specifically at each of these mechanisms, it can be seen that the notion of education and the global challenges are integral parts of the same. In fact, these two elements are relevant because they are mutually determined. The notion of education and the global challenges give content to the mechanisms advanced, and can in turn also be inferred by the mechanisms advanced. Although IGOs work in the field of education according to their own mandates, the mechanisms and activities implemented to face these problems also depend on what the problems identified are, which may differ from one IGO to another, and how they are defined and framed. In addition, the identification of a problem can reveal a particular approach to education and thus shape the content and the purposes of a particular activity of an agenda-setting mechanism.

The strong links between agenda-setting and global challenges is widely accepted in literature (Dery, 2000). Indeed, as Cobb and Ross argue (1997, pp. 3-4): “agenda conflicts are not just about what issues government chooses to act on; they are also about competing interpretations of political problems and the alternative worldviews that underlie them”. However, agenda-setting and problem definition are two distinctive issues: “Problem definition is concerned with the organization of a set of facts, beliefs, and perceptions – how people think about circumstances. Agenda-setting refers to the

process by which some problems come to public attention at given times and places” (Weiss and Ozgercin, 1989, p. 118).

The interrelation between these three elements is particularly evident in the first mechanism (value setting). This mechanism of agenda-setting is related specifically to promoting values, concepts and principles of education. Promoting a particular notion of education directly is already an agenda-setting mechanism. Therefore, it is important to understand what the values, principles and concepts that IGOs promote are, whether these principles are the same for every IGO and whether there have been any changes in the values promoted over time. In fact, the values, concepts and principles promoted underpin the notion of education of an Organization and educational policies are constructed on the basis of this notion. It shapes the content of the activities performed. Moreover, virtually every agenda-setting mechanism has, explicitly or otherwise, a component promoting values, concepts and principles of education. The notion of education of an organization can be inferred indirectly by looking at the content of the activities of agenda-setting mechanisms. For example, the production and dissemination of certain treaties and the selection of indicators might be focused on some aspects and challenges of education such as equity or gender. This shows, indirectly, the notion of education of an organization. Finally, the global challenges perceived can provide a reflection on what the values, concepts and principles underpinned by the Organization are. In fact, the framing and identification of a particular challenge in education reveals the importance of some values which may be endangered by that challenge. For example, identifying as a global challenge the belief that teachers’ low social status damages the quality of education promotes the concept that teachers are important in the education process and that they constitute building blocks of the quality of education.

On the second mechanism (capacity building), the idea of sharing best practices and providing technical assistance implies that there are problems and challenges that are common, and that common answers could exist to these problems (Jakobi, 2007). This mechanism wishes to propose political solutions, and orienting practices, to perceived common, or global challenges. The context in which a best practice is advanced shapes its content. In order to understand what the priorities promoted through this mechanism are, it is necessary to look at the problems that these practices intend to face. Therefore,

questions can be raised regarding the nature of these common problems and challenges, how IGOs frame them, and subsequently what policy solutions are proposed.

On the third mechanism (goal setting), it can be seen how the content of the mechanism depends on the notion of education and the global challenges perceived. In fact, the goals proposed and pursued reveal an issue to be faced. By way of an example, if the goals established are to renovate curricula, they are likely to imply a concern over the obsolescence of curricula, which means identifying a global challenge in the obsolescence of curricula. In addition, if the goal is to expand access to primary education, or increase the quality of education, it tends to suggest that low access rates and low quality education are problems to be dealt with. On the other hand, as explained above, the notion of education can be inferred from the global challenges perceived and this notion of education shapes the content of the goal set. Creating a goal on universal primary education not only means that the very fact that there are out-of-school children is a challenge, but it also reveals a human rights based approach to primary education. Therefore, a question could be raised as to what the global challenges and the notion of education related to these goals are.

As to the fourth mechanism (standard setting), the creation of a treaty is always a reflection of the times, and reveals the issues that the international community is dealing with and conceives of as the most pressing. It is then interesting to point out what the historical events are that have determined the need for some of the treaties signed. Exogenous factors certainly influence the creation of a particular treaty. The context perceived and the global challenges, have an important role in determining the content of that treaty. Treaties incorporate values and it is important to understand how certain values have evolved within these treaties. IGOs have their preferences in referring to certain treaties over others. These preferences reveal how IGOs may be closer to certain values promoted in a particular treaty rather than to others. It may happen that a particular treaty proposes a notion of education that is close to that of a particular Organization. This Organization might be more willing to support this treaty because of its proximity to the values promoted. In addition, the notion of education these standards are trying to promote may be questioned. Benchmarks are used to keep track of developments in a particular field. Therefore, the fields that should be tracked can be interrogated. Often these fields of development are associated with some kinds of challenges and to a

particular issue of concern. For example, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study promoted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement wishes to test 4th grade pupils on their literacy competences. This implies that for International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement early literacy is a matter that should be taken into account. On the contrary, the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences, developed and conducted by the OECD, measures adults' proficiency in "key cognitive and workplace skills needed for individuals to participate in society and for economies to prosper" ([OECD website: Survey of Adult Skills](#)). This test and relative benchmarks reflect concern over skills for employment and a vision of education that aims at developing human capital.

As to the fifth mechanism (financial leveraging), conditionalities are often used to impose a certain logic. Therefore, the question could be raised as to what the values and logics promoted by these conditionalities are, as well as the problems these conditionalities are to solve.

Agenda-setting mechanisms depend heavily on the global challenges perceived and the notion of education held. Moreover, agenda-setting mechanisms also depend on what the global challenges *perceived* by a particular actor are. In fact, not all the global challenges the world is facing are perceived by all Organizations. Therefore, there is strong interconnection, mutual interdependence and interrelated-definitions between a) the problems and global challenges IGOs construe as being the most important, b) IGOs' notions of education, and c) the mechanisms and activities IGOs set up and undertake in order to tackle these problems. These interconnections are highly relevant in any research into IGOs' activities. Hence, on the one hand, the notion of education *shapes* the identification of problems and challenges, and the mechanisms and activities put in place to face these problems and challenges. On the other hand, the notion of education *is shaped* by what constitutes it: the problems and challenges identified and the mechanisms and activities developed.

1.4 Conclusions

The multiple processes of globalization have drastically changed the context in which governance of education occurs. Moreover, the impact globalization had on the reshaping of governance actors, arenas, processes and structures has altered the ways in which

education governance can be defined and analysed. Over the past decades, scholars have tried to explore new theoretical and methodological frameworks and lenses through which to examine the current complex landscape of power relations in education. From the beginning of this century, literature has shown the efforts that have been made to apply the theory of global governance to education, a theory that was developed during the 1990s by international relations theorists.

Although the approaches to global governance of education vary widely among scholars, global governance of education can be defined as a methodological and theoretical framework which highlights the broader global space in which governance in education now takes place, and which is not confined within the territory and sovereignty of traditional Nation States. Global governance of education defines and entails all the processes and structures involved for exercising power and authority in order to steer and influence education in the global, with multilocal repercussions. Analytically, it helped overcoming methodological nationalism to look for other sources of power in education such as IGOs, private actors and CSOs and contributed towards focusing research on less formal and non-traditional processes and structures to examine the influence of global/international/transnational actors in education policy-making.

One of the processes of global governance in education is agenda-setting, which is the process of collectively identifying and pursuing policy priorities for global commitments that shape and influence education. Literature shows that IGOs are active players in agenda-setting and that over time they have developed specific mechanisms to set global education agendas. By reviewing literature, it has been possible to develop a taxonomy of agenda-setting mechanisms which consists of the five following mechanisms: i) value setting, ii) capacity building, iii) goal setting, iv) standard setting, and v) financial leveraging. These mechanisms are specific ways to set global education agendas and are strongly interconnected with the notion of education held, and the global challenges perceived by the global governance actor performing them.

In the following sections, the research aims and objectives will be presented, as well as the methodology with which the research has been conducted, drawing from the assumptions and findings of the theoretical framework. In particular, the taxonomy of agenda-setting mechanisms, as well as the theoretical assumption of interdependence

between agenda-setting, notion of education and global challenges, constitute the basis for the development of the analytical categories of the analysis.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The objective of this research is to investigate the complex landscape of the global governance of education understood as the framework describing the ways in which power and authority in education are distributed and exercised in an increasingly interconnected context. It will focus on the role of IGOs in the global governance of education. Rather than conducting a comparative analysis of IGOs, the evolution of the role of one specific IGO will be analysed over a period of time. An interval was selected which encapsulates the timeline of particular international education agendas and is marked by the rise of globalization and its effect on the governance of education. The research will focus on UNESCO, as the UN specialized agency with an educational mandate established in its Constitution. Based on the theoretical assumption that agenda-setting is a process of global governance, the evolution of the role of UNESCO in global governance will be analysed, examining its role in the agenda-setting process.

In particular, the study will have two *foci*: on the one hand, it will analyse the priorities of the Organization in the agenda-setting process; on the other, it will examine how a specific mechanism of agenda-setting (goal setting) has gained relevance and importance in UNESCO's programme as the preeminent mechanism for setting education agendas. This research will also explore the dynamic and dialectic relationship between UNESCO's priorities in agenda-setting and the priorities in the agendas that UNESCO helped set. Specifically, the agendas set will be explored to investigate the extent to which they have influenced UNESCO's priorities in the agenda-setting process. This exercise will shed light on the processes behind setting global education agendas, as well as how global agendas have an impact on the priorities of the Organizations that contribute towards setting them.

The study will comprise a deeper analysis of the evolution of the international education agendas that UNESCO contributed toward shaping as a result of the multiple activities entailed by the goal setting mechanism. Namely, i) Education for All I (EFA I) 1990 – 2000, ii) Education for All II (EFA II) 2000 – 2015, and iii) SDGs 2015 – 2030, particularly Sustainable Development Goal Four (SDG-4). These international education agendas are some of the concrete arrangements with which UNESCO has tried to set global education agendas.

The research aim is, thus, twofold: to analyse UNESCO's priorities in the agenda-setting process, and to examine the specific importance and relevance of goal setting in UNESCO's global governance role. It will also focus on the dialectic relations between UNESCO's priorities and those of the agendas. All these analyses will be studied in light of historical and institutional contexts.

In the contextualization of the agendas, the events taken into consideration are of endogenous and exogenous nature. Endogenous events, for example, are particular changes in the Organization such as the voting of the new Director-General, important external evaluations of the Organization, the increase in the number of Member States, or the withdrawal of budget support from particular Member States. Exogenous events refer to some significant or symbolic events occurring outside UNESCO whose influence and impact on the Organization are undeniable. For example, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the changes in UN leadership, the creation of other international development agendas, the evolution of particular educational concepts, or the financial crisis of 2008. Regarding the functioning of UNESCO, a brief analysis of the origins, structures, as well as its governing bodies (the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat) will be made so as to have a better understanding of its ways of operation. Landmark and major events will be taken into account from the time of its creation, more than 70 years ago. As to its mandate, attention will be paid to how UNESCO has tried to fulfil it, focusing particularly on education. Finally, the genesis of UNESCO's policies will be explained, taking into account the working modalities of the Organization.

UNESCO'S ROLE IN AGENDA-SETTING OVER TIME

Shifts in UNESCO's priorities will be traced, linking the changes to possible endogenous and exogenous events that may have influenced such changes. In order to assess the *evolution* of UNESCO's role, a historical perspective is required. Therefore, the analysis will span a period from 1990 to 2017. UNESCO's priorities will be analysed in the following terms: i) educational themes, ii) the notion of education, iii) the global challenges perceived, iv) budget allocation, as well as v) agenda-setting mechanisms and activities put in place.

i) As to the educational themes, the research will reveal the aspects of education that UNESCO focuses on in performing its mandate. ii) Regarding the notion of education

and the global challenges, they are analysed as this thesis hypothesises that there is a strong interconnection, mutual interdependence and interrelated definitions between agenda-setting mechanisms and these two elements. UNESCO's notion of education will be elucidated looking at UNESCO's work plan and flagship publications. iii) As to the global challenges, the concerns that UNESCO envisions and the backdrop for its actions in a determined period will be analysed. In fact, perceiving a determined issue as a challenge shapes the orientation and prioritisation of the activities and programme. iv) With regard to the budget, resource allocation to different activities, and the share of budget for each of these activities will be analysed examining whether there are budget priorities in the educational themes and agenda-setting mechanisms. v) Concerning the agenda-setting mechanisms, an analysis of the most preeminent mechanisms used in agenda-setting will reveal the most evident effects they have had on UNESCO's notion of education, and vice versa, and whether there have been any changes over time.

GOAL SETTING: UNESCO AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AGENDAS

Goal setting is a mechanism by which UNESCO contributes to the establishment of global education agendas, especially through the setting of internationally agreed goals and frameworks for action. As explained in the theoretical framework (see § 1.3.4), there is an essential distinction between international education agendas and global education agendas. EFA and SDG-4 are international education agendas: they consist of an internationally agreed set of goals and targets with an agreed framework for action for their implementation. These goals, targets and framework are agreed by Nation-States. EFA and SDG-4 are agendas that belong to the States that have committed themselves to following the goals, targets and framework for action.

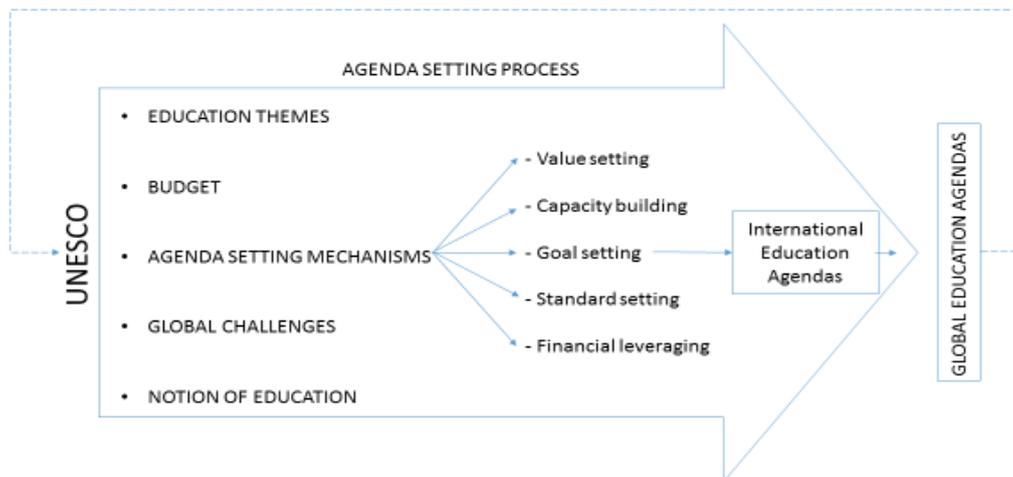
Thus, the research focuses on understanding the importance of goal setting as an agenda-setting mechanism for UNESCO and UNESCO's role in contributing to specific international education agendas during their lifecycles. It will be examined whether this mechanism has acquired specific relevance in UNESCO's work and whether it has been influenced by the results it has achieved. In this 27-year period, UNESCO was mandated to act directly within EFA as well as within SDG-4. It will be studied how UNESCO's

mandate has been fulfilled within EFA and SDG-4, and how the activities performed in relation to them have constituted a priority for UNESCO.

Therefore, the overarching research question is how has UNESCO played a role in the global governance of education over the last 27 years and what has shaped this role? It will be problematized how global education agendas are formulated, how UNESCO has played a role in setting global education agendas, and what the priorities followed are. The research will then focus on analysing whether goal setting has been one of the most relevant mechanisms of agenda-setting and, more specifically, how UNESCO has performed its role in EFA and SDG-4. The latter questions also entail questioning how UNESCO’s work has contributed to shape the agendas’ priorities and how these, in turn, have contributed toward shaping UNESCO’s priorities.

These questions can be understood only by answering subordinate questions such as what is the institutional relationship between EFA and SDG-4 and UNESCO; what are the priorities that guide UNESCO’s work; are there any shifts in priority over time; what are the elements that may explain these shifts?

Figure 1: Research aim and objective



3. METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the evolution of UNESCO's role in agenda-setting over time, the main political documents and the flagship publications of the Organization will be analysed. The political and flagship publications of UNESCO will be subject to content and discourse analyses, inspired by Krippendorff (1997) and Johnstone (2008), so as to reveal its institutional priorities. The documents will be examined using five analytical categories: 1) educational themes, 2) global challenges, 3) notion of education, 4) agenda-setting mechanisms and activities, and 5) budget. All the documents will be analysed using these categories. As to the international education agendas, their main political documents will be investigated by analysing their education priorities and the role envisioned for UNESCO and its actual contribution towards shaping them.

3.1 The case study: UNESCO and international education agendas

UNESCO

With the adoption of its Constitution on 16 November 1945, UNESCO was established after a Conference in London at which forty-four States of the newly-founded UN participated. UNESCO is an IGO as it is an IO whose Members are sovereign States represented by their respective governments. In particular, the governments of the State-Parties to the Constitution created the Organization acting on behalf of their peoples. As Article X of the Constitution declares, UNESCO is a “specialized agency” of the UN and its mandate is to contribute towards international peace through education, science and culture:

In consequence whereof they [the Governments of the State-Parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples] do hereby create the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established and which its Charter proclaims. (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 5).

To date, the Organization has 195 Members and 8 Associate Members (see § 4.1.2), the Headquarters is located in Paris (France) and there are more than 50 field offices around the world. UNESCO's structure consists of three Governing Bodies, National

Cooperating Bodies and Institutes. The Governing Bodies are the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat. The General Conference, regulated by Article IV of the Constitution and by the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, is UNESCO's primary decision-making body, comprising representatives of all Member States. It meets in ordinary session every two years and it determines the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization. The Executive Board, elected by the General Conference, regulated by Article V of the Constitution and by the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, consists of fifty-eight Member States. It meets in ordinary session at least twice a year and it is responsible for the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference. The Secretariat, regulated by Article VI, consists of the Director-General and staff. The Director-General, nominated by the Executive Board and appointed by the General Conference, is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization and appoints the staff of the Secretariat which implements the programme approved by the General Conference.

The General Conference, with its decision-making authority, adopts two main programmatic political documents. The first document is the Medium Term Plan (or Medium Term Strategy), also called C/4. This document is drafted by the Secretariat and is discussed, changed and approved by the General Conference. The document outlines the strategic objectives and the lines of work for the Organization without mentioning precise activities or programmes. In addition, the C/4 reflects on and gives a vision of current challenges and provides a forward-looking direction in which UNESCO should move. The C/4 covers six years and is the basis for the second programmatic document that will be studied: the C/5. The C/5 is the Programme and Budget of the Organization. Like the C/4, the C/5 document is prepared by the Secretariat and is discussed, modified and approved by the General Conference. It covers two years, is divided into programme areas, and follows the strategic objectives outlined in the C/4.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AGENDAS

By international education agendas, reference is made to the formal array of priorities established among Nation-States. Thus, international education agendas cover education policy priorities. These international education agendas take shape as decades or as internationally agreed sets of goals, targets, and frameworks for action (see § 1.3.4).

Since 1990, a long list of international education agendas has been established with different geographical, temporal and institutional spans. Of the international education agendas established during this time frame, three have been the most relevant for the work of UNESCO in education. These agendas are: EFA I, EFA II, and SDG-4.

In March 1990, UNESCO, in partnership with the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized the WCEFA in Jomtien (Thailand) adopting the "World Declaration on Education for All" and the "Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs". The Declaration and Framework for Action comprised goals and targets towards which all States could aim. The overarching goal was to meet the basic learning needs of all by 2000.

In April 2000, UNESCO, in partnership with the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the International Labour Office (ILO), convened the World Education Forum in Dakar, adopting the "Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments". The World Education Forum reaffirmed the Jomtien "World Declaration on Education for All", expanding and renewing the Framework for Action. Although the overarching goal was still to meet the basic learning needs of all, the specific goals were changed. In fact, the Dakar Framework for Action set out six goals and twelve strategies towards which: "individual countries [...] *should* set their own goals, intermediate targets and timelines within existing or new national education plans" (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 15. Emphasis added). The time span of the Framework for Action was 15 years.

In 2011, a broad process of consultation started for the purpose of building the post-2015 structure of a new development (and education) agenda. This complex process ended with the adoption of the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2015: "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UN, 2015, A/RES/70/1). This Resolution consists of seventeen goals with a hundred and sixty-seven targets. Goal 4 is related to education. With seven targets and three means of implementation, it constitutes the current international education agenda.

3.2 Time frame

The period considered begins in 1990 and extends until 2017. There are two main reasons behind the choice of these 27 years. The first is related to changes in the global context. In fact, several authors have indicated that the 1990s were the years of the rise of globalization when an increase in its pace could be witnessed (Kehoane and Nye, 2000). As explained in the theoretical framework (see § 1.1.2), this increased pace of globalization brought several changes in education and, in particular, in the governance of education. The hypothesis is that some of the challenges brought by globalization had an impact on UNESCO's role in global governance and especially on its activities and priorities. Therefore, these years have been included in this thesis to see if, and how, these challenges influenced UNESCO's work.

The second reason is related to the structures of international cooperation. In fact, as previously stated, in March 1990, with the WCEFA and the resulting documents, a major and important international education agenda was set. The hypothesis is that the structures established by this and the following international education agendas shaped UNESCO's programme and priorities, requiring staff and budget allocation, but also directing attention to some aspects of education rather than others. For these two reasons, the years comprised between the beginning of EFA (1990) and the beginning of SDGs and especially SDG-4 have been included in the analysis.

These 27 years are divided into five periods to make comparisons and assess evolution. These five periods are the following:

- First period: 1990 – 1995
- Second period: 1996 – 2001
- Third period: 2002 – 2007
- Fourth period: 2008 – 2013
- Fifth period: 2014 – 2017

Figure 2: Periodization



The periodization is based on UNESCO's working modalities. In fact, its works and activities are guided by Medium Term Plans spanning six years.

3.3 Selection of documents

As explained above, the political and flagship publications of UNESCO will be studied. As to UNESCO's political publications, two documents produced by the General Conference of UNESCO will be analysed. The first document to be taken into consideration is the Medium Term Plan (C/4) and the second document is the Programme and Budget (C/5). From 1990 to 2017, UNESCO developed and/or accomplished five C/4s and fourteen C/5s (see table 4).

The second kind of publication analysed will be flagship publications and/or key publications. These publications are the main source of UNESCO's vision of education. In fact, these publications are rare, and are generally not concerned with special programmes and/or projects, but they have a broader view on education and development. These constitute UNESCO's main reference work on education. As UNESCO defines them:

[Flagship] publications are reports with global reach and major historical works that present UNESCO's official position or the official position of an intergovernmental group led by UNESCO, or information resulting from its global perspective. Flagship publications are corporate products that are often scheduled for periodic release and serve as major advocacy tools for the Organization. [...] [Key publications] are high-profile products that: i) treat major policy issues of strategic importance – usually of global or regional scope; or ii) present official information resulting from UNESCO's global strategy and crosscutting knowledge platforms. [...] They are expected to reach a broad public either globally or regionally (UNESCO, 2014*e*, pp. 2-3).

One flagship publication or key publication per period will be selected. For the first period, the World Education Report published in 1991 has been selected. "Learning: the treasure within", the so-called "Delors Report", published in 1996, has been chosen for the second period. For the third period, the flagship publication "Towards Knowledge Societies" published in 2005 will be examined. For the fourth period, the 2010 EFA GMR "Reaching the marginalized" has been selected. Finally, for the last period the key

publication “Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?” published in 2015 has been chosen.

As to the documents related to the international education agendas, the main sources of information related to the goals and priorities of those agendas will be analysed. In particular, the Jomtien Declaration and the associated Framework for Action for the EFA I agenda. For the EFA II agenda the Dakar Framework for Action will be studied. Finally, for the SDG-4 agenda the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action will serve as a basis for analysis. The analysis will also examine other agenda related documents.

Table 4: Working Documents

YEARS	UNESCO			AGENDA
	MEDIUM TERM PLAN	PROGRAMME AND BUDGET	FLAGSHIP/KEY PUBLICATION	INTERNATIONAL AGENDA DOCUMENTS
1990	25 C/4	25 C/5		Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action
1991			World Education Report	
1992		26 C/5		
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996	28 C/4	28 C/5	Delors Report	Third International Consultative Forum, Amman Communiqué
1997				
1998		29 C/5		
1999				
2000				The Dakar Framework for Action
2001				
2002	31 C/4	31 C/5		
2003				
2004		32 C/5		
2005			Towards Knowledge Societies	
2006				
			33 C/5		Global Action Plan

2007				
2008	34 C/4	34 C/5		
2009				
2010		35 C/5	EFA-GMR Reaching the marginalized	Enhancing the Effectiveness of EFA Coordination
2011				
2012				
2013		36 C/5		
2014	37 C/4			
2015			37 C/5	Rethinking Education. Toward a global common good?
2016				
2017			38 C/5	

3.4 Categories of analysis

The evolution of UNESCO’s priorities in agenda-setting will be elucidated through content and discourse analyses. In particular, the methodological framework of Krippendorff (1997) inspires the content analysis, while discourse analysis is inspired by Johnstone (2008).

According to Krippendorff (1997) texts do not have a single meaning to be found, recognized and described. A text can be read from different perspectives and, therefore, have different meanings. Content analysis then helps to recognize meanings from texts. Researchers have to select what kind of meanings they would like to find, recognize and describe from a given text based on their own research questions. Accordingly, researchers have to understand what kind of data can inform such meanings. Hence, they have to select the analytical categories through which reading and analysing texts (Krippendorff utilized the term “analytical constructs”). These analytical categories are the basis for data collection. They inform researchers of the different meanings of the texts. In order to collect data, text is coded under the different analytical categories. It implies that text, read from the perspective of one analytical category, can provide certain meanings, that is to say it can “mean” something. To these particular meanings, a code is

assigned, a “meaningful unit” (*idem*, p. 30). This recording/coding process “transforms unedited text [...] into analysable representations” (*idem*, p. 84). A scheme of codes is thus built to collect all different meanings from the different analytical categories. Finally, in order to make inferences from texts replicable and valid, “if-then” statements should be applied as rules of inference from these different meanings (*idem*, p. 35).

From Krippendorff’s perspective (*idem*, p. 18), “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of its use”. “Text means something to someone” (*idem*, p. 19). Since content analysis, from this viewpoint, considers the *meanings* of particular texts (*ibidem*) as valuable data from which to infer interpretations, five analytical categories have been defined in this thesis which will provide a number of key meanings for the interpretation of UNESCO’s programmatic documents. The categories that will guide the analysis relate to five main areas of the governance of education and have been constructed on the basis of UNESCO’s mandate and strategy (see § 1.3.3); they refer to: i) preeminent educational themes, ii) main global challenges perceived, iii) main values, concepts and principles promoted, iv) kind of agenda-setting activities, and v) budget prioritization. These categories, which constitute a complex picture of the Organization’s priorities in setting education agendas, will allow sense to be made of the texts, to ‘recognize meanings’ and to find data out of the text.

Likewise, discourse analysis has been chosen, inspired by Johnstone (2008), to understand further how meanings can be inferred from text and how it can be deconstructed. Indeed, from Johnstone’s perspective, discourse analysis, as a method, examines the aspects of the structure and functions of the language utilized to understand its meanings. The nature of discourse analysis data is “actual instances of discourse, which sometimes are referred as texts” (*idem*, p. 20). It is important to highlight that in discourse analysis “discourse” means “actual instances of communicative action” (*idem*, p. 1). For some scholars influenced by Foucault’s reflections, “discourses are conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking. These linked ways of thinking and talking constitute ideologies (sets of interrelated ideas) and serve to circulate power in society” (*idem*, p. 3). Since governance refers to the exercise of power and authority (see § 1.1.1), educational discourses

produced by an IGO such as UNESCO are thus an integral part of the broader framework of the global governance of education.

Discourse analysis methodology helps to analyse meanings and ideas beyond the sentences and texts because it provides the conceptual basis and tools to disclose latent meanings in the text. Indeed, discourse is shaped by the context, inasmuch as it shapes the context; discourse is shaped by the ideas, inasmuch as it shapes ideas. Hence, discourse plays a role in the production, circulation, and reflection of the main ideas, contributing to the collective identification of policy priorities in education, and particularly in UNESCO. In analytical terms, discourse analysis consists of dividing long discourse into parts, into separable meaningful units, and looking at the characteristics of the different parts, connecting actual instances to ideas and meanings. This division is performed through the analytical lenses researchers wish to apply and their research questions.

Using a combination of content and discourse analyses, the research methodology used for this work aims to recognize and unveil latent and manifest meanings and ideas from the discourse of UNESCO's political documents. In particular, all of UNESCO's programmatic and flagship publications will be examined using five analytical categories: 1) educational themes, 2) global challenges, 3) notion of education, 4) agenda-setting mechanisms and activities, and 5) budget. Each of these categories involves a particular way of collecting and analysing data by dividing texts into separate meaningful units (codes) and making abductive inferences from them.

EDUCATIONAL THEMES

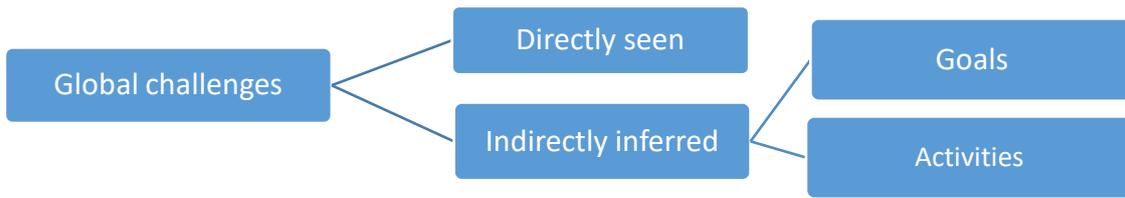
This category aims at understanding the educational themes and issues that UNESCO addresses and which are thus part of its programme. These educational themes are listed and coded as “preeminent”, “important”, or simply “mentioned”. Preeminent themes are educational themes that are mentioned several times and whose concepts span the documents selected. Important themes concern issues that deserve mention and analysis, but they do not shape UNESCO's work in depth. Finally, there are educational themes that are mentioned, but not further elaborated.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

As described above (see § 1.3.5), the global challenges perceived by the Organization can have great impact on the definition of UNESCO's priorities in agenda-setting. Analytically, two kinds of global challenges can be identified. The first concerns the global challenges that are defined as such by the Organization. A global challenge is referred to as something (a problem, an issue, a trend, a phenomenon, or consequences of these) that is collective, shared by, and affecting humankind, the human race, human beings, the world's population (or a certain section of it), the world context, all individuals, all Nations and all societies. The assumption is that these challenges are shared by a group that has something in common. From UNESCO's perspective, the group of "humanity", which is politically represented by States, shares a common future and destiny. Therefore, States share similar responsibilities and they should face the future collectively.

The second kind of global challenges are challenges or problems for which a particular activity or policy is created by the Organization. These challenges acquire the status of global in two ways: affecting all humanity, and calling for global actions and a global approach. Particularly emblematic is a passage written by former UNESCO's Director-General Federico Mayor: "the choices we are called upon to make today may have irreversible consequences for a future shared by the whole human race since, for better or for worse, the world is now a single entity whose problems call for a global approach" (UNESCO, 1990*a*, p. 12). These global challenges will be identified by looking at two different aspects: 1) the goals and solutions proposed to face these challenges, 2) the activities and issues that UNESCO proposes to address as part of its programme. Indeed, the goals proposed and pursued often reveal a challenge to be addressed. For example, if the programmatic document of UNESCO argues for increased access to primary education, or an improvement in the quality of education, it tends to indicate that low access rates and poor quality education are challenges to be dealt with. Moreover, the activities proposed in the programmatic document can reveal that special attention should be paid to a particular challenge. For example, if UNESCO proposes to encourage activities like establishing national committees on children's rights, it reveals that UNESCO perceives threats to children's rights as a global challenge.

Figure 3: Global Challenges



A coding scheme will thus be created. In this scheme, all global challenges perceived by UNESCO will be included. The following table shows an example of the coding scheme (see table 5).

Table 5: Global challenges coding scheme

Document 1: Global Challenges					
N	Code macro category	Code	Directly seen	Indirectly Inferred	Occurrence
1	Inequalities	Education of children with special education needs	No	Special programmes will be developed to serve children and youths with special education needs	1012
2		Education for vulnerable groups of the population	Yes		1114
3		Education opportunities for refugees	No	These activities will aim at reducing obstacles preventing migrants and refugees from having access to lifelong education	1242
4	...	...	...	...	...

Each of the challenges will be coded under the “code” column. It will be specified whether the challenge has been defined as a global challenge as such by the Organization under the “directly seen” column. If the global challenge is not defined as such, but it is inferred from goals or activities, the activities or goals will be specified under the “indirectly inferred” column. The exact paragraph (for programmatic documents) or page (for flagships) where the global challenge is presented will also be reported. Finally, once

identified and coded, the global challenges will be grouped in macro categories of challenges under the “code macro category” column. This process will be carried out based on the “familiarity” (Wittgenstein, 1974) of the challenges perceived following a logical-abductive process of inferencing (Krippendorff, 1997, p. 36). For example, if the text suggests that UNESCO perceives the education of disabled children, access to education for vulnerable groups, and education opportunities for refugees as a global challenge, it can be inferred that a major challenge perceived by UNESCO is that of inequalities in education. A list of macro categories for global challenges will be developed for each period based on the different codes of global challenges. These macro categories will serve as a basis for the identification of UNESCO’s priorities.

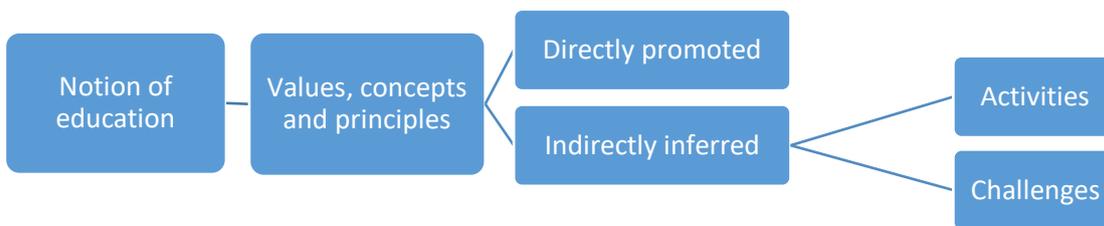
NOTION OF EDUCATION

In order to have a better understanding of the notion of education held by UNESCO over the various periods, the values, concepts and principles that the Organization has promoted in its working documents and flagship publications will be analysed. There are two ways of identifying such values, concepts and principles. The first is by looking at the values, concepts and principles that are promoted directly in the activities and publications. Directly promoted and asserted values, concepts and principles are those that are at the core of an activity and are clearly stated as important and relevant for the Organization. The text explicitly defines the values, concepts and principles that the Organization wants to promote.

The second way is by looking at the values, concepts and principles indirectly promoted. This means that they are not explicitly mentioned in the text, nor are they at the core of the process of promotion. These values, concepts and principles can be indirectly inferred from two sources: 1) the activities put in place in a certain field and 2) the challenges perceived as the most pressing for education. In fact, there are activities which, although not directly concerned with the promotion of specific values, convey values through the process of selection of some aspects rather than others. These promoted values can then be inferred by looking at the ideological bases that form and shape that particular activity. Taking the previous example cited in the theoretical framework of this thesis, UNESCO’s activities to provide technical assistance to Member States for the revision of primary-school curricula in order to meet local learning needs, conveys and promotes the concept

of relevance of education. On the other hand, the framing and identification of a particular challenge in education can also convey a particular value, or concept of education. For example, by identifying as a global challenge the presence of major persistent obstacles to the adaptation of educational content and methods to meet the challenges of the 21st century, UNESCO promotes the concept that education content and methods should be rendered more responsive to the current challenges.

Figure 4: Notion of Education



A coding scheme, similar to that of global challenges, will be created for the notion of education. In this scheme all values, concepts and principles promoted directly or indirectly by UNESCO will be included. The following table shows an example of the coding scheme for the notion of education (see table 6).

Table 6: Notion of education coding scheme

Document 1: Notion of education					
No.	Code macro categories	Code values, concepts and principles	Directly promoted	Indirectly Inferred	Occurrence
1	Relevance	Responsive education	No	Further steps will be taken towards tackling the major persistent obstacles to the adaptation of educational content and methods to meet the challenges of the 21st century.	1308
2		Education meets local learning needs	No	UNESCO provides technical assistance to Member States in revising primary-	1121

				school curricula to meet local learning needs	
3		Functional literacy	Yes		1210
4	...	...	...	...	...

Each of the values, concepts and principles will be coded under the “code values, concepts and principles” column. It will be specified whether the value, concept or principle has been promoted directly by the Organization under the “directly promoted” column. If it is not directly promoted, but inferred from the activities and challenges, these will be specified under the “indirectly inferred” column. The exact paragraph (for programmatic documents) or page (for flagships) where these values, concepts and principles are promoted will also be reported. Finally, once identified and coded, the different values, concepts and principles will be grouped in macro categories of concepts under the “code macro category” column. These numerous values, concepts and principles (promoted directly or indirectly) will be grouped into macro categories by means of a logical-abductive process of inferencing (Krippendorff, 1997, p. 36). Macro categories of concepts constitute the notion of education of the Organization. However, it is important to highlight that the notion of education of an Organization such as UNESCO cannot be reduced to one. It entails different approaches and sometimes synchronically and diachronically contrasting values. A list of macro categories of concepts will be developed for each period based on the different codes of values, concepts and principles.

An additional distinction should be made. Macro categories of concepts group together the values, principles and concepts promoted, as well as the issues that are perceived as important and need to be strengthened or enhanced. This means that UNESCO’s notion of education is formed and shaped by an assemblage of macro categories. Although the values, concepts and principles concerned are promoted with different degrees of intensity, they nonetheless constitute and shape the notion of education. Analytically, to identify macro categories of concepts, attention will be paid to the variables of frequency, intensity and cross programmatic relevance. Therefore, greater importance will be attributed to the values, concepts and principles which appear more frequently, whose promotion is direct, and whose meaning spans UNESCO’s entire programme.

AGENDA-SETTING MECHANISMS

As described earlier, a taxonomy of five different mechanisms of agenda-setting will be used to assess this process, namely: value setting, capacity building, goal setting, standard setting, and financial leveraging. These five mechanisms (and related sub mechanisms) will form the bases of this analytical category for examining the programmatic and flagship documents. In the same way as for the two previous categories of analysis (global challenges and notion of education), a coding scheme will be created (see table 7). However, unlike the previous categories, the mechanisms and sub mechanisms codes are fixed and do not change from one period to another.

Table 7: Agenda-setting mechanisms coding scheme

Document 1: Agenda-setting Mechanisms				
N	Mechanisms code	Sub mechanisms code	Activities	Occurrence
1	Value setting	Promoting and disseminating values, principles and concepts	Effective EFA advocacy and communication strategy developed and implemented	1123
2	Capacity building	Promoting best practices and information sharing	Good practices and policies on universal primary education (UPE) developed, analysed and disseminated	1124
3		Technical guidance, assistance, judgement	Countries will be assisted in developing effective national education systems, by providing sector-wide policy advice and capacity-building in education planning, policy, management and evaluation	1242
4	Goal Setting	Establishing an internationally agreed set of goals and support for regional and international plans and strategies	UNESCO intends to provide leadership in this process, in particular by enhancing its role as lead coordinator of all EFA partners, with a particular responsibility for maintaining their collaborative momentum	1132
5	Standard setting	Normative actions - Creating treaties	Promote the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)	1321

6		Producing benchmarks, data, standards, rankings and assessments	Benchmarking through surveys, research and studies will be carried out on the contribution of education to the fulfilment and practice of human rights	1411
7	Financial leveraging	Financial leveraging	In mobilising funds, UNESCO will liaise with the Fast-Track Initiative secretariat, donors and selected countries.	1121

The different activities of UNESCO will be analysed considering what the aim and effect of an activity could be in light of the agenda-setting mechanisms. Thus, virtually all of UNESCO's activities stated in its programmatic documents can be coded and catalogued under the five mechanisms.

As explained before, some activities are ambivalent and can pertain to different mechanisms. Thus, in order to pinpoint them, the context will help decipher the effect and the aim of certain activities. For example, the organization of a ministerial meeting is an activity which can be catalogued under the first mechanism (value setting), the second (capacity building), and the third (goal setting). The context, effect and aim of the organization of that ministerial meeting will shed light on the mechanism that this activity belongs to. If the purpose of the ministerial meeting is to sensitize policy-makers on some educational issue, the activity belongs to the first mechanism. However, if the aim of the ministerial meeting is to promote and share best practices, then it belongs to the second mechanism. If the ministerial meeting is part of a multiplicity of activities in order to reinforce cooperation between States for achieving EFA goals, it belongs to the third mechanism. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to distinguish one single mechanism to which the activities belong. In these cases, the activity will be reported under all the pertinent agenda-setting mechanisms.

Once all the activities are grouped, the preference for certain mechanisms will be revealed in particular periods. In addition, an analysis will be carried out on UNESCO's work for each of the mechanisms, looking specifically at the activities performed under the mechanisms.

In the annex, examples of the coding schemes for global challenges, notion of education, as well as agenda-setting mechanisms will be reported.

BUDGET

UNESCO's official budget will be analysed in absolute and relative terms. Firstly, the total budget will be examined, along with its regular and extra budgetary chapters, and with the share of the budget allocated to major programmes. The share of the budget allocated specifically to education programmes will be compared with the budget allocated to other programmes. The budget will also be compared over the years and with extra budgetary sources. Thus, the historical evolution of UNESCO's budget and the prioritization of Sectors will be traced.

An in-depth analysis will be carried out on the budget allocated to the education programme. The share of budget allocated to specific activities will be analysed, highlighting the activities which seemed to deserve more budget support. This information will shed light on the work that is given particular priority.

3.5 Limitations of methodology

During the development of the research, some limitations have been recognized. The first limitation concerns the sample of documents analysed. This limitation became apparent during the analysis of one of the agenda-setting mechanisms: value setting.

Indeed, as the theoretical framework explained, this mechanism is the most complex and regards numerous kinds of activities which also belong to other agenda-setting mechanisms. This research tries to understand UNESCO's work in this specific mechanism. However, although it was possible to infer the *activities* of value setting performed by UNESCO from its programmatic documents, it was almost impossible to infer what the *actual values* that UNESCO tried to set through the value setting mechanism and activities were. In order to understand the values set by UNESCO, an analysis of the content of each of the specific activities of value setting in which UNESCO was involved should have been conducted. The research might have included documents concerning the outcomes of the most relevant projects and activities related to value setting.

However, the incorporation of this body of documents would have been unfeasible due to time and space limitations and it would have created several methodological problems, such as the sampling of value setting activities and main documents, as well as the ownership of particular documents in joint projects.

In order to overcome this limitation a possible solution has been proposed. The research methodology requires the analysis of the notion of education held by UNESCO. This notion of education, which comprises values, concepts and principles, is derived from different sources. Among the sources of inference of the notion of education are UNESCO’s activities, which have multiple meanings that help shape it as a complex notion. Therefore, it has been proposed that the notion of education held by UNESCO encapsulates most, if not the same values and principles UNESCO wishes to set through its activities, including value setting activities.

The author acknowledges that there may be contradictions and there might be some cases in which the values set through the value setting mechanism differ from the notion of education UNESCO holds. Hence, in the “value setting” section of the analysis, it will be stated from time to time whether some activities of value setting confirm or refute the notion of education held by UNESCO.

A second limitation is related to the source of data for the different categories of analysis. Indeed, there are documents that may provide more accurate information on some categories rather than other documents and other categories. For example, the programmatic document delineating the programme and budget offers more information on the agenda-setting mechanisms and activities than on the notion of education, and more information rather than a flagship publication does.

This table shows the degree of relevance of the kind of publications in order to find information about the different categories.

Table 8: Relevance of documents for categories of analysis

	Educational themes	Notion of education	Global challenges	Agenda-setting mechanisms and activities	Budget
Medium Term Plans	Medium	High	High	Low	Low

Programme and Budget	High	Medium	Low	High	High
Flagship/ Key publications	Medium	High	High	Low	Low

4. CONTEXT

4.1 UNESCO

4.1.1 UNESCO origins, mandate, structures, membership and general history

ORIGINS

At the end of the Second World War, a worldwide impetus called for a restructure of international order. One of the greatest thrusts of this impetus was the creation of the UN from the ashes of the League of Nations. On 25 and 26 June 1945, fifty countries gathered in San Francisco to discuss the settlement of the UN in order to:

save succeeding generations from the scourge of war [...]; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom (UN, 1945, p. 1).

Furthermore, in this period other important IGOs were created that would have great impact on the international development landscape for the years to come. The proliferation of IGOs has been helped and encouraged by the Charter of the UN itself. In fact, in the Charter the creation of specialized agencies is strongly encouraged, and among the specialized agencies formed there is UNESCO.

The idea and the establishment of UNESCO resulted from a multiplicity of factors. Three main thrusts contributed to the foundation of UNESCO: i) the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, ii) Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace (1945), and iii) the Conferences of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME).

In 1921, the Assembly of the League of Nations adopted a resolution authorizing the creation of a “committee charged to examine international questions regarding intellectual cooperation” (UNESCO Preparatory Commission, 1946, p. 8). This committee was established in 1922 with the name of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation and it was an advisory body of the League of Nations itself based in Geneva. In 1926, the French Republic offered a branch Institute that had the aim of helping the Committee giving birth to the International Institute on Intellectual

Cooperation with the aim of fostering international understanding through the promotion of educational, scientific, and cultural exchange. Therefore, a first international organ was created that dealt with issues of culture, science and education. During the San Francisco Conference, Henry Bonnet, former Director of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation recommended that governments discuss the creation of an IO on cultural cooperation (Stanca-Mustea, 2015). The Institute worked from 1926 to 1942 when its activities were stopped due to the war in Europe. It re opened briefly from 1945 to 1946 when its mandate was finally incorporated in UNESCO's functions and activities.

A second thrust contributing to the creation of UNESCO came from the Americas. In fact, some months before the San Francisco Conference establishing the United Nations a group of twenty representatives of American Republics gathered together in Chapultepec in March 1945 for the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace. In the resolution "Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance and Solidarity" (Act of Chapultepec) are the basis for the endorsement by the American Republics of the creation of an "agency especially charged with the task of fostering intellectual and moral cooperation between nations" (UNESCO Preparatory Commission, 1946, p. 3).

A third and crucial thrust came from the evolution of the international cooperation in education in Europe. In 1942, the Allied Ministers of Education of European countries met in the United Kingdom for the CAME. The CAME had the purpose of discussing and exchanging views on educational questions affecting all Allied countries of Europe. From 1942 to 1945 they met, through Committee and Commissions, ten times. In 1944, the US State Department declared that it would participate to an international programme for education and culture for the restoration of Europe, collaborating with CAME and to establish a United Nations Organization for Educational and Cultural Reconstruction. This statement paved the way for the creation of an IO with culture and education in its mandate. Just after the San Francisco Conference, in July 1945, the British government, in association with the French government, and on behalf of CAME, invited all governments of the new-born UN to attend a Conference in London "to take steps toward the establishment of a United Nations Organization in the educational and cultural fields" (UNESCO Preparatory Commission, 1946, p. 4).

As a consequence of these factors, from the 1st to 16th of November 1945 forty-four States met in London and adopted the Constitution of UNESCO on 16 November 1945. The Constitution of UNESCO, which establishes the scope, the mandate, and the procedures of the Organization, comprises a Preamble and fifteen Articles. It came into force on 4 November 1946 after ratification by twenty countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, France, Greece, India, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America). The first General Conference of UNESCO was held in Paris in 1946 with the aim to determine the policies and main lines of work of the Organization.

UNESCO is officially a “specialized agency” of the UN and this relation is cleared in Article X of its Constitution:

This Organization shall be brought into relation with the United Nations Organization, as soon as practicable, as one of the specialized agencies referred to in Article 57¹ of the Charter of the United Nations. This relationship shall be effected through an agreement with the United Nations Organization under Article 63² of the Charter, which agreement shall be subject to the approval of the General Conference of this Organization. The agreement shall provide for effective cooperation between the two Organizations in the pursuit of their common purposes, and at the same time shall recognize the autonomy of this Organization, within the fields of its competence as defined in this Constitution. Such agreement may, among other matters, provide for the approval and financing of the budget of the Organization by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 16).

The relations between UNESCO and UN are regulated by the “Agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

¹ Article 57. 1. The various specialized agencies, established by intergovernmental agreement and having wide international responsibilities, as defined in their basic instruments, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related fields, shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Article 63. 2. Such agencies thus brought into relationship with the United Nations are hereinafter referred to as specialized agencies.

² Article 63. 1. The Economic and Social Council may enter into agreements with any of the agencies referred to in Article 57, defining the terms on which the agency concerned shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations. Such agreements shall be subject to approval by the General Assembly. 2. It may coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies and through recommendations to the General Assembly and to the Members of the United Nations.

Organization” which was approved at the first session of the General Conference of UNESCO on 6 December 1946 and by the UNGA at its sixty fifth plenary meeting on 14 of December 1946 with Resolution 50 (I) “Agreements with Specialized Agencies”. This agreement entails twenty-two Articles and it was further amended twice, in 1948 (adding the present Article XIII: laissez-passer) and in 1962 (deletion of former Article II concerning the procedure of admission to UNESCO of states not Members of the United Nations).

MANDATE

The mandate of the Organization is specified in the Preamble and in Article I (Purposes and Functions) of its Constitution. In the Preamble, it is stated that UNESCO is created “for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established and which its Charter proclaims” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 16). In Article I the first paragraph provides the broad purposes of UNESCO. Specifically,

The purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the Nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations (*idem*, p. 17).

The second paragraph provides the ways in which these purposes are to be achieved and it delineates areas of activity of the Organization: communication, culture, education, and sciences. The ultimate aim of the Organization is well expressed by the first president of General Conference Leon Blum:

The United Nations Organization and the Institutions gathered around it constitute a whole, which is devised for the achievement of one specific purpose, namely, the realisation of peace between peoples and the achievement of human progress; and in this whole task the part to be played by Unesco is not the least important. Nor is it the least noble, since it consists in creating the intellectual, moral and emotional atmosphere upon which the operation of the whole system rests (UNESCO, 1946, p. 8).

Julian Huxley, the first Director-General of UNESCO, prepared for the first General Conference a book entitled “UNESCO. Its Purposes and its Philosophy” (Huxley, 1946). In this publication he highlighted that UNESCO’s concern

is with peace and security and with human welfare, [...] its outlook must be based on some form of humanism. Further, that humanism must clearly be a world humanism, both in the sense of seeking to bring in all the peoples of the world, and of treating all peoples and all individuals within each people as equals in terms of human dignity, mutual respect, and educational opportunity (Huxley, 1946, p. 7)

It then added that “the general philosophy of UNESCO should, it seems, be a scientific world humanism, global in extent and evolutionary in background” (*idem*, p. 8).

As to the mandate on education, the second paragraph of the first Article of Constitution stated that UNESCO will:

Give fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture: by collaborating with Members, at their request, in the development of educational activities; by instituting collaboration among the nations to advance the ideal of equality of educational opportunity without regard to race, sex or any distinctions, economic or social; by suggesting educational methods best suited to prepare the children of the world for the responsibilities of freedom (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 6).

Therefore, promoting education for all, as a means to foster peace is the core mandate of UNESCO. However, in its book, Huxley delineated better the philosophy that should guide the work of UNESCO in the field of education:

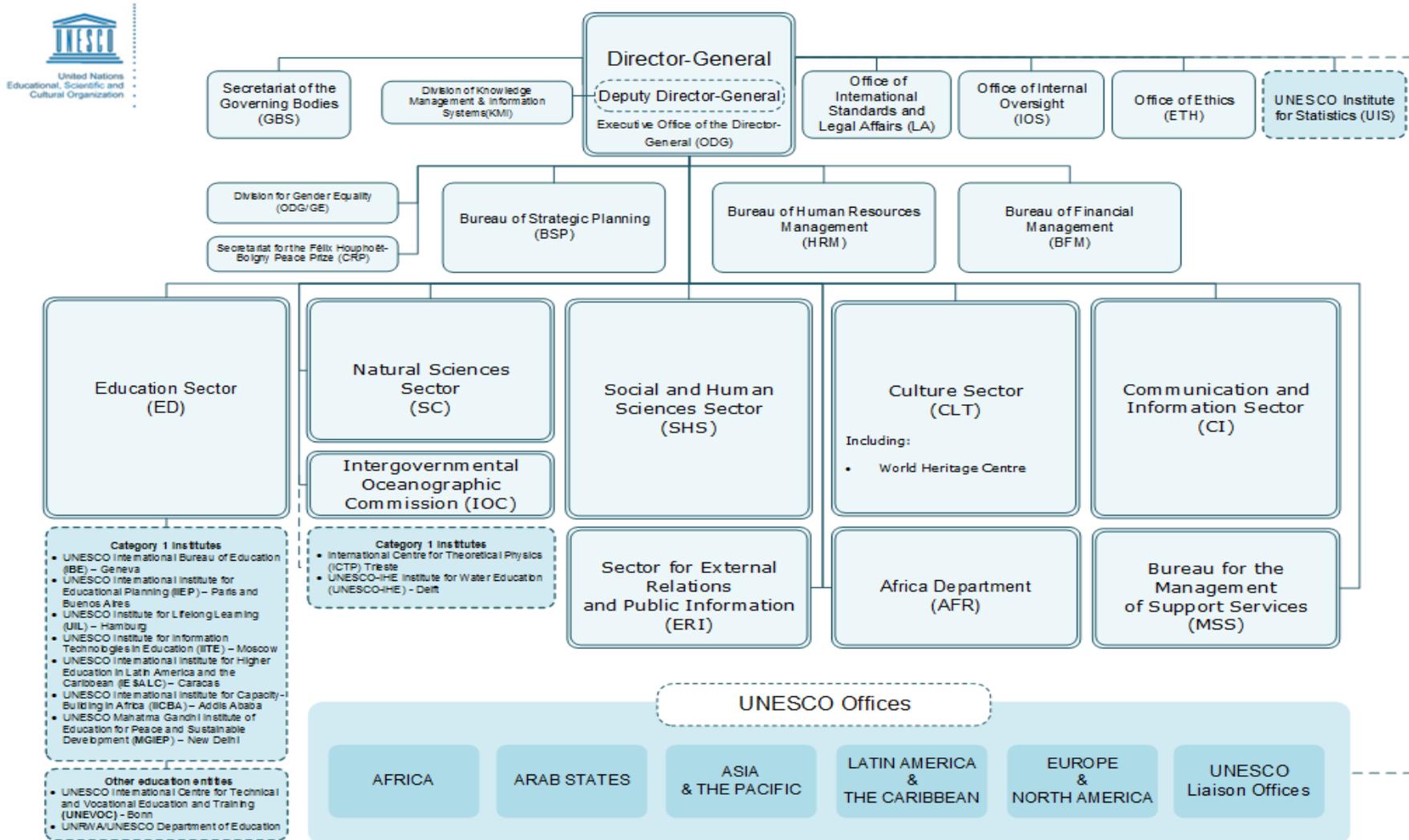
Education must seek not only to confer knowledge, skills, habits, and outlook upon individuals, but also to bring out and develop their inherent qualities and aptitudes, and to help them to realise their potentialities to the fullest degree possible. [...] Education must not confine itself to objectives that are practical in the restricted sense of having immediate utility [...]. On the contrary, it must include in its scope activities which are valued for their own sake, whether in the intellectual, the aesthetic, or the moral sphere – knowledge for the sake of knowledge, discovery for the sake of discovering, beauty because it is beautiful, art and music and literature for their power of moving the human spirit, morality for the sake of living a good life, nobility of character because it is an end in itself. [These activities]... have value in and for themselves, and that, for that reason, they must be included in our educational purview (Huxley, 1946, p. 29).

The mandate of the Organization is thus of intellectual cooperation and its role “is not, strictly speaking, to build schools but rather to help renovate education systems and instil universal values into them, update programmes and improve textbooks” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 1).

STRUCTURE

UNESCO’s structure entails Governing Bodies, National Cooperating Bodies and Institutes. The Governing Bodies are three and are the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat (see § 4.1.2), regulated respectively by Articles IV, V, and VI of its Constitution. Article VII regulates National Cooperating Bodies which are bodies whose function is to associate Member States “principal bodies interested in educational, scientific and cultural matters with the work of the Organization” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 15). Although UNESCO prefers the creation of National Commissions as National Cooperating Bodies (*idem*), it leaves to the choice of Member State to make the arrangements as suit their particular conditions for that purpose. During its 20th session in November 1978, the General Conference adopted the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO. The Charter entails five Articles describing: I. Purpose and Functions, II. Role of National Commissions in their relations with Member States, III. Services rendered to UNESCO by National Commissions, IV. Responsibilities of Member States towards National Commissions, and V. Responsibilities of UNESCO towards National Commissions.

Figure 5: Organigram of the Secretariat in 2017



MEMBERSHIP

The membership to the Organization is regulated by Article II. A State can be Member of the Organization if it has the membership of the UN Organization³. However, States not members of the UN may be admitted to membership of UNESCO. Their membership should be accepted by a two-third majority vote of the General Conference, upon recommendation of the Executive Board. In addition, UNESCO recognizes Associate Members, which are territories or groups of territories not responsible for the conduct of their international relations. The General Conference developed the Rights and Obligations of Associate Members during its 6th session. Associate Members have the right to participate in the deliberations of the General Conference and of its commissions and committees without voting rights. Members States of UNESCO which are expelled from the UN cease automatically to be Members of UNESCO. Each Member State has a Permanent Delegate to UNESCO which represents it.

As mentioned before, the founding States were 44. However, the membership grew almost constantly over time with 59 Members in 1950, 74 in 1955, 99 in 1960, 120 in 1965, 125 in 1970, 136 in 1975, 153 in 1980, 160 in 1985, 159 in 1990, 184 in 1995. To date, the Organization has 195 Members and 8 Associate Members, more than 50 Field Offices around the world and its Headquarter is located in Paris (France). During the years “some countries withdrew from the Organization for political reasons at various points in time, but they have today all re-joined UNESCO. South Africa was absent from 1957 to 1994, the United States of America between 1985 to 2003, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 1986 to 1997 and Singapore from 1986 to 2007” ([UNESCO website: The Organization History](#)).

MILESTONES IN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

UNESCO’s contribution to the development of education changed during its 70 years of history. As explained before, UNESCO was born as the agency of the UN to build the defences of peace from the ashes of a war that devastated the world. From the beginning “UNESCO’s approach was above all intellectual, ethical, and standard setting. Everything had to be rebuilt and started afresh: schools, universities, libraries and

³ “The Membership of the United Nations Organization shall carry with it the right to membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 7).

museums. And what needed to be reconstructed *in the minds of men were the democratic principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect*” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 2). In education, its approach was directed toward fundamental education. In fact, its first publication ever was entitled “Fundamental Education” (UNESCO, 1947). Fundamental education expressed the idea of an education on to which more could be built. It goes beyond literacy, mass education, popular education, adult education and provision of primary education (UNESCO, 1947). “UNESCO included fundamental education activities in its very first programmes” (UNESCO, 1997, p. 26) establishing a Regional Centres for fundamental education: one in Latin America (Patzcuaro, Mexico) and one in Arab States (Sirs-ek-Layyan, Egypt). In these centres, there were trained hundreds of teachers for fundamental education. Noteworthy is the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was still not drafted. The campaign for fundamental education took different strands. In particular the one on universal primary education recommending that Member States make free primary education compulsory and universal in 1948 and on adult education when it was held in 1949 the first Conference on Adult Education.

During the 1950s UNESCO managed to overcome the obstacles of the Cold War “by organizing exchanges of information and ‘joint studies’ between experts from East and West. UNESCO can pride itself on having organized [...] conferences which brought together representatives of Eastern and Western Europe and North America” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 3). This decade saw UNESCO particularly active in the fields of science and culture with the creation of the European Organization for Nuclear Research in 1954 and International Atomic Energy Agency in 1957 and with the idea of Common Heritage with The Hague Convention in 1954.

In education, particularly relevant was the 5th General Conference in 1950 held in Florence. In fact, at the same time it was held the “first conference of representatives of international non-governmental organizations cooperating with UNESCO” (Stanca-Mustea, 2015, p. 35) initiating the fruitful partnership between UNESCO and NGOs. In addition, the Conference endorsed the creation of the UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE). Now called UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) after a change in the name in 2006, the Institute was founded in 1951 and had the aim to promote human rights and international understanding in education. Moreover, the 1950s were years in which UNESCO disputed the concept of race producing series of declarations on race and racial

prejudice paving the way for the first Convention on education of UNESCO's history in 1960: the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960).

The decolonization process of the 1960s marked the history of UNESCO. In fact, "from 1958 to 1964 a total of 27 newly independent African States joined the Organization" changing the nature of the Organization "which went from being a mainly Western organization to being a truly Global Institution" (Duedahl, 2016, p. 151). This gave to the Organization "a greater universality of thought and action" (Stanca-Mustea, 2015, p. 59). As a result of these process, the specific needs and expectations of newly independent countries the focus of UNESCO efforts were pushed toward capacity-building and its actions in favour of development (UNESCO, 1996*a*).

This period also witnessed a rapid development of regional co-operation. For example, UNESCO organized three regional ministerial conferences in 1960, in Karachi, Beirut and Addis Ababa linking education and development strategies. "From this point on, education was considered a key component in any strategy aimed at the social and economic development of a nation" (Stanca-Mustea, 2015, p. 59). This decade was characterized by the first global mobilization to fight illiteracy and provide universal primary education for all. The 1960 Karachi Conference of Asian Member States created the first regional Plan for the Provision of Universal, Compulsory and Free Primary Education with long-term objectives to be achieved by the year 1980. In 1964 a five year experimental project was launched for combating illiteracy and in 1965 the World Conference of Ministries of Education on the Eradication of illiteracy was held in Tehran. Exemplary of this concern for literacy was the creation and first celebration of the International Literacy Day in 1967.

The attention to capacity building was reflected in the creation of the UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) in 1963 "that would undertake research and training in the field. It was agreed that the new institution should be multidisciplinary in character; enable experts to work and teach together and practitioners to take courses and gather useful experiences" ([IIEP website: History](#)). Another important milestone of these years was the creation of the joint UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers in 1966.

During the 1970s “the importance of the Organization as a forum for discussion and dialogue – and occasionally for confrontation – and as a platform for the expression of hopes and wishes of all kinds” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 3) was highlighted. New concepts and ideas in education were elaborated thanks to a major work of the International Commission on the Development of Education under the chairmanship of Mr Edgar Faure. In 1972, the Commission published the Report “Learning to be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow” (UNESCO, 1972) introducing the notions of ‘lifelong education’ and the ‘learning society’.

In this decade, UNESCO promoted physical education. In fact, in 1976 UNESCO hosted the first Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sports. Sport was seen “as a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and networks, to promote ideals of peace, fraternity, solidarity, non violence, tolerance and justice, and ultimately to serve as a catalyst for peace and development” (Stanca-Mustea, 2015, p. 101). In 1978 the International charter of Physical Education and Sport was drafted. The attention to physical education was linked to health education during the years of the expansion of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic.

UNESCO’s history in the 1970s was also characterized by a strong standard setting activity. In 1974, the General Conference approved the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education and in 1976 the international dimension of education was strongly reaffirmed with the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Particularly important is the beginning of the process of recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in different regions of the world. In 1974 there was the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by the one in the Arab and European States Bordering on the Mediterranean in 1976; the Convention in the Arab States (1978); and in Europe (1979).

During the 1980s “UNESCO restated its constitutional ideals of the promotion of human rights and the free flow of ideas” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 3). Particularly relevant was the repositioning in the field with a series of decentralization policies. Africa was declared as

the priority for the Organization. In this decade the process of recognition of degrees in different regions continued in 1981 there was the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States, and in 1983 the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. UNESCO embraced and supported the development of environmental concerns and helped in the process of linking development with culture leading the United Nations Decade for Cultural Development. An important standard setting instrument of these years was the first Convention on Technical and Vocational Education approved by the General Conference in 1989.

4.1.2 UNESCO governing bodies and working modalities

The governing bodies of UNESCO are three: the General Conference, the Executive Board and the Secretariat. UNESCO Constitution determines these Organs. In particular, it determines the Composition, Functions, Voting, Procedures and Observers of the General Conference (Article IV); the Composition and Functions of the Executive Board (Article V); as well as the role and responsibilities of the Director-General and Secretariat (Article VI). UNESCO has also developed detailed Rules of Procedure of the General Conference (114 Rules) as well as Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (67 Rules).

GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General Conference is regulated by Article IV of Constitution and by the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, adopted by the General Conference at its 3rd session. The General Conference is UNESCO's primary decision-making body, comprising representatives of all Member States:

The General Conference shall consist of the representatives of the States Members of the Organization. The Government of each Member State shall appoint not more than five delegates, who shall be selected after consultation with the National Commission, if established, or with educational, scientific and cultural bodies (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 9).

The General Conference meets in ordinary session every two years and it may meet in extraordinary session if it decides to do so itself or if called by the Executive Board, or on the demand of at least one third of the Member States. The General Conference "shall

determine the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 9). In particular, it approves and adopts two important political programmatic documents: the Medium Term Strategy (or Medium Term Plan) called C/4 and the Programme and Budget called C/5.

Other functions of the General Conference are: to summon international conferences of States when it deems it desirable (paragraph 3); to adopt proposals for submission to the Member States, distinguishing between recommendations and international conventions submitted for their approval (paragraph 4); to advise the United Nations Organization on the educational, scientific and cultural aspects of matters of concern to the latter (paragraph 5); to receive and consider the reports sent to the Organization by Member States on the action taken upon the recommendations and conventions (paragraph 6); to elect the members of the Executive Board and, based on the recommendation of the Executive Board, every four years to appoint the Director-General of UNESCO (paragraph 7).

Member States have the right to vote in the General Conference. Each Member State has one vote in the General Conference and decisions are made by a simple majority except in cases in which a two-thirds majority is required (Rule 84). In order to exercise its right to vote, each Member State must have submitted valid credentials, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference. It must also be up to date with its assessed contributions. According to Article IV, paragraph 8.(b), of the Constitution, “a Member State shall have no vote in the General Conference if the total amount of contributions due from it exceeds the total amount of contributions payable by it for the current year and the immediately preceding calendar year” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 10). However, paragraph 8.(c) provides that the General Conference may decide to make an exception to this rule “if it is satisfied that failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member State” (*ibidem*).

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board, elected by the General Conference, is regulated by Article V of its Constitution and by the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board. It is composed of fifty-eight Member States. The Members of the Executive Board should be elected with

balanced geographical distribution. The Appendix II of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference (Procedure for the election of Members of the Executive Board) defines the composition of regional electoral groups and the distribution of seats among the groups. In particular, Group I (North America and Western Europe) has nine seats, Group II (Central and Eastern Europe) seven seats, Group III (Latin America and the Caribbean) ten seats, Group IV (Asia and the Pacific) twelve seats, Group V (Africa) twenty seats. The term of office of Members of the Executive Board is four years. Members of the Executive Board can be re-elected.

The Executive Board meets in regular session at least four times during the biennium. It acts under the authority of the General Conference and it is responsible for the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference as the Article V paragraph 6.(b) states: “In accordance with the decisions of the General Conference and having regard to circumstances arising between two ordinary sessions, the Executive Board shall take all necessary measures to ensure the effective and rational execution of the programme by the Director-General”. Among the functions of the Executive Board are: the preparation of the agenda for the General Conference (paragraph 6.(a), recommendations to the General Conference about the admission of new Members to the Organization (paragraph 7), and the nomination of the Director-General of the Organization (Rule 58).

Members of the Executive Board have the right to vote and decisions are made by a simple majority except in cases in which a two-thirds majority is required (Rule 51).

SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat is regulated by Article VI and it consists of the Director-General and staff. The Director-General, nominated by the Executive Board (Rule 58 Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board) and appointed by the General Conference (Article IV paragraph 7 of Constitution and Rules 104, 105, 106, 107 Rules of Procedures of the General Conference), is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization. The Director-General is appointed for four years renewable once. Director-General formulates proposals for appropriate action by the General Conference and Executive Board and prepares a draft biennial programme and budget for the Executive Board. Director-General also prepares periodical reports in the activities of the Organization. The Director-General, or a deputy designated by him, participates, without the right to vote,

in all meetings of the General Conference, of the Executive Board, and of the Committees of the Organization.

The Director-General appoints the staff of the Secretariat which implements the approved programme by the General Conference. The staff regulations are approved by the General Conference.

PROGRAMMATIC DOCUMENTS

The first programmatic document of UNESCO is the Programme and Budget, the so called C/5. The Programme and Budget covers two years. The Programme and Budget is adopted by the General Conference. The resolutions proposing the adoption of the Programme and Budget are regulated by Rules 78, 79, 80, and 81 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference. The outline of the C/5 and thus the way of reporting programme and budget changed over time. However, it is possible to identify a general framework structure. The C/5 is divided into two sections: Section I Programme and Budget, and Section II Appendices. Section I (Programme and Budget) is divided into a (variable) number of Parts. Although the number and content of Parts have changed in the history of the Organization, the first three Parts remained the same. Part I deals with General Policy and Direction; Part II explains Programmes and Programme-Related Services; Part III delineates the Support for Programme Execution. The following Parts (the number of them and the structure of the items entailed in them changed from one C/5 to the other) are related to General Administrative Services, Maintenance, Security, Currency Adjustments and Anticipated Cost Increases.

Part II is divided into: II.A Major Programmes, II.B Programme Related Services, and II.C Participation Programme. Part II.A constitutes the core of UNESCO's activity. Although the naming and structure of Part II.A changed during the years, it is possible to draw a general structure comprised of five distinct levels.

Table 9: Example general division of five levels

LEVELS	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Major Programme	Delineates the area of competence of UNESCO	Education/ Natural Science / Culture...
Programme (or Biennial Sectoral)	Expresses the different strategic directions of action	Basic education for all

Priority, or Strategic Objective)		
Subprogramme (or Main Line of Action)	Explains the general activities that can support the directions of action	Providing basic education for all children
Main Line of Action (or Expected Results)	Delineates the precise activities that UNESCO will perform	Renewal and expansion of primary education
Expected Results (or Performance Indicators)	Explains the concrete results of the activities	National policies, capacities and indicators for integrated early childhood and family education reinforced in 10 countries

As mentioned, during the years UNESCO reformed its ways of working and reporting its activities: this implied also an overlap of definition and labelling. The following tables will provide examples of the structure division of Major Programme I Education.

Table 10: Example structure division 25 C/5 valid from 1990-1991 to 1996-1997

Major Programme Area	Major Programme Area I: education and the future	
Programme	I.1 Toward basic education for all	
Subprogramme	I.1.1 Massive reduction of illiteracy	
Programme actions	Literacy	
	Post-literacy and continuing education for youth and adults	
Objectives and output	Mobilization of world opinion, decision-makers and the international community in favour of the eradication of illiteracy	

Table 11: Example structure division 29 C/5 valid only for 1998-1999

Major Programme	Major Programme I: Education for all throughout life	
Programme	I.2 Reform of education in the perspective of education throughout life	
Subprogramme	I.2.1 Educational strategies for the twenty-first century	
Main Line of Action	Promoting education systems responsive to the challenges of the twenty-first century	
	Information and documentation services to sustain the renewal of education systems	

Table 12: : Example structure division 30 C/5 valid from 2000-2001 to 2006 – 2007

Major Programme	Major Programme I: Education for all throughout life		
Programme	I.1 Basic education for all		
Subprogramme		I.1.1 Providing basic education for all children	
Main Line of Action		Renewal and expansion of primary education	
Expected Results		National policies, capacities and indicators for integrated early childhood and family education reinforced in 10 countries	
		Innovative experiences and “best practices” in the field of early childhood and family education widely shared among policy-makers, practitioners and experts	

Table 13: Example structure division 34 C/5 from 2008-2009 to 2012-2013

Major Programme	Major Programme I: Education		
Biennial Sectorial Priority	Leading education for all (EFA) by ensuring global coordination and providing assistance to Member States to achieve the EFA goals and education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) based on the Global Action Plan (GAP)		
Main Line of Action		I.1 Global leadership in EFA, coordination of United Nations priorities in education, and development of strong partnerships	
Expected Results		The EFA Global Action Plan implemented.	
		Coordinated, harmonized and effective partnerships pursued within the framework of the EFA Global Action Plan for strengthened political commitment at the global, regional and national levels for the EFA agenda.	
Performance indicators		Number of countries where national plans and policies reflect a tangible political commitment to EFA;	

Table 14: Example structure division 37 C/5 valid from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017

Major Programme	Major Programme I: Education for all throughout life		
Strategic Objective	Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all		
Main Line of Action	I.1 Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all		
Expected Results		National capacities strengthened to develop and implement policies and plans within a lifelong learning framework	
		National capacities strengthened to scale up inclusive and gender responsive quality literacy programmes	
Performance Indicators		Number of countries supported by UNESCO in the implementation and scaling-up of gender responsive literacy programs	

The second programmatic and political document of UNESCO is the Medium Term Plan or Medium Term Strategy, the so called C/4. The C/4 outlines the strategic objectives and the lines of work for the Organization and provides a forward-looking direction toward which UNESCO should move in a longer period of time. The first experiment of programming beyond the (biennial) budgetary period was produced in 1970, and it was called “Long Term Outline Plan 1971 – 1976” (UNESCO, 1970). In this document the General Conference Resolution 33.1 was recalled inviting the Director-General to prepare a long term outline plan covering three budgetary periods. In this plan, the General Conference suggested to include: a statement of the objectives to be aimed; proposals for the activities through which these objectives can be attained describing the major fields of activities without suggesting particular projects; and an estimate of the financial implications (*idem*). However, the very first C/4 Medium Term Plan, as it is known today, was produced in 1976 for the 19th session of the General Conference (UNESCO, 1976a). In this first Medium Term Plan, the Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow asked why UNESCO needs a Medium Term Plan and he proposed three considerations. First, there is a discrepancy between the timeless and visionary purposes of the Organization set forth by its Constitution and the time-bounded activities of the biannual programme. Thus, the document C/4 can have a mediating character “constituting a link between the broad aims of UNESCO and the detailed biennial programmes” (UNESCO, 1971, p. 14). Second, it gives a systematic character to something already taking place in UNESCO’s discussion: a longer term vision in approaching to problems and programmes. In fact, several resolutions of the General Conference stressed the idea of keeping efforts more than the two years of the programme and budget. This comes from the recognition of the complexity of global challenges and the required solutions. C/4 might be the basis for searching debate on future activities. Third, Director-General perceived the need to avoid dispersion of efforts. The new problems coming at the attention of the international community every year result in the proliferation of projects and activities. In consequence, it is difficult to understand which activity might be abandoned and which new activity should be embarked. The Medium Term Plan establishes a basis and criteria for the choice of activities and ensures that the programme is focused towards the most significant goals during six years-time.

Moreover, the Director-General explained the relationships between the Medium Term Plans and the Programme and Budget: “the medium term plan is primarily a conceptual document in which the analysis of problems and objectives has pride of place. By contrast, the C/5 is slanted towards actions and it is consequently focused upon work plans and budget proposals. It fits into the framework defined by the C/4” (UNESCO, 1976a, p. xxxiii). Thus, since 1976, UNESCO developed Medium Term Plans (C/4s) which covered six years. Starting from 2014, the C/4 covers eight years. The C/4 constitutes the basis for the production of the C/5.

4.2 International education agendas: EFA I, EFA II and SDGs

4.2.1 International and global education agendas in 27 years

As noted in the theoretical framework, a global education agenda is an array (formal and non formal) of education policy priorities (material and symbolic) that are set by a multiplicity of actors, whose scope, scale, project and reach is global (Robertson, 2012), and that have to be done globally, requiring global commitments. It has been also noted that global education agendas could come from and take shape in different forms. Indeed, these global education agendas might derive from declarations, decades, treaties, multilateral agreements, international movements and initiatives, international celebrations, plans of actions, as well as internationally agreed set of goals, targets, indicators and frameworks for action. Global education agendas are not mutually excludable and can exist multiple global agendas at the same moment.

Literature has demonstrated that IGOs are one of the main actors in producing and sending into the global these education policy priorities. Although educational development and priorities setting have been an established sovereignty of Nation-States, with the expansion of multilateralism of the second half of the 20th century, IGOs have enhanced their role and influence in global education agenda-setting. In particular, the UN system entered the arena of agenda-setting, through a specific interpretation of its mandate. Indeed, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) stated:

The world conferences and summits since 1990 have been the best attempt in the history of the United Nations to give concrete content to these objectives of the United Nations Charter. Specifically, the first paragraph of the Charter of the United Nations expresses

the determination of the peoples of the world to ‘promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom’ and to ‘employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples’. Article 55, United Nations shall promote: a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development; b. solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and c. universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all (UNDESA, 2007, p. 8).

The UN, starting from the 1990s, increased its efforts in agenda-setting through the organization of summits and conferences, the establishment of decades, plan of actions, international years, as well as through the promotion of treaties and conventions. Of particular importance for the UN work was the organization of the Children’s Summit in 1990 which adopted a declaration, including goals and commitments and a plan of action. This Summit format served as a model for succeeding conferences. “As the conferences proceeded, there was a tendency for increasingly explicit commitments to be made, with time-bound targets and more extensive plans for national and international implementing action” (*idem*, p. 3). The UN agenda-setting work has generated “an unprecedented global consensus on a shared vision of development. These remarkable participatory processes, and the array of development goals that were agreed through them” (*idem*, p. iii), laid the ground for the international development agenda MDGs, as well as showed to the international community a particular way of setting global agendas.

Thus, the 1990s experienced a multiplication of sources of global agendas. A long list of them was produced with different geographical, temporal and institutional spans. Accordingly, sources of global education agendas increased. Global education agendas can be part of broader global agenda. For example, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development proclaimed the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. This declaration promoted a certain vision of development, and constituted a basis for global development agenda. However, this agenda entailed also educational components that were interpreted and used by IGOs to set educational priorities for global commitments.

The following table (see table 15) provides an overview of the multiple sources of global education agendas that were established during the years from 1990 to 2017. The sources

are divided in international years, summits and conferences, declarations, and conventions. Furthermore, the next table (see table 16) presents the most prominent international agendas which have educational components. Whereas some of these agendas are international agendas completely dedicated to education, others are international development agendas which entailed some educational priorities. The most prominent decades and international plans of action endorsed at the international level have been selected. Moreover, it has been included specifically the international education agendas in which UNESCO was involved.

In the years from 1990 to 2017, 220 different sources of global education agendas have been found. In particular, 69 summits and conferences related to education were held; 64 declarations adopted; 47 international agendas were established and followed; 25 international years proclaimed with educational components; and 15 conventions. All these sources can generate educational priorities for global commitments. However, some of them were particularly prioritized as instruments of setting global education agendas. In particular, the international education agendas EFA I, EFA II and SDG-4 were crucially important and relevant for the work of UNESCO in education.

Table 15: Sources of global education agendas

	International years	Conferences and summits	Declarations	Conventions
90	International Literacy Year	World Conference on Education for All; World Summit for Children; Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; 42 nd International Conference on education	Jomtien Declaration on Education for all; World Declaration and a Plan of Action for the survival, protection and development of children; Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries; International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
91			United Nations Principles for Older Persons; United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.	
92		United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; International Conference on Nutrition; 43 rd International Conference on education.	Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; Proclamation on Ageing; Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.	
93	International Year for the World's Indigenous people	International Congress on Population Education and Development; World Conference on Human Rights	Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on Human Rights; International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action; Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.	Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities; Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (UNESCO).

94	International Year of Family; International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal	World Conference on Education for Special Education Needs; International Conference on Population and Development; Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction; 44 th International Conference on education	Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education; Barbados Programme of Action	
95	United Nations Year for Tolerance	Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women; World Summit for Social Development	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action; World Programme of Action for Youth; Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (UNESCO)	
96	International Year for the Eradication of Poverty	World Food Summit; Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II); 45 th International Conference on education; Second International Congress on 'Education and Informatics'	Rome Declaration on World Food Security; Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements: The Habitat Agenda.	
97		Fifth International Conference on Adult Education; International Conference on Child Labour.	Agenda for Development; Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations (UNESCO); Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (UNESCO)	Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (UNESCO); Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education

				Teaching Personnel (UNESCO).
98	International Year of Ocean	World conference on Higher Education	ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	
99	International Year of Older Persons	Special session of the General Assembly on Population and Development; International Conference of Technical and Vocational Education	Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace	
00	International Year of Culture of peace	World Education Forum; Millennium Summit; Special Session of the General Assembly for the 5 Year Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	Dakar Framework for Action; Millennium Declaration.	
01	UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations; International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and	Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda; Special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS; World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; 46 th session of	Brussel Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries; Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations; Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium; UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS; Durban Declaration and Programme of Action against racism; UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.	

	Related Intolerance	the International Conference on Education		
02	United Nations Years for Cultural Heritage	Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children; Second World Assembly on Ageing; International Conference on Financing for Development; World Food Summit +5; World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio + 10)	Monterrey Consensus; Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation; Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing; United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.	
03		World Summit on the Information Society	United Nations Convention against Corruption; International Declaration on Human Genetic Data (UNESCO); UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (UNESCO).	Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO); Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage (UNESCO).
04	International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition	International Meeting to review the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; 47 th International Conference on Education; World Conference on health promotion and health education	Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (UNESCO)	
05	International Year for Sport and Physical Education; International Year of Physics	Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration; 2005 World Summit; World Summit on the Information Society; Second World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction	2005 World Summit Outcome; Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO); International Convention against

				Doping in Sport (UNESCO)
06		High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development	UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
07			United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.	
08	International Year of Languages	Second Global Conference on Financing for Development; 48 th International Conference on Education; International Conference on Prison Education.	Doha Declaration on Financing for Development; Political declaration on Africa's development needs	
09	International Year of Human Rights Learning	Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI); World Conference on Higher Education; World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development.	Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development	
10	International Year of Youth; International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.	United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals; World Conference on Early Childhood education.	Salvador Declaration on Comprehensive Strategies for Global Challenges	
11	International Year for People of African Descent;	Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	Istanbul Declaration on Least Developed Countries; United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training; Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS.	Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of

				Qualifications in Higher Education (UNESCO)
12	International Year of Sustainable Energy for All	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; International Conference on Alternative Development; Third International Congress on TVET	The future we want – outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; Lima Declaration on Alternative Development; Shanghai Consensus on TVET	
13			Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development	
14	International Year of Small Island Developing States	UNGA Special Session on progress and achievements of International Conference on Population and Development; Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States; World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; Nagoya Conference on Education for Sustainable Development.	Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014; Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway; Outcome document of World Conference on Indigenous Peoples	Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (UNESCO).
15	International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies	World Summit on the Information Society + 10 High-Level Event; World Education Forum; Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction; Third International Conference on Financing for Development; United Nations Sustainable Development Summit	Incheon Declaration; Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; Addis Ababa Action Agenda; Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.	Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (UNESCO); Recommendation on adult learning and education (UNESCO); Recommendation concerning technical and vocational education and training (UNESCO).

16		UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)	Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All: New Urban Agenda	
17	International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development			

Table 16: International agendas with educational components

Years from 1985 to 2020																																																	
85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20														
Health for all																																																	
International Plan of Action on Ageing																																																	
UN Decade for Disabled Persons																																																	
2 nd Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination					3 rd Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination																																												
				UN Decade for Cultural Development																																													
					Education For All I										Education for All II										Sustainable Development Goals																								
3 rd UN Develop. decade					Fourth United Nations Development Decade										Millennium Development Goals																																		
					International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism										2 nd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism										3 rd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism																								
					UN Decade of International Law																																												
					International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction																																												
					UN Decade Against Drug Abuse																																												
					2 nd Industrial Development Decade for Africa																																												
					UNESCO's Horizon 2000 for the promotion of African Languages																																												
					Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000										United Nations Literacy Decade																																		

4.2.2 EFA I - World Conference of Education for All and the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action (1990 – 2000)

In early 1989, the executive heads of UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank agreed to jointly convene the WCEFA (Little and Miller, 2000). With this agreement, the four agencies (which will be the “Main Sponsors” of EFA I) established an Inter-Agency Commission with an Executive Committee and an Executive Secretariat (located at UNICEF, New York) with the mandate to consult with governments, NGOs, and other partners in order to prepare the WCEFA in 1990, the same year of the International Literacy Year. The Inter-Agency Commission was also advised by an International Steering Committee, whose members were the main sponsors, co-sponsors, associate sponsors, INGOs, regional institutions, and the country representative of Thailand which would host the WCEFA. The Inter-Agency Executive Secretariat, whose executive secretary was Wady D. Haddad of the World Bank, organized three technical workshops which prepared two drafts of the Jomtien Declaration (originally titled "World Charter") and the Framework for Action. The Draft B of the “Jomtien Declaration” was “distributed to participants in the nine regional consultations and three international consultations convened by the Inter-Agency Commission between October 1989 and January 1990, as well as to participants in the World Conference” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990a, p. iii). The Inter-Agency Executive Secretariat prepared also the background document “Meeting the Basic Learning Needs: a Vision for the 1990s” (*idem*) which has been circulated among partners during the WCEFA.

The WCEFA was held in Jomtien (Thailand) between 5 and 9 of March 1990. At the Conference participated delegates and representatives of 155 Member States of the UN, 33 delegates of IGOs, 125 delegates from NGOs and institutions, and other participants from academia and members of secretariats, with more than 1500 participants. During the WCEFA, an Ad Hoc Committee had the mandate to revise the draft of the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs prepared by the Inter-Agency Executive Secretariat. The WCEFA had three principal aims:

1. highlight the importance and impact of basic education, and renew commitment to make it available to all;

2. to forge a global consensus on a framework for action to meet the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults;
3. to provide a forum for sharing experiences and research results to invigorate ongoing and planned programmes. (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 2)

The Jomtien Declaration and the Framework for Action were endorsed by the WCEFA during the last plenary session.

The WCEFA had three kinds of sponsors. The main sponsors were the initial promoters: UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank. As the initiative became important, other nine governments and organizations decided to join forces and became co-sponsors: the Asian Development Bank, Denmark, Finland, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Japan, Norway, Sweden, UNFPA and United States Agency for International Development. Then, there were other nine governments and organizations as associate sponsors: Australia, Canadian International Development Agency, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the International Development Research Centre, Italy, Switzerland, Bernard van Leer Foundation and World Health Organization (WHO). Finally, Inter-American Development Bank figured as Joint Organizer of Regional Activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

THE CONTEXT, GLOBAL CHALLENGES PERCEIVED

At the threshold of the century, much of the discourses around development became being oriented toward the new concept of human development. The overarching challenge and goal of the years was the one of achieving and moving toward human development. This is also reflected in the documents associated to the Jomtien Declaration and the Framework for Action. Human development was seen as the focus and purpose of any development action and this belief is witnessed by the statement of the UN Secretary General during the Conference:

The issues of literacy and basic education for all must constitute key elements of . . . a comprehensive approach to address the human dimension of development. This Conference is thus expected to have a substantial impact in shaping the international development strategy that will carry us into the twenty-first century (Perez de Cuellar) (*idem*, p. 9).

The background documents prepared by the Inter-Agency Executive Secretariat provided strong arguments on how human development is affected by particular global challenges the world was facing at the end of the century. Indeed, it opens with this statement:

On the threshold of the 21st century, the world faces major global challenges characterized by the threat of economic stagnation and decline; widening economic disparities among and within nations; millions of people dislocated and suffering from war, civil strife, and crime; widespread environmental degradation; and rapid population growth. These challenges pose problems of direct or indirect concern to all nations, although the nature, extent, and incidence of the effects of the problems vary according to each nation's specific conditions and societal context" (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990a, p. 1).

Human development required an integrated approach to development since it "has become abundantly clear that economic, socio-cultural, and environmental processes are closely linked co-operative and committed international climate in support of human development" (*idem*, p. 6). Hence, the global challenges directly stated in background documents with an impact on human development are: economic stagnation, economic disparities, marginalized populations, environmental degradation, and rapid population growth. These challenges pose problems on the quality of life of people, damage equality of opportunities and undermine State capacity to face human development challenges with the required long term vision due to the urgent interventions needed. Demographic growth also has been associated with raising demand for education and the number of out of school children rose during the 1980s. During the WCEFA, the belief in a people-centred development process, in which human development is at the core of economic and social development, is reiterated and it has been recognized the fundamental role that meeting basic learning needs has in improving quality of life, enabling continuing education and fostering human development (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990b).

The WCEFA final document reveals also other challenges perceived by the international community there gathered. However, looking at the different statements made by participants, it is possible to infer that although the goals, the visions, and the global challenges are unique in the final formulation of the Declaration and the Framework for Action, the intentions and the interpretation of these vary widely between participants. The approaches to education revealed in the different statements have important impacts on the spirit with which partners interpreted the goal of meeting basic learning needs.

Particularly evident are differences between Main Sponsors. In fact, while UNDP is aligned with the vision that education is a strategy of broader human development strategies (“basic education should be pursued not merely as a sectoral target, but as an integral part of a human development plan” Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 14), UNICEF was focused on its organization mandates, explaining that “the ultimate goal [...] should be] that children are educated: that they are literate and numerate, and that they have life skills” (*idem*, p. 15). The World Bank seems to have a strong economic approach on education stating that “investment in education produces high rates of return” and that

Ministers of Finance, as well as those working in development Banks, should be pleased to note that education produces substantial value for money. This is reflected both in national accounts and in individual earnings. As people are educated, earnings grow, so do savings, so does investment, and, in turn, so does the well-being of society overall (*idem*, p. 11).

UNESCO’s vision seems to be more human rights focused. Indeed, UNESCO’s Director-General affirmed that “our common objective is to mobilize societies as a whole for the cause of education, to reaffirm flagging commitments, to join complementary forces and demonstrate international solidarity, to co-operate and learn from each other, and before this century ends, to make the right to education a daily reality for all” (*idem*, p. 20).

Furthermore, the Declaration itself and the Framework for Action entailed the description of several global challenges. In particular, the Declaration and Framework for Action stated that the world is facing these challenges: i) access to schools for children and the related failure to complete basic education programmes; ii) adult illiteracy, particularly for women; iii) access to knowledge for a good quality of life; and iv) the fact that people complete education programmes but “do not acquire essential knowledge and skills”. Moreover, other concerns are presented in relation to financial constraints and economic disparities that persists in some areas of the world. In addition, population growth, conflicts of different kinds, and environmental degradation are recognized as factors that can damage the possibility of countries to provide education for all.

THE WORLD DECLARATION ON EDUCATION FOR ALL: MEETING BASIC LEARNING NEEDS

The World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, adopted by the WCEFA, consists of a “Preamble” and ten Articles divided in three parts: “The Purpose”, “The Expanded Vision”, and “The Requirements”.

The Preamble underlines three key aspects. Firstly, a precise approach to education is clearly shown. In fact, it is recalled twice that education is a human right. The Preamble of the World Declaration on Education for All opens with evoking the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its 26th Article which says that everyone has a right to education, affirming also that “[...] education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 42). Secondly, the Preamble of the World Declaration on Education for All urges for a sense of responsibility of all Nations to the global challenges the world is facing at the threshold of the century. The sense of responsibility appears from the recognition of the necessity to “give to present and coming generations an expanded vision of, and a renewed commitment to, basic education to address the scale and complexity of the challenge” (*idem*, p. 43). Finally, this Preamble openly and directly recognizes the fundamental role education plays in improving personal and social conditions. Moreover, it is recognized that cultures and knowledge (specifically of indigenous peoples) have a value and promote development.

The Purpose comprehends one article of four paragraphs. It gives the sense of what EFA is and aims. The overarching goal and priority of this agenda is that

Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decision and to continue learning (*ibidem*).

With this important statement, the Declaration affirms that everyone has the right to a tailor-made kind of education. An education constituted by learning tools and learning

contents, which enables people and improves the quality of their lives. Moreover, Article 1 further characterizes what basic education is. In fact, the educational opportunities that everyone should be able to enjoy must be relevant in the sense of being adequate to the specific context. Indeed, “the scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 43). Article 1 thus poses the overarching goal of the agenda. It is broad and encompasses purposes of education at both individual and societal levels. If the first paragraph strengthens the individual, urgent and fundamental end of such education, the other three paragraphs focus on the societal, human and cultural development that education for all enables.

The Expanded Vision comprises six articles which focus on five principles that constitute the “expanded vision” of education for all: universal access and equity; focus on learning; broadening the means and scope of education; enhancing the environment for learning; strengthening partnerships.

The equity dimension is here conceived both in terms of equity in access and in terms of learning achievements. In fact, on the one hand particular attention is paid to ensure access to education for girls and women, for underserved groups (among these there are poor, street and working children, people leaving in rural and distant areas, migrants, refugees, indigenous groups and minorities), and for children with disabilities; on the other hand Article 3 states that “For basic education to be equitable, all children, youth and adults must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning” (*idem*, p. 44). Another important component of this expanded vision is the focus on actual learning which results in the need for developing systems to assess learning acquisition. Moreover, the diversity of people’s learning needs is recognized, highlighting the importance of early childhood care, and of primary schooling, as well as a variety of delivery systems, such as non-formal and literacy programmes, through which the learning needs of youth and adults can be met. Finally, the Declaration highlights learning environments, conceived here as an enabling societal environment which can support the learners in order to participate in and benefit from education.

The last three articles addresses the requirements for this kind of education. This part of the Declaration argues that a determinant political will is needed to achieve this goal. The

policy context is perceived as important, and the national educational authorities cannot be considered as the sole responsible actors for meeting basic learning needs. In fact, it is recognized that social, cultural and economic sectors' policies should be supportive to realize and meet these commitments. Societies too have duties and responsibilities and in particular higher education institutions, which insure a strong intellectual environment. Finally, it is recalled that "meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility" (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990b, p. 48) and thus international solidarity should be strengthened. Moreover, with Article 10, the Declaration seems to affirm that education for all is a global concern and all aspects and all stakeholders have duties and responsibilities in their own specific spheres of actions.

Therefore, the right to education recalled in the Preamble should be intended as a right to basic education. A concept of basic education which goes, at least in the text of the Declaration, beyond primary schooling and entails the effective acquisition of all basic learning needs, regardless the time, space, place, and modality of their acquisition. A right to basic education that should be respected, protected, and fulfilled not just by States, but by societies as a whole.

JOMTIEN GOALS AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

The participants of the WCEFA adopted the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, which was conceived to meet the goals of the Declaration. In the Framework for Action the targets and the principles that should guide actions, as well as the roles and priorities at national, regional, and world levels are established. The Framework for Action was conceived not only for governments' action but for all education partners, and it was developed as a "reference and guide for national governments, international organizations, bilateral aid agencies, NGOs, and all those committed to the goal of Education for All, in formulating their own plans of action for implementing the World Declaration" (*idem*, p. 52).

As to the goals, it has been made clear that the overall and "ultimate goal" is one and ambitious: meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. However, in order to achieve this goal, each State should establish its own specific targets and priorities, based on the country needs and contexts. The specificity of needs based on national cultural, educational and socio economical contexts is recognized. In addition,

the Framework for Action suggests an intermediate goals scheme to adopt. The intermediate goals should have the characteristics of being time-bound, target specific and measurable (and measured).

Although the goal was one, and the targets should be developed by countries, the Framework for Action provides indication on six dimensions in which terms countries may want to set their targets. These “dimensions” became in the *vulgata* the six targets of EFA I. The dimensions were:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and development activities;
2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education;
3. Improvement in learning achievement;
4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate to one-half its 1990 level;
5. Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults;
6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development.

In order to achieve the targets each country may establish, the Framework for Action suggests some principles of action and priority actions at different levels: national, regional and world levels. The principles proposed underline the shared responsibility of all sectors of societies in education. Families, schools, communities, governments and NGOs should find cooperative, multi-sectoral and synergistic strategies to meet basic learning needs of population. The spirit of partnership should also comprehend bilateral and multilateral cooperation which has the aim to “help develop the endogenous capacities of national authorities and their in-country partners” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 54).

Hence, the Framework for Action recognized that, to be successful, EFA I has to be grounded at country level and that given the diversity of situation of countries it “can only suggest certain areas that merit priority attention” (*idem*, p. 55). At national level, the Framework for Action suggests to conduct needs analysis and defining what the basic learning needs to be achieved are. Partnerships is the *leitmotiv* of the priority actions at national level. These partnerships may be built between education stakeholders from IOs to communities and families with the aim of mobilizing commitments, efforts and

resources. Stress is put on developing a supportive policy environment. The complementarity between EFA I strategies and broader national development strategies is also recognized, highlighting how educational goals should be conceived and conducted in an integrated manner with other sectoral strategies. Emphasis is also added on the planning capacity of countries in order to increase efficiency of education systems, reduce wastage, and improve the conditions to meet the basic learning needs.

The same spirit of partnership is promoted at regional level as put forth in the Framework for Action: “Basic learning needs must be met through collaborative action within each country, but there are many forms of co-operation between countries with similar conditions and concerns that could, and do, assist in this endeavour” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 59). Regional cooperation in education is based on two pillars: exchanging information and experience, and undertaking joint activities. As to information exchange particularly important are exchanges on policy and technical issues with a view of using existing channels of regional cooperation for educational cooperation. As to the joint activities, the Framework for Action highlights six areas: i) training of education personnel; ii) improve data analysis; iii) joint research activities; iv) production of educational materials; v) use of communication media to meet basic learning needs; and vi) management of distance education services (*idem*).

At world level, the spirit of partnerships takes shape as “international solidarity”. The favourable historical conjunctures open possibilities of a renewed commitment for international cooperation, reducing the wastage of military spending to dedicate resources to “socially useful areas”, such as education for all. The international cooperation envisioned at the world level is conceived as being oriented towards building capacities in countries. Therefore, it covers areas such as “training and institutional development in data collection, analysis and research, technological innovation, and educational methodologies” (*idem*, p. 61), but also exchange on policy issues and maintaining the momentum, continue advocacy and building new partnerships. The economic issue is also addressed. Foreign debts and financial crisis associated to a stagnation of international funding for education have dangerous impact on the possibilities of some countries to meet the basic learning needs of their population. Long term commitment of development funding agencies and international donors is needed. These partners “should explore innovative and more flexible modalities of cooperation in consultation with the

governments and institutions with which they work” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990b, p. 61). The UN Agencies will maintain their long-term commitments toward the EFA I spirit.

FOLLOW UP

The Framework for Action ends with the “Indicative phasing of implementation for the 1990s”. In this paragraph, it is envisioned the decade divided in two phases. The first phase goes from 1990 to 1995 and it is the “First stage of implementation of plans of action” (*idem*, p. 63). In this phase, governments should set their specific targets to meet basic learning needs, development agencies establish policies and plans, and national coordinating bodies monitor implementation and propose appropriate adjustments to the different plans. The phase should end with a mid-term evaluation of the implementation indicatively in 1995-1996. Based on this mid-term evaluation, governments and development agencies adjust their plan for the second stage of implementation (1996 – 2000). Finally, “Governments, Organizations and development agencies evaluate achievements and undertake comprehensive policy review at regional and global levels” (*ibidem*).

At the end of the WCEFA participants discussed also the possible concrete activities for the way forward. The WCEFA endorsed the “Statement on the Follow-Up to the World Conference on Education for All” (*idem*, p. 65).

In the “Statement”, five follow-up actions were envisioned. The first follow-up action is at country level and it “may, therefore, be for countries to conduct a “needs assessment” to ascertain what resources are required to reach their goals” (*ibidem*). The second is still at country level but deals with establishing a “more effective co-ordination by agencies (multilateral, bilateral and NGOs)” (Little and Miller, 2000, p. 7). The third deals with regional cooperation and aims at providing opportunities for countries to consult in regional or subregional settings and share mutual concerns and knowledge on how multilateral, bilateral and NGOs can best assist countries. The fourth follow up action is at international level. The main sponsors of WCEFA (UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank) agreed to “increase support to basic education within each of their own planning frameworks, structures and resources allocation mechanisms, [...and] decided to meet annually to co-ordinate their own activities in the educational field” (Inter-

Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 65). Finally, the follow up statement suggested that “national representatives, multilateral and bilateral agencies and NGOs would wish to be part of a consultative forum which will aim at promoting the EFA goals” (*ibidem*). UNESCO was mandated to “provide appropriate services to facilitate the follow-up” (*idem*, p. 65).

Particularly important for the way forward was the idea and the following establishment of the International Consultative Forum. In fact, after Jomtien, a number of “structures” were established based on the “Statement” and one of these structures was the International Consultative Forum.

During the same year, in July 1990, the heads of main sponsors agencies met at UNICEF to discuss the follow up activities and plans. During this meeting the creation of the International Consultative Forum Secretariat under the auspices of UNESCO was agreed. The Executive Secretary was Michael Lakin of UNESCO. The heads of agencies met another time at World Bank in Washington in January 1991 and here they

...have agreed to convene the first meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All at UNESCO headquarters during the first week of December 1991. This forum will bring together personalities from each major region, heads of intergovernmental and bilateral agencies, and chief executive officers from foundations, the private sector, the media and NGOs invited in their personal capacities. The forum is intended to serve as an informal mechanism for consultation and information sharing among the diverse constituencies present at the World Conference and committed to the success of its follow-up (UNESCO, 1991*b*, p. 11).

In March 1991, the heads of UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and other sponsors issued a Statement of Solidarity to Achieve Education for All reaffirming the importance of basic education as a human right and enabler of human development. From this interagency statement the main sponsors, which will be hereafter called the “Convenors”, started organize the first International Consultative Forum on Education for All.

Table 17: Activities and events related to EFA I 1990 - 2000

YEARS	MAIN EFA I COORDINATION	PARTNERS INITIATIVES	UNESCO/UN MAIN CONFERENCES
1990	WCEFA		42 nd International Conference on Education
1991	1 st International Consultative Forum		
1992		Joint UNESCO-UNICEF Monitoring Project	43 rd International Conference on Education
1993	2 nd International Consultative Forum	UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA launched E-9	
1994			Salamanca Conference 44 th International Conference on Education
1995	Regional Consultations		World Social Summit 4 th World Conference on Women
1996	3 rd International Consultative Forum		45 th International Conference on Education
1997		2 nd E-9 Ministerial Meeting	CONFINTEA V
1998			World Conference on Higher Education
1999	Regional Consultations		
2000	World Education Forum		Millennium Summit

In December 1991, the First International Consultative Forum on Education for All was held in Paris. During the first international Consultative Forum, an Ad Hoc Working Group was created to decide the role of the Forum, the composition and membership, as well as the organization and preparatory work between fora. The Ad Hoc Working Group presented a report (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1991, Annex 2) which delineated its role as “essentially an advisory or consultative body and that its primary function is to monitor and analyse progress towards the EFA goals”. It should keep basic education high in the world’s agenda and function as a global catalyst and stimulus for action. The three key roles were thus monitoring, advocacy and promoting partnerships. “Senior Executives” should comprise it as well as persons involved in basic

education that can take actions within their governments or institutions. As to the ways of working, the Ad Hoc Working Group suggested that the Forum should meet every 18-24 months and it should have a secretariat financed and supported by all sponsors. In addition, the creation of a Forum Steering Committee, comprised by 10 – 12 members from IGOs, INGOs, multilateral and some countries representing the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was suggested.

After the First International Consultative Forum the EFA I initiative had an official structure with the International Consultative Forum, a Forum Steering Committee, and a Forum Secretariat. The last one was based and hosted by UNESCO. Between the first and the second Forum, the Forum Secretariat prepared a publication of the “Status and Trend” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1993) in preparation for the Second International Consultative Forum

to provide policy-makers, development practitioners, educators and other interested professionals, as well as the media, with a graphical overview of the situation and current trends in basic education using the latest available data for selected indicators” (*idem*, p. 5).

This publication delineated the major challenges toward achieving EFA goal. Particularly interesting is noting that this publication was the first ‘intellectual contribution’ for EFA and it has two important *foci*: the first one is primary schooling, considered as “the «cutting-edge» of basic education” (*ibidem*); the second was the notion of quality education. In fact, a dedicated chapter tries to solve the “puzzle” of how to measure quality. The issue of quality grew in importance and the Second International Consultative Forum, held in New Delhi in September 1993, had as the main focus the issue of “quality education”. In the “Summary of general conclusions” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1994), although the main concerns expressed are related to primary education, there is an important statement on quality education. In fact, the Forum implemented its consultative role by suggesting that “improvements in the quality of basic education can be obtained by carefully targeting resources and decentralizing their management” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1994).

However, the first phase of implementing EFA was characterized also by “non-Forum” initiatives. In fact, specific partnerships among Convenors were inspired by EFA. For example, UNICEF and UNESCO established the “Joint UNESCO-UNICEF Monitoring Project” in 1992, which had the aim to provide policy makers with conceptual and analytical tools to monitor the quality of their basic education programmes. This Joint UNESCO-UNICEF Monitoring Project lays its roots in a broader scheme of cooperation between UNESCO and UNICEF in education. In fact, in 1989, the two Organizations established the Joint Committee on Education (1989 – 2003) with the mandate “to facilitate a high-level exchange of views on strategies, approaches and new challenges in education and related areas of mutual interest to the two organizations and to expand the co-operation between UNESCO and UNICEF” (UNESCO, 1990*c*, Annex I) with no decision-making capacity. Another example of successful partnerships inspired by EFA was the E-9 Initiative.

Sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA, the leaders of Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan gathered in New Delhi in December 1993 for the first Education For All Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries. As the UNESCO’s Director-General reported to the Executive Board:

The goals of the Summit were threefold: (i) to strengthen political and societal commitment to EFA through the personal involvement of heads of State and government; (ii) to promote South-South exchanges on the design of effective EFA strategies and means of mobilizing domestic resources with greater urgency; (iii) to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to the goals of Jomtien, particularly through the provision of increased donor support for the implementation of EFA policies in developing nations (UNESCO, 1994*c*).

This E-9 partnership is one of the few structures that survived from 1993 to recent years and it has also influenced the creation of similar structures for other sectors, such as on the health sector the WHO organized the “Ten Largest Countries Initiative in promoting Health for All” (Little and Miller, 2000, p. 15).

Between 1993 to 1996 the Forum Steering Committee and the Forum Secretariat focused their efforts toward the organization of the Third International Consultative Forum in Amman which had a threefold aim: i) reaffirm commitments to the goals established in

Jomtien; ii) review progress towards these goals; and iii) find ways of overcoming persistent problems and confronting new challenges (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1996), as the indicative phasing of the Framework for Action established. In 1995, the Forum Steering Committee organized small-sized regional consultations to prepare the midterm assessment. In 1996, the Third International Consultative Forum was held and it ended with the Amman Affirmation, which highlighted the positive goals achieved, the shortfalls, the continuing and emerging challenges and the road ahead.

From the Amman Affirmation it is possible to infer that some changes in discourse took place. First and foremost, it has been assessed that basic education was interpreted as primary schooling. However, the Affirmation felt in the same mistake, in fact, showing the positive goals achieved, the indicators selected were just the ones related to enrolment in primary education. Another issue relates to the data provided: “the quality of data provided was questioned. Several countries and agencies stated their concerns about the accuracy and validity of the data presented” (Little and Miller, 2000, p. 16).

After the Amman Forum, the international commitments were focused on the preparation for the EFA 2000 Assessment. At international level a “Management Committee” was appointed.

The Management Committee was a subset of the Steering Committee. It comprised the development agencies directly contributing financially to the work of the Forum, four regional representatives and a representative from an organization of the civil society. The role of the Management Committee was to give specific guidance to the Secretariat with respect to implementation of decisions taken by the Steering Committee and to arrange for the funding of the particular activities. The Management Committee dealt only with matters referred to it by the Steering Committee. It could not generate its own agenda” (*idem*, p. 42).

At regional level, Regional Technical Advisory Groups were established to coordinate activities in countries. The Regional Technical Advisory Groups were helped and assisted by the Global Technical Advisory Group composed mainly by UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA and World Bank. At country level EFA Assessment Groups were

established which included technical sub-groups, an Interagency Working Group, as well as it has been nominated a National Assessment Co-ordinators (Little and Miller, 2000).

Before the end of the decade, in 1997, the E-9 countries organized the Second Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad. This meeting was the second official gathering under the auspices of EFA I, although, in 1995 the countries met in Indonesia for a Review meeting of the commitments taken in New Delhi in 1993. At this meeting, UNDP joined the three conveners UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA. At the end of the meeting, the nine countries signed a “joint communiqué” with the aim to “guide the nine countries in developing or implementing their national policies; to keep the exchange of experiences between countries focused on a selected list of items and, finally, to guide the agencies, banks and donors in their endeavour to collaborate closely with the E-9 countries” (E-9, 1997, p. 8). Particularly significant is the use by E-9 of labels that are utilized in those years in international cooperation in education, such as “reaching the unreached” or “inclusive education”.

Another important milestone for the EFA I follow up was the UNGA Resolution of 1997 which, recognizing and welcoming the efforts done in pursuing the goal of EFA I,

Invites Member States, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to further intensify their efforts to effectively implement the World Declaration on Education for All, the Amman Affirmation, and the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning and the Agenda for the Future of Adult Learning adopted at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, held at Hamburg, Germany, from 14 to 18 July 1997, as well as the relevant commitments and recommendations to promote literacy contained in the recent major United Nations-sponsored international conferences, with a view to better coordinating their activities and increasing their contribution to development (UN, 1997).

Close to the end of the decade, the Steering Committee organized ten sub regional meetings and five regional consultations in order to prepare the following World Education Forum, which would be held in April 2000. The Consultation would have been held between 1998 and 1999.

UNESCO'S ROLE IN FOLLOW UP

The Framework for Action and the Follow up Statement clearly recognize that UNESCO had an important role in the follow up of EFA I. In fact, the Framework for Action gave particular responsibility to UNESCO on the cooperation at the world level: “given that UNESCO is the UN agency with a particular responsibility for education, it will give priority to implementing the Framework for Action and to facilitating provision of services needed for reinforced international co-ordination and cooperation” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 61). In addition, the Follow up Statement declares that “UNESCO has offered to provide appropriate services to facilitate the follow-up” (*idem*, p. 65). However, what these “facilitating provision of services” and “provide appropriate services to facilitate the follow-up” meant concretely was not clarified further in the official documents.

According to Little and Miller (2000, p. 7), “the specific role of UNESCO in the follow up process was problematic”. For these scholars, this was evident in three aspects: i) the social recognition of UNESCO in the period; ii) the organizational priority of UNESCO in basic education; and iii) the UNESCO structuring of Education Sector. I) Having conducted an evaluation of the International Consultative Forum, Little and Miller presented how controversial was the drafting of the Follow up Statement, which saw UNICEF and World Bank advocating for having the Secretariat in U.S. while UNESCO, manifesting its mandate on education, advocating for having the Secretariat in Paris. Moreover, the evaluators expressed that “UNESCO’s reputation as an effective UN organization, was, at that time, weak” (*ibidem*). Through side meetings during the World Conference, partners achieved a compromise: “the compromise was that the follow-up secretariat would be *sited at and serviced by* UNESCO, but it was not *part of* UNESCO” (*ibidem*).

ii) In 1989, UNESCO produced the UNESCO’s Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 which was UNESCO’s plan to help Member States to eradicate illiteracy. One of the goals of the Plan of Action was to rally international community toward the goal of reducing illiteracy. As the Director-General of UNESCO reported:

Under these circumstances, it was logical and necessary for the Director-General of Unesco to take the lead in forging an alliance of major agencies to promote education for all. The World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs has this as its prime objective [...] For Unesco, the World Conference and its follow-up are key elements in the plan for mobilizing international agencies, and more particularly the United Nations family, in support of literacy” (UNESCO, 1991*b*, p. 4).

Therefore, the World Conference and its follow-up was seen as instrumental to achieve UNESCO’s own Plan of Action to Eradicate Illiteracy by the Year 2000 and not as a genuine contribution toward a Member State-created agenda. “For UNESCO, ILY and the WCEFA are components of the Plan of Action to Eradicate Illiteracy by the Year 2000, approved by the General Conference at its twenty-fifth session (1989)” (UNESCO, 1991*b*, p. 5).

iii) Finally, the Secretariat of the Forum was always poorly staffed (4-6 people). Although the agreement reached was that the follow-up secretariat would be *seated at and serviced by* UNESCO, but it was not *part of* UNESCO, the Organization provided and financed the staff for the Secretariat. Being paid and hosted by UNESCO created challenges for the Secretariat to be neutral and impartial during interagency disagreements (Little and Miller, 2000). In addition, Little and Miller stated that “On the one hand the Secretariat is ‘guided’ by the Steering Committee. On the other hand, Secretariat Members are ‘employed and paid’ and presumably managed and appraised by the host Organization [UNESCO]” (*idem*, p. 43). Thus, the entire work of the Forum could have been conditioned by the fact that the Secretariat was hosted at UNESCO. Finally, the Forum had to confront with heavy UNESCO bureaucracy which requested a big deal of staff time in dealing with it (*idem*).

However, UNESCO played an important and significant role during the years of EFA I. Indeed, the financial commitment of UNESCO was the highest of the Convenors since it staffed the Secretariat and provided in kind support to the Forum (translation, meetings, documents, consultants...). UNESCO also established important projects in support of EFA I such as the E-9 initiative with UNICEF and UNFPA. The Organization put at the service of the Forum its own mechanisms. For example, the follow up on the literacy “dimension” was undertaken within the existing UNESCO’s regional project for literacy, or the UNESCO-UNICEF Joint Committee established the UNESCO-UNICEF

Monitoring Project. In addition, the International Conferences on Education, the “new” International Institute for Statistics, and the various publications of the Education Sector of UNESCO (in particular Prospects and the World Education Reports) gave substantial intellectual and statistical contributions to the EFA I. These activities and knowledge production were of particular importance in defining, and further interpreting, the spirit of the goals and targets. For example, the focus of UNESCO put on the notion of quality had the consequence of capturing global attention on the quality dimension of EFA I goals.

GLOBAL EDUCATION AGENDA WITHIN EFA I

Based on these findings, on the analysis of Little and Miller (2000), and on the theoretical assumptions (see § 1.3.4) we could argue that the EFA I initiative, which was a collective agreement between participants of the WCEFA, entailed several global education agendas, an array of education policy priorities established for global commitments. The global education agendas entailed in EFA I do not correspond to the actual goal or the “dimensions” suggested for target creation.

In fact, this international education agenda showed three interlinked particularities: i) the interpretations of and approaches to the agenda varied widely among partners; ii) the goal of EFA I was one but it was flexible in duties and responsibilities; and most importantly iii) the tension between global goals and national autonomy was not resolved.

i) Interpretations and approaches. As previously said, each of the partners at Jomtien had its own organizational motivation to participate in the WCEFA. The different approaches to education was also evident in the perception of the global challenges that education should deal with. In addition, the choice of where to seat the Secretariat was not a trouble-free and uncontested exercise. Little and Miller (2000) argued at the end of the decade that each of the Convenors “shared the vision of EFA for different reasons that relate to their unique mission and mandate”, while Torres (2000, p. 22) declared that “Education for All proposal could and would lead to most diverse interpretations”. In her vision, it has resulted in a “downscaling” (*ibidem*) of concepts, expectations and actions of EFA I.

Table 18: Interpretation of EFA I (Torres, 2000)

PROPOSAL	RESPONSE
1. Education for all	1. Education for children (the poorest among the poor)
2. Basic education	2. Schooling (and primary education)
3. Universalizing basic education	3. Universalizing access to primary education
4. Basic learning needs	4. Minimum learning needs
5. Focusing on learning	5. Enhancing and assessing school performance
6. Expanding the vision of basic education	6. Increasing the duration (number of years) of compulsory schooling
7. Basic education as the foundation for lifelong learning	7. Basic education as an end in itself
8. Enhancing the environment for learning	8. Enhancing the school environment
9. All countries	9. Developing countries
10. Responsibility of countries (government and civil society) and international community.	10. Responsibility of countries.

However, the most relevant finding is that these different interpretations meant that within EFA I, multiple global education agendas coexisted, although all derived from the same Framework for Action and overarching goal. Each of the partners “utilized” the international goal to “globalize” its education agenda, to set into the global a particular education agenda which comes from the interpretation of EFA I.

ii) Flexible in duties and responsibilities. Related to the previous point, EFA I did not establish clear duties and responsibilities. It had no precise owner and each one of the partners (Co-sponsors, States, NGOs...) had to set their own intermediate goals, targets and action plan. The commitments were vague. Therefore, this international agenda seems to be more a platform for the establishment of other agendas. Hence, this vagueness was used by Conveners to shape and direct the interpretation of the content of the goals and the structures to set global commitments. For example, the International Consultative Forum Secretariat, under the auspices of UNESCO, was agreed by main sponsor agencies at UNESCO after the WCEFA. Moreover, the Forum Secretariat, between the first and the second International Consultative Forum, published “Status and Trend”, a monitoring exercise delineating the major challenges toward achieving EFA I goal. This exercise works clearly as selecting issues for public attention (Weiss and Ozgercin, 1989), setting therefore some priorities (in this case primary schooling and quality education).

iii) The tension between global goal and national autonomy. On the one hand, EFA I stressed the importance of a global partnership and that education is a global duty and responsibility: “Meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 60). On the other hand, in practice it has been completely demanded to countries to deal with the goal and to set its own intermediate targets “following” the dimensions provided. However, these dimensions were not concrete targets, nor followed the principle that education is a common responsibility. In fact, since it has been recognized the diversity of countries and contexts, the global goal and the dimensions could be interpreted in nothing but extremely different ways with different paths to achieve it. They are not unique and global, but diversified throughout the “locals”. Another important issue that revealed this tension is related to the measurement. Although it is recognized in the Framework for Action that levels of performance might be established, these levels of performance were left to the autonomy of States. Setting levels of performance and of the proportions of participants who are expected to reach these levels in specific basic education programmes was an autonomous task of individual countries. It resulted in an agenda with no global goal and without one strategy that unites partners to achieve that common goal. Thus, this global goal and strategy had to be interpreted, creating several global education agendas starting from the same international education agenda EFA I.

4.2.3 EFA II – World Education Forum and Dakar Framework for Action (2000 – 2015)

At the end of the decade, 183 countries prepared the National EFA 2000 Assessment based on 18 core indicators, which constituted the monitoring base of EFA I. Moreover, the Steering Committee of the International Consultative Forum organized five regional consultations and one E-9 consultation, held between 1999 and 2000, to discuss the findings of the National EFA 2000 Assessments and to prepare the World Education Forum. It also commissioned and prepared an evaluation of the International Consultative Forum (Little and Miller, 2000), 14 special thematic studies⁴, as well as 20 national case studies. The findings and discussions of the National EFA 2000 Assessments are thus

⁴ 1. Adult education; 2. Applying new technologies; 3. Children in difficult circumstances; 4. Decentralization and community participation; 5. Demographic transition; 6. Donor financing of EFA; 7. Early childhood care and development; 8. Special needs education; 9. Education in economic crises; 10. Girls' education; 11. Refugees; 12. School health and nutrition; 13. Textbooks; 14. Learning materials.

collected and elaborated in a “Global Synthesis Report” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000) which aimed “to assist in elucidating the major trends and the issues arising”. It was prepared as “a contribution to the reflective analysis that is needed in carrying the Jomtien agenda forward into Dakar and the decade following” (*idem*, p. 1).

During the preparatory work, the regional conferences, and the World Education Forum of Dakar, the main shortfalls and achievements of the past decade were analysed. The general impression was that the goal of EFA-I was not met but that important progress had been made. In particular, the achievements and positive aspects of the EFA-I experience were identified in four areas: 1) a general improvement in all dimensions suggested in the Jomtien Framework for Action; 2) an enhanced partnership and global action to improve education; 3) an increase in the global awareness of different basic education aspects; and 4) an improvement of the knowledge base on education.

1) General improvement in all dimensions. All preparatory documents seem to agree on the fact that there was an improvement in all dimensions of the Jomtien Framework for Action. In particular, more children were enrolled in school with a decline of out-of-school children population, early childhood education was expanded, the number of literate adults grew, and there were some reductions in disparities between genders in education. As the Global Synthesis Report assessed “the targets, although not achieved or fully achieved, are more attainable than a decade ago” (*idem*, p. 9). This progress, however uneven, was also reported in the Dakar Framework for Action, which noted that:

The EFA 2000 Assessment conducted at national, regional, and global levels shows that progress has been made over the past decade towards the vision reflected in the Jomtien Declaration. Worldwide, primary school enrolments increased by some 82 million pupils since 1990, with 44 million more girls in school in 1998 than in 1990. [...] At the end of the 1990s, developing countries as a whole had achieved net enrolment rates in excess of 80 per cent. Repetition and dropout rates had declined. There has been some improvement, albeit limited, in gender equality in primary enrolment in many regions, with the critical exception of sub-Saharan Africa. Early childhood care and education have expanded modestly, mainly in urban areas. Virtually all countries in the world have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and have thereby accepted an obligation to ensure the right of every child to a basic education. There has

been a gradual growth in non-formal education and skills training. While levels of illiteracy remain unacceptably high, a measure of progress has been achieved. The overall adult literacy rate has risen to 85 per cent for men and to 74 per cent for women (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 13).

2) Mobilising global action to improve education. The broad vision and the attention paid to collective commitments fostered broad base partnerships among all stakeholders in education. This enhanced partnership was favoured by the call for action that stemmed from the WCEFA. The Jomtien Declaration has provided the umbrella for international action in order to improve several aspects of basic education. It has served as a catalyst of international collaborative efforts and policy discussion and action. In this sense,

There has been a partnership for the design, steering and implementation of the overall EFA programme. The international agencies have sponsored, financed or undertaken projects, individually and collectively. A large number of NGOs have contributed by supporting and undertaking projects either directly related to or within the broad policy umbrella of the Jomtien Framework for Action. Ministries of education, health, agriculture and others have mounted special projects and monitored changes in accordance with the directions set at Jomtien. Individual experts, research agencies and others have carried out surveys and evaluations and produced reports (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000, pp. 57-58).

3) Global awareness. The EFA I also was successful in focusing global attention on some aspects of education that were previously neglected. For example, it reached the goal of capturing global attention to early childhood care and education (ECCE) and it is due to EFA I that there was an “increase global awareness of the importance of education and care during the early years and to encourage creation of programmes that foster such development and learning” (UNESCO, 2000*d*, p. 11). Moreover, EFA I fostered debates on the notion of quality education, on the issue of equity and inclusion, as well as promoted an expanded vision of basic education. In addition, it enhanced global awareness on the challenges that should be faced in meeting the basic learning needs for all. As the Dakar Framework for Action stated:

The many factors that impinge on the demand for education are now better understood, as are the multiple causes that exclude children, young people and adults from learning opportunities. The range of actions required to increase the participation and retention of

girls in school has received widespread attention. Knowledge about the effectiveness of teachers and other educators, the central role of appropriate learning materials, the need for a context-specific mix of ‘old’ and ‘new’ technologies, the importance of local languages for initial literacy and the major influence of the community in the life of schools and other education programmes has increased. The value of early childhood care and education for later school success and the need for strong linkages between the different subsectors of education and among basic education, health, nutrition, safe water and the natural environment have received greater attention and are better understood (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 13).

4) Improvement in the knowledge base. Associated with the previous point, the need for monitoring and assessments of results toward specific (although not completely defined) targets fostered the production and collection of education data, as well as the accountability in education. Great improvements were recognized in the capacity of States to gather educational data, in their analytic and evaluative capacities. The Global Synthesis clearly recognized that:

A global education indicators system has been produced despite the many difficulties encountered in gathering and verifying data. [...] Through the co-ordinated efforts to provide useable data, countries previously lacking necessary structures and techniques have improved their own capability and learnt a great deal about how their own systems are functioning, while others with advanced systems have shared their expertise and experience and improved their level of international understanding (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000, p. 61).

Despite these significant progresses and achievements, several challenges were also acknowledged. In particular, it has been possible to infer that the recognized problems were mainly related to six aspects: 1) the EFA I goals as well as the dimensions were not achieved; 2) the vagueness of the dimensions led to various interpretations of the commitments; 3) a lack of political will; 4) a stronger partnership needed; 5) the collection of data; and 6) the quality dimension of basic education.

1) Goals not achieved. Although there has been great progress in all dimensions, “none of the specific EFA targets have been met in their entirety, most notably the fundamental goal of achieving ‘universal access to, and completion of’ basic education by 2000” (UNESCO, 2000*d*, p. 14). Some countries showed that progress is possible, but major

inequities between countries and within countries persisted. In particular, basic education was recognized as harder to reach for women, people living in rural areas, working children, socio economic disadvantaged, people with disabilities, and minority ethnic groups. Moreover, “some countries and some regions experienced major setbacks, including declining enrolment of particular groups of students” (*ibidem*).

2) Vague dimensions and various interpretations. Although it was in line with the original agreements and expectations, “countries have not mechanically followed the Jomtien framework: instead they have interpreted and modified it according to their own requirements” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000, p. 9). In fact, the commitments of EFA I were not fixed but opened to interpretations. This favoured a restrictive vision of basic education to primary schooling and reduced the efforts toward the original vision set in the Jomtien Declaration.

3) Weak political commitments. Related to the previous point, the lack of political will was pointed out as one of the main causes of the (partial) failure of EFA I. Indeed, the commitments and involvement of countries were uneven. The Executive Secretary for the EFA Forum, analysing the past decade, stated before the Forum: “education may be high on the rhetorical agendas of governments, but all too many commitments remain unmet” (Ostveit, 2000, pp. 98-99). Moreover, a constant theme in the National EFA 2000 Assessments was the insufficiency of financial and material resources available to meet the EFA I goal (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000). The scarcity of financial resources reflected weak political commitments of governments to keep their promises.

4) A stronger partnerships. One of the limitations of this agenda was that the dimensions established were mainly thought for developing countries rather than for developed countries. Indeed, it resulted that developed countries often did not report their progress and it had the “consequence of the relative paucity of reports from industrialized countries” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000, p. 58). Thus, the experience of some of the world’s most advanced educational systems was not shared and these countries, while signatories at Jomtien, did not demonstrate commitments and sincere partnerships. Moreover, at the global level, the weakness of the structure of this partnership was acknowledged. Indeed, the International Consultative Forum Secretariat

had not any legal identity, it was mainly based and financed only by UNESCO, and it was poorly staffed. These considerations were at the basis of reiterated demands for a more effective global partnership at all levels.

5) Data gaps. Gathering and analysing data related to EFA I dimension presented several challenges. Indeed, many aspects of EFA I were not susceptible to representation through indicators. The qualitative aspects of the sixth dimension for example was hardly assessed, and the Global Synthesis argued that National Assessments included “relatively little data on qualitative improvements in learning by children, youth and adults” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000, p. 56). It resulted in an uneven collection and analysis of progress, as also complained during the Amman International Consultative Forum Meeting. Although advanced training programmes and assistance to countries for improving monitoring and evaluation systems were performed by co-conveners, some countries faced important difficulties in collecting relevant data for EFA I.

6) Quality dimension. With the weak political commitments and the restrictive interpretation of basic education to schooling, the quality dimension of education was poorly recognized. Indeed, “the primary concerns in many countries have been meeting quantitative targets of enrolment and progression, yet there have been many expressions of concern about the quality of provision, teaching and learning” (*ibidem*). Although the notion of quality was promoted and discussed during the three International Consultative Fora, this increase in the attention was not reflected in actual commitment at country level.

With these background analysis and consultations, in April 2000, UNESCO, in partnership with the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA convened the World Education Forum in Dakar.

WORLD EDUCATION FORUM. DAKAR GOALS AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

At the World Education Forum, more than 1100 national leaders and head of States participated along with more than a hundred Ministers of Education, the Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan, 7 UN agencies and the World Bank, as well as 100 NGOs.

The World Education Forum reaffirmed the “World Declaration on Education for All” of Jomtien: “the vision of Jomtien remained pertinent and powerful” (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 12). Moreover, it adopted the “Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments”, expanding and renewing the commitments and the strategies to achieve the EFA II goals. As the Executive Secretary for the EFA Forum stated: “the stage is now set for the countries of the world, individually and collectively, to adopt a stronger, more action-oriented approach to the goal of universal basic education. This is the purpose of the World Education Forum” (Osttveit, 2000, p. 99).

During the three-day Forum, the participants reflected on the challenges posed for education by the new international context, which was extremely different in Jomtien. This context was characterized by growing opportunities led by the rise of the knowledge-based economy, the increased pace of globalization, and the revolution in communication and information technologies, whereas inequalities between developed and developing countries persisted, several countries were affected by conflicts with a growing number of refugees and displaced persons, and poverty and HIV/AIDS remained deep scourges of humanity (UNESCO, 2000*d*).

During the plenary sessions and sub-plenary and strategy sessions, participants discussed four main themes: “equity and quality, effective use of resources, co-ordination with civil society and promoting education for democracy” (*idem*, p. 14). These sessions were particularly important in shaping the content and interpretation of the goals and strategies outlined in the Dakar Framework for Action. Indeed, the discussions were focused on the importance of equity, and particularly on girls’ education, of learning assessment and its role in enhancing the quality of education, the use of technologies in education, as well as the concept of inclusive education, which “has emerged in response to a growing consensus that all children have the right to a common education in their locality regardless of their background, attainment or disability” (*idem*, p. 18). Moreover, the importance of teachers in quality education was discussed, a child friendly educational environment, and the links between education and poverty reduction and development. The promotion of democracy, citizenship and peace, and the importance of health education were also important parts of the discussion. All these themes and issues were reflected and can be traced within the Dakar Framework for Action, both as EFA II goals and strategies.

The Dakar Framework for Action was short and comprised 21 points. However, it also entailed an expanded commentary which “provided details on each goal and strategy of the Framework for Action on the basis of the many suggestions provided before and during the World Education Forum” (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 11). It also included five regional frameworks for action and one ad hoc for and the E-9 group, discussed and agreed during the preparatory conferences and “which represent an integral part of the Framework for Action” (*idem*, p. 3).

The Dakar Framework for Action was defined as “a collective commitment to action. Governments had an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets were reached and sustained” (*idem*, p. 8). Although governments are the primary “duty bearers” of this agenda, the responsibility is shared among all participants of the World Education Forum, which form a broad based partnership among countries, NGOs, and international community. Whereas the overarching goal was still “to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults” through the reaffirmation of the Jomtien Declaration, the goals and strategies to achieve it changed. In fact, the Dakar Framework for Action set out six goals and twelve strategies toward which: “individual countries [...] *should* set their own goals, intermediate targets and timelines within existing or new national education plans” (UNESCO, 2000*b*, 15. Emphasis added). These goals and strategies are “global in nature” (*ibidem*) but they are more concrete and have more explicit targets for achievement than the previous decade (Osttveit, 2000). In particular, the Dakar Framework for Action established the following six specific goals, as well as twelve strategies to reach these goals:

Table 19: Six EFA II Goals

EFA II GOALS	
Goal 1	Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
Goal 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.
Goal 3	Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
Goal 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.

Goal 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.
Goal 6	Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Table 20: Twelve EFA II strategies

STRATEGIES	
1	Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for Education for All, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education.
2	Promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies.
3	Ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development.
4	Develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management.
5	Meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict.
6	Implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education that recognize the need for change in attitudes, values and practices.
7	Implement education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a matter of urgency.
8	Create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all.
9	Enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers.
10	Harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals.
11	Systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels.
12	Build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards Education for All.

Particularly significant is noting three overarching principles that should guide States' work in implementing the Dakar Framework for Action: human rights; role of the State and partnerships; and the conclusions of the Delors Report. Reaffirming the Jomtien Declaration meant also reaffirming the human right based approach to education entailed in it. The Dakar Framework for Action recalled repeatedly that education is a fundamental human right and the key to sustainable development. Indeed, education is conceived as

both a means to achieve other development goals, as well as an “end in itself: it should focus on the substance of what is learnt” (Gandolfi, 2006, p. 57). Great attention is paid to the role of the State and the partnerships it has to establish. Indeed, the Expanded Commentary of the Dakar Framework for Action explicitly stated that “the indispensable role of the state in education must be supplemented and supported by bold and comprehensive educational partnerships at all levels of society. Education for All implies the involvement and commitment of all to education” (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 12). In particular, it is stressed the idea that the “heart of EFA activity lies at the country level” (*idem*, p. 22) and countries have the ultimate responsibility in ensuring the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action. For this reason, among the commitments entailed within the Framework for Action there is that countries had to prepare National EFA Plans by 2002. These National EFA Plans are needed to ensure a more comprehensive and strategic partnership among States and international partners. The four pillars of Delors are fully integrated in the EFA II agenda. Indeed, the Framework for Action explicitly said that the basic learning needs in their fullest sense “include learning to know, to do, to live together and to be” (*idem*, p. 8). As the Global Synthesis put it: “in short, the four ‘Delors pillars’ – learning to know; learning to do; learning to live together; learning to be - are all basic” (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 2000, p. 7).

The Dakar Framework for Action reinforced the expanded vision of basic education, aimed at comprehending educational issues such as democratic citizenship (Gandolfi, 2006), health education, and an education that empowers individuals and communities transforming their lives. The education envisioned is strongly related to the cultural, social and human development, and it is the key element of peace and sustainable development.

Although the goals have still areas of vagueness, the Expanded Commentary helped in providing a more focused and unique interpretation of them. For example, the elusive goal 6 related to quality is provided with eight aspects that determined successful education programmes, a measure of quality:

- (1) healthy, well-nourished and motivated students;
- (2) well-trained teachers and active learning techniques;
- (3) adequate facilities and learning materials;
- (4) a relevant

curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; (5) an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe; (6) a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values; (7) participatory governance and management; and (8) respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 17).

Important were the twelve strategies since they were developed as the key and critical enablers to achieve the goals, building on the lessons learnt from the previous decade. In fact, some of these strategies dealt with the challenges and shortfalls perceived of the EFA I. In particular, the first strategy is an overarching strategy. It reaffirmed that EFA II can be achieved only by political will and commitments at all levels. Moreover, it affirmed an important principle for the follow up of the agenda: “No countries seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources” (*idem*, p. 18). Indeed, this principle faced the serious financial challenge that prevented some countries from achieving EFA I.

FOLLOW UP

With the adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action, the Forum participants collectively committed themselves to attain the six specific goals entailed in it. This agenda had a time span of 15 years, while some of the goals and commitments had to be achieved before 2015. Indeed, the fifth goal aimed to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. Moreover, States were requested to develop National EFA II Plans by 2002.

Building on the achievements of the previous decade, follow up activities were structured at all levels, from national to international levels. The Dakar Framework for Action, as well as the expanded commentary, was deeply focused on developing the ways in which these commitments can be maintained. In fact, on the one hand, it set the twelve strategies, on the other, it designed several follow up activities. In particular, the last strategy explicitly dealt with the mechanisms to achieve EFA II:

Implementation of the preceding goals and strategies will require national, regional and international mechanisms to be galvanized immediately. To be most effective these mechanisms will be participatory and, wherever possible, build on what already exists.

They will include representatives of all stakeholders and partners and they will operate in transparent and accountable ways. They will respond comprehensively to the word and spirit of the Jomtien Declaration and this Dakar Framework for Action. The functions of these mechanisms will include, to varying degrees, advocacy, resource mobilization, monitoring, and EFA knowledge generation and sharing (UNESCO, 2000b, p. 10).

The Framework for Action emphasized that the heart of EFA II activity lies at the country level. Thus, countries were requested to establish (or strengthen) National EFA Fora, and to develop National EFA Plans by 2002 which should “give substance and form to the goals and strategies set out in this framework for action” (*idem*, p. 9). Moreover, these plans had to be integrated into a wider poverty reduction strategy and framework. Regional and sub regional activities should therefore be aligned with the national plans and should “be based on existing regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives” (*ibidem*). Thus, regions had to find a lead EFA II network to become the “official” EFA regional forum that should be linked to the national fora.

There are several differences between the Jomtien Framework for Action and the Dakar Framework for Action in relation to the follow up activities. As the Director-General stated:

The Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) differs in some important respects from that of Jomtien. Unlike the Jomtien World Declaration, the Dakar Framework does not include a timeline of follow-up activities. On the other hand, the Dakar Framework has a stronger emphasis on the need for (financial) resources, on the EFA challenge in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and on the education of girls as well as an explicit acknowledgement of “globalization” and a particular emphasis on the need for EFA plans to be integrated into wider poverty reduction frameworks (UNESCO, 2004c, p. 2).

One important difference is the role envisioned for UNESCO. At the international level, the global coordination was mandated to UNESCO. As expressed by the Dakar Framework for Action, there are two paragraphs essentially focused on UNESCO’s role:

UNESCO will continue its mandated role in co-ordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. In line with this, UNESCO's 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 mobilization. Informed by a

monitoring report from the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and, in particular, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and inputs from Regional and Subregional EFA Forums, it will also be an opportunity to hold the global community to account for commitments made in Dakar. It will be composed of highest-level leaders from governments and civil society of developing and developed countries, and from development agencies.

[...] UNESCO will serve as the Secretariat. It will refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work. This will involve working groups on each of the six goals adopted at Dakar. This Secretariat will work closely with other organizations and may include staff seconded from them (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 10).

Thus, UNESCO's role was twofold: 1) coordinating EFA partners and maintaining collaborative momentum, and 2) "refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work". Whereas at Jomtien, and during the first meeting of the co conveners in 1991, it was agreed that UNESCO served as the Secretariat for the International Consultative Forum, according to the Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO served as the Secretariat, which informally became the Secretariat of the entire EFA II agenda. Thus, some of the initiatives already established by UNESCO, such as the E-9 and the Collective Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations (CCNGOs), were merged into EFA II coordination architecture and became officially part of EFA II. Moreover, the Follow up Statement in Jomtien requested all development partners to enhance their contribution to education for all, while in the Dakar Framework for Action it should be a duty only for UNESCO.

The history of the global coordination of EFA II cannot be dissociated from the history of UNESCO's role in coordinating EFA II. Thus, it can be inferred that the global coordination architecture of EFA II can be almost equated with the work that UNESCO carried out on coordinating EFA II (except for few important initiatives).

The global coordination architecture of EFA II changed and evolved during the years and it was comprised by coordination structures and initiatives.

Table 21: EFA II Coordination Structures.

Structure	Level	Description
High Level Group	Global	In accordance with the precise mandate established in the Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO convened “annually a high-level, small and flexible group. It will serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization” (UNESCO, 2000 <i>b</i> , p. 10). High-level representatives from national governments, development agencies, UN agencies, civil society and the private sector composed it. Main Tasks: generate political momentum and mobilize financial, technical and political support towards the achievement of the EFA goals. Established by UNESCO (2001 – 2011). 10 meetings: 2001, France; 2002, Nigeria; 2003, New Delhi; 2004, Brazil; 2005, China; 2006, Egypt; 2007, Senegal; 2008, Norway; 2010, Ethiopia; 2011, Thailand.
Working Group	Global	This Group had a rather informal nature, with consultative and professional function. It comprises various constituencies representing governments, regional bodies, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, civil society, NGOs and the private sector from IGOs to Academia, and during the years demonstrated its ability to orient the agenda and pointing some directions for action. It had the purposes of developing and discussing “a common framework of knowledge and understanding of what is happening in specific countries, regions and organizations”, as well as “to discuss issues which are critical for bringing the EFA movement forward and to make recommendations for action in these areas” (UNESCO, 2000 <i>e</i> , p. 3). The main tasks of the Working Group was to provide technical guidance to all partners in the EFA movement and facilitate information exchange. Established by UNESCO (2000 – 2011). 11 annual meetings in Paris.
International Advisory Panel	Global	Established by the Director-General of UNESCO in 2007 (ended in 2011), it was comprised by high level representative of EFA II partners, with the purpose to advise UNESCO in the coordination of EFA II and to prepare the agenda and the Communiqué of the High Level Group. The Panel constituted a “structure year-round consultation and follow up process among a representative group of the main EFA partners” (UNESCO, 2008 <i>c</i> , p. 2).
CCNGO/EFA	Global	The Collective Consultation of NGOs was a project created in 1984 by the Education Sector of UNESCO in order to create a “collective consultation mechanism to facilitate dialogue between UNESCO and NGOs on the theme of basic education” (UNESCO, 2002 <i>f</i> , p. 1). With the establishment of the EFA I and EFA II agendas UNESCO modified CCNGOs working procedures in order to adapt it as a mechanism to include

		civil society in the coordination of EFA II. The CCNGO had a Coordination Group and they met in annual meeting 4 times during the EFA II period.
E-9 Initiative	Global	Established by UNESCO and UNICEF in 1993, this structured initiative bring together the ministers of the 9 most populous developing countries with the aim of sharing best practices, holding each other accountable, monitoring progress and finding common solutions to the common problems. With the establishment of the EFA II agenda, this initiative became part of the broader global architecture of EFA II coordination. The “Ministerial Review Meeting” was held 7 times: 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014.
High Level Forum	Global	Established in 2012 after the reform process of the global EFA II coordination architecture, it had the purpose of high level advocacy. During this Forum were invited world leaders and champions of education. Conceive to be annual, the first and unique meeting recorded was held in 2012 at the launch of GEFI.
EFA Steering committee	Global	Established by UNESCO in 2012 after the reform process, the Steering Committee substituted the International Advisory Panel. It aimed to provide strategic direction, monitor progress in the period up to 2015 and beyond, and advise on how to facilitate urgent and strategic actions to achieve EFA II goals. It was a small group of 20 people of mixed constituencies. The Steering Committee prepared the Global EFA Meeting and the High Level Forum and met three times a year.
Global EFA Meeting	Global	Established by UNESCO in 2012 after the reform process, The Global EFA Meeting is a biennial meeting that merged the functions of the High Level Group and the Working Group. With a technical and political component, it had the aim of “critically review the world’s progress toward the six EFA goals [...], and to hold the global community accountable” (UNESCO, 2011a, p. 4). The Global EFA Meeting was held twice in 2012 and in 2014.
Regional EFA Fora	Regional	Established by regional partners, they changed over time. Regional fora would serve as catalyst of information from national fora and report to the global coordination mechanisms. Here below a list of some of the existing regional fora. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARABEFA, the EFA Forum for the Arab States. • The Subregional Forum for East and South-East Asia (SRF) • The country-driven subregional forum for South Asia • The Central Asia Education Forum • Regional meetings of African EFA National Coordinators

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-agency Regional Group on EFA in Latin America and the Caribbean
National EFA Fora	National	Established by partners at national level.

Table 22: EFA II Initiatives

Initiative	Description
Global Monitoring Report	The EFA Global Monitoring Report was produced by an independent international team based in and hosted by UNESCO. The report aimed at presenting the progress of the EFA II movement, monitoring and underlying important trends and findings. Used as a key document for the High Level Group, it was conceived as a tool for advocacy and information sharing. The Team was established by UNESCO, UNICEF and the WB in 2001, while the first report was published in 2002.
Global Action Week	Established in collaboration between UNESCO and the Global Campaign for Education, the EFA Global Action Week was an international campaign to raise awareness and mobilize action on the goals of EFA II agenda. It had a global advocacy purpose to held governments accountable for their commitments. It was organized in the anniversary of the Dakar World Education Forum.
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) / GPE	Launched at the meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank in April 2002, the EFA-FTI aimed at providing countries with the necessary resources they need to achieve the goal of universal primary education. After a reform process, it changed its governance structures, modalities of action and name becoming the GPE.

Flagship Initiatives	<p>Established jointly by partners, “the flagship programmes are focused on specific EFA-related issues and problems requiring extra help from or accelerated action by a number of partner agencies. The integration of flagships into regular educational activities is the responsibility of each country”. (UNESCO, 2001<i>a</i>, p. 4). A Flagship initiative comprised structured set of activities carried out by EFA II partners, “under the leadership of one or more United Nations specialized agencies, in order to address specific challenges in achieving the Dakar goals” (UNESCO, 2003<i>a</i>, p. 8).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Initiative on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education (UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education) • Early Childhood Care and Education • 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 • The 10-year United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) • Literacy in the Framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD)
Other Initiatives	<p>There were also numerous initiatives established by partners on a voluntary basis which were related to EFA II issues and agenda and which were not under the leadership of an UN specialized agency. Examples of these initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class of 2015 • Networks of Parliamentarians for Education for All • Partnerships for Education • International Task Force on teachers for EFA • Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education • Global Initiative on Out of School Children • School Fee abolition Initiative • Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa

According to UNESCO (UNESCO IOS, 2016), the coordination process of EFA II can be analytically divided in three phases: i) 2000-2004; ii) 2005-2010; and iii) 2011-2015.

First Phase 2000 – 2004

During the first phase, UNESCO aimed at establishing the main structures and initiatives that constituted the global architecture of EFA II. In particular, great effort was put on achieving the targets of the preparation of national EFA plans in 2002 and achieve gender parity in 2005. In yearly reports to the Executive Board (UNESCO, 2001*c*; 2002*c*; 2003*c*; 2004*c*; 2004*d*), the Director-General of UNESCO summarized the main achievements and progress on the implementation and follow up to the World Education Forum and how UNESCO kept its commitments of “co-ordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum”, as well as “refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work”. These documents provided a good overview of all the activities that are performed by UNESCO and partners in following up the Dakar Framework for Action.

As noted above, UNESCO was the only Organization which had a mandate to refocus education programme on EFA II related issues. The Director-General committed UNESCO to achieve it and prepared the Programme and Budget of the following biennium (2002 – 2003) on the basis of the goals of EFA II. Indeed, in its report on the implementation of and follow up to the Dakar Framework for Action, he stated:

Following the Dakar Forum, the Organization adjusted and streamlined Major Programme I (30 C/5) in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action. In the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31 C/5), the centrality of the follow-up to the Forum has been further strengthened. Hence, basic education for all has been designated as principal priority for 2002-2003 and its allocations benefit from an increase of 41.7% (UNESCO, 2001*c*, p. 1)

One of the first activities carried out by UNESCO was the establishment of in-house coordination mechanisms. Indeed, in 2000, the Director-General created a Dakar Follow up unit (later called International Coordination Division of EFA), an Intersectoral Strategic Group, a Senior Staff Group, as well as a Network of Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes following a working meeting. These mechanisms established five principles for UNESCO’s contribution to the follow up of Dakar commitments: Coordination,

Cooperation, Civil Society involvement, Communication, Commitment (UNESCO, 2001c).

As to the external coordination activities, the first attempts were focused on supporting the creation of National and Regional EFA Fora. These National Fora had to prepare the National EFA Plans for 2002. UNESCO advocated for an integration of EFA Plans with other planning instruments such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the UN Common Country Assessment (UNCCA) and UNDAF. In order to help countries in the preparation of the plans, UNESCO developed the “Guidelines for the Preparation of National Action Plans for Education for All” in 2000. Moreover, UNESCO conducted two surveys in 2001 and 2002 to assess the progress of countries in the preparation of the plans. It resulted that numerous countries were unable to perform it and required technical assistance (UNESCO, 2002c). Concerns were raised and attention was requested on the issue of external financing, a theme that was on the agenda during all meetings in this phase, as well as on the capacity to monitor EFA II goals. UNESCO created an EFA Observatory in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) which provided technical assistance to countries for data collection, and organized an Expert Group Meeting on EFA Indicators in 2001. Technical assistance was also provided through the Regional EFA Fora. These Fora were mainly established during the first two years from Dakar and they had different performances. It is interesting noting that these regional EFA *fora* were often based on and built from the existing regional consultation structures of UNESCO, or promoted by the regional offices of UNESCO.

During Dakar Forum, two Flagship initiatives were established: FRESH and UNGEI. All EFA flagship initiatives (or programmes) were created in this phase (see table 22). According the UNESCO ADG/ED: “an EFA flagship is a structured set of activities carried out by voluntary partners, under the leadership of one or more United Nations specialized agencies, in order to address specific challenges in achieving the Dakar goals” (UNESCO, 2003a, p. 8). These initiatives were promoted by a wide range of partners and they were reviewed also by the Working Group on EFA. Indeed, there was “some confusion about their place in EFA efforts and some overlap between them. There is an information and communication gap, particularly at national level, and there are inadequate links with other development planning frameworks” (*ibidem*). However, their activities were perceived significant and relevant. Among the most important initiatives

there was the UNLD 2003-2012, which UNESCO was mandated to lead. Indeed, the resolution of the UNGA at its 56th session that proclaimed UNLD “explicitly situates the Decade within the Dakar Follow-up mechanisms and calls on UNESCO to assure the coordinating role at the international level” (UNESCO, 2002*c*, p. 4). These flagship initiatives captured global attention and functioned also as important advocacy measures.

Global advocacy for EFA II was one of the areas of constant attention by UNESCO and EFA II partners throughout all EFA II agenda. In fact, the Director-General of UNESCO advocated for EFA II within several important fora such as the G8 Summits. The partnership with the G8 was of crucial importance for the future development of the structures of EFA II. Indeed, whereas the G8 endorsed the commitments for EFA II in Okinawa, the G8, meeting in Genoa, created the G8 Task Force on Education which met for the first time at UNESCO at the end of the first High Level Meeting on EFA. The G8 countries strengthened their efforts with IGOs providing extra budgetary sources to UNESCO for EFA II coordination, as well as favoured the creation of a flagship initiative led by the World Bank: the EFA-FTI. This Initiative, launched at the meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank in April 2002, aimed at providing countries with the necessary resources they need to achieve the goal of universal primary education. Although it had a restricted focus and it was criticized for this reason (UNESCO, 2002*d*), EFA-FTI was the unique initiative related to EFA II that was able to mobilise additional funds fulfilling the Dakar promise that “no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources” (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 9).

Among the structures of global coordination, there were also some already existing structures that had been reformed in order to serve the EFA II purposes. Indeed, one of the important innovations brought forth by the Dakar Framework for Action is the attention to civil society and its role. The involvement of civil society in the global coordination architecture was ensured by the CCNGOs of UNESCO. CCNGO was previously a UNESCO mechanism for facilitating dialogue with civil society on literacy. UNESCO revitalized this mechanism and reformed it in order to become the official mechanism of dialogue with civil society on EFA II: CCNGO/EFA. Several activities were carried out in order to include civil society within the global debate on EFA II. For example, CCNGO/EFA members were invited to participate in the Working Group and

High Level Group, as well as UNESCO tried to “regionalize” the CCNGO/EFA in order to have CCNGO/EFA members participating in the Regional EFA Fora. Moreover, the 46th International Conference on Education in 2001 had a special session dedicated to the civil society role in EFA II. Finally, with members of CCNGO/EFA, UNESCO launched the yearly EFA Global Action Week during the anniversary of the World Education Forum of Dakar. Another example of the integration of existing mechanisms within the global coordination architecture was the E-9 initiative. Created in 1993 (see § 5.1.5), this initiative continued performing its activities with the overall assistance of UNESCO during all the 15 years of EFA II.

One of the major initiatives built in these years is the EFA GMR. In 2001, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, assisted by the EFA Observatory housed at UIS, developed a first publication monitoring progress toward the achievement of EFA II goals. This initiative was perceived by the Working Group and High Level Group as extremely useful so much so that UNESCO was urged to convene an International Editorial Board for the Monitoring Report. The EFA GMR was conceived as “a major independent report to the High-Level Group and an advocacy tool for EFA. Based on a rigorous analysis, the report will aim to create awareness, induce change and alert the world to the critical issues, bottlenecks and problems in EFA progress” (UNESCO, 2002*c*, p. 4). The annual Report focused each year on a specific issue of the EFA II agenda. While the first Report was concentrated on a general analysis of trends (UNESCO, 2002*g*), the second was concentrated on gender equality (UNESCO, 2003*d*), and the third on quality education (UNESCO, 2005*b*). The GMR used to be presented at the High Level Group meeting and it constituted the main reference work. Hence, the discussions of the High Level Group were strongly directed and focused on the GMR theme.

Besides these important initiatives and structures, UNESCO established two coordination structures at international level: the Working Group on EFA and the High Level Group on EFA. These structures responded to the suggestions of the Dakar Framework for Action to establish “working groups on each of the six goals adopted at Dakar” (the Working Group on EFA), and to convene “annually a high-level, small and flexible group. It served as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization” (the High Level Group on EFA).

At the end of 2000, UNESCO convened the first meeting of the Working Group on EFA (UNESCO, 2000*e*). This Group had a consultative and rather informal nature and had the purposes of developing and discussing “a common framework of knowledge and understanding of what is happening in specific countries, regions and organizations”, as well as “to discuss issues which are critical for bringing the EFA movement forward and to make recommendations for action in these areas” (*idem*, p. 6). It comprises various constituencies, from IGOs to academia, and during the years demonstrated its ability to orient the agenda and pointing some directions for action. The Working Group meetings served also “as a hub for a range of other EFA-related conclaves taking place the same week” (UNESCO, 2004*e*, p. 7).

Particularly interesting is noting the issues that are raised during these meetings. In fact, the discussions that took place in the Working Group and High Level Group meetings likely provide information and understanding on what are the most urgent educational themes that were perceived at that time, and what are the directions that the EFA II agenda was taking.

For example, the first meeting (UNESCO, 2000*e*) was focused on studying partnerships, and requesting UNESCO to further develop the working documents “Development Partner Co-operation in the Support of Education for All: Rationale and Strategies” and the draft of “The Global Initiative towards Education for All A Framework for Mutual Understanding” in order to shape financing strategies. The second meeting (UNESCO, 2001*b*) urged countries to develop the National EFA Plans, welcome the first Monitoring Report and new flagship initiatives, and requested UNESCO to design a comprehensive strategy for partners. In the third meeting (UNESCO, 2002*d*) it was presented the EFA-FTI and the group made sound recommendations on the advocacy work and on the monitoring exercise. The fourth meeting (UNESCO, 2003*a*) presented the challenge of not equating EFA II to a UNESCO-led initiative and it underlined the fact that EFA II was not a standalone activity: “it is a key component of comprehensive social development, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, has a key role to play in influencing broad agendas” (*idem*, p. 4). Thus, the Working Group expressed the desire to see stronger and more effective connections between development agendas and EFA II. The fifth meeting (UNESCO, 2004*e*) reflected upon the engagement with civil society and the private sector, while questioning data and statistics.

In 2001, UNESCO convened the first High Level Group Meeting (UNESCO, 2001*a*). At the beginning, the nature of the group was unclear to the participants and during the first meeting they raised questions and discussed on it. This Group entailed “an appropriate representation of EFA actors (developing countries, civil society, bilateral and multilateral agencies)” (*idem*, p. 19). It was composed by high level profile, such as Head of States and Ministers of Education. The first meeting clarified also the functions and role of the High Level Group, it was meant to:

- generate political commitment at the highest levels
- ensure that the Dakar goals are operationalized
- act as a catalyst for resource mobilization for EFA
- keep on track the efforts of all the partners and monitor the contributions of all partners
- use its legitimacy under the auspices of UNESCO and as part of the United Nations system to call others, such as donors and other international and regional agencies, to account for their part in EFA
- examine an analytical presentation of EFA progress using the Monitoring Report
- identify and address problems in progress towards EFA goals
- focus on problem-solving and lesson-learning
- set time-bound goals and specify actions to enhance efficient achievement of EFA targets.

At the end of each meeting, the main points and the way forward were summarized. Moreover, each time, the High Level Group issued a “Communiqué” which presented the main priorities for action and recommendations. Indeed, as the Director-General of UNESCO stated during the second High Level Group Meeting: “It [the High Level Group] must set the annual agenda of the whole EFA movement, all of whose key constituencies are represented here: governments, donors, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations and civil society” (UNESCO, 2002*e*, p. 28). The composition and the venue of the meeting changed from one meeting to the other. The first six meetings were all held in E-9 countries.

The themes debated at these meetings were sound. The first meeting for example discussed on the role and nature of the Group, as well as the importance of partnerships and planning for National EFA Plans preparation. It made recommendations on and guided the work of UNESCO, requesting the Organization to “prepare an authoritative Monitoring Report, after first devising a scheme for managing and processing the report’s preparation”, to “continue to dialogue about the structure and form of the High-Level Group”, as well as to prepare “a comprehensive strategy to operationalize the Dakar Framework for Action by March 2002” (UNESCO, 2001*a*, p. 29). The second High Level Group Meeting (UNESCO, 2002*e*) was opened by a presentation of the EFA GMR 2002. This presentation focused the analysis and discussions of the meeting. The final Communiqué addressed the urgency to achieve gender parity, to ensure quality, and to monitor progress and achievement with good data. It also addressed the need for better coordination between initiatives and the partnerships with donors. The third meeting (UNESCO, 2003*b*) was focused on the elimination of gender disparity and the realization of gender equality. As it was noted, “the discussions of the meeting were closely related to the findings and analysis contained in the EFA GMR 2003/4, which was devoted to the subject of gender and education for all” (*idem*, p. 5). Particularly interesting is noting the Communiqué seemed to really provide the “Action Agenda” that it suggested, providing recommendations to all meeting constituencies. Moreover, it recognized the need for better coordination of international initiatives as well as requested UNESCO to “review and enhance its capacity for coordination”.

This request came at the same time of the Executive Board’s one to review the UNESCO’s role in following up the Dakar Framework for Action. Hence, at its 170th Session, the Director-General presented the “Report by the Director-General on the strategic review of UNESCO’s post-Dakar role in Education for All (EFA)” (UNESCO, 2004*c*). This strategic review constituted the first review of UNESCO’s role in EFA and it proposed several options for the way forward. Indeed, the Director-General recognized that UNESCO had a twofold commitment and “how to best implement this dual commitment has been a continuing challenge for the Organization in the four years since the Dakar meeting took place” (*idem*, p. 1). Among the challenges perceived in this review there were the fact that the agenda of High Level Group was mostly aligned with the theme of the GMR, the “International Strategy to Put the Dakar Framework for Action

on EFA into Operation in 2002” requested by both the Working Group and the High Level Group was welcome but partners did not demonstrate willingness to follow it. Moreover, the strategic review suggested that UNESCO should “seek immediately to enhance its capacity to shape the EFA agenda at all levels” (UNESCO, 2004c, p. 18), with a more confident approach in coordinating partners, and reaffirming EFA II priority in the work of UNESCO.

In line with it, the fourth High Level Group urged UNESCO in its Communiqué “to initiate early consultations with key stakeholders to achieve greater clarity, cohesion and mutual recognition regarding their respective roles as partners in reaching the EFA goals and education-related Millennium Development Goals” (UNESCO, 2004f, p. 34), and to facilitate the preparation of mapping the contributions of all partners to EFA-II. Due to the Strategic Review, the recommendations entailed in it, and the activities that from it would be performed, it has been argued that a new phase of EFA II coordination started.

Second Phase 2005 – 2010

On the basis of the Strategic Review, the Communiqué of the High Level Group of 2004 and the Executive Board decision 3.4.2 (UNESCO, 2004d), UNESCO initiated a process of consultations with the main EFA II partners to prepare a “comprehensive mapping and implementation plan of the current and future contributions of each partner toward EFA” (UNESCO, 2005c, p. 1). Thus, the Director-General established a Task Team in charge of developing the “Global Mapping of EFA Partner’s role and contributions”. Through a process of consultation and a two-days meeting of EFA II partners in 2005, UNESCO sought information on “(a) the vision and strategy of each partner in addressing EFA goals [...]; (b) the funds allocated to EFA [...]; (c) their assessment of the global effort so far since Dakar [...]; and (d) the manner of achieving effective collaboration, including an assessment of the various mechanisms [...] and suggestions for improvement” (*idem*, p. 1). Among the most interesting results of this mapping is the need for greater synergies of efforts and establishment of better linkages between all EFA II mechanisms (for example through the establishment of a database of partners’ efforts and a continuing dialogue), the need to place EFA II at the heart of international debates on development, an advocacy strategy to be enhanced, and an enhanced capacity of UNESCO to coordinate and lead EFA II partners.

Based on the mapping exercise, as well as on the Strategic Review, the Executive Board (UNESCO 2004d) requested the Director-General to develop a strategy for the 2005-2015 period with corresponding results-based implementation plans. Thus, the Director-General reported in 2005 the UNESCO's EFA Strategy for 2005-2015 (UNESCO, 2005c). This strategy outlined the seven UNESCO's key functions, as well as the four strategic objectives in support of EFA II. Among the functions listed were monitoring, standard setting (in particular on the right to education considered as the normative pillar of EFA II), as well as a laboratory of ideas and a knowledge broker functions. Moreover, one of the function envisioned is to act as a "promoter of an education of quality in all its dimensions, as a key to the personal development, health and well-being of individuals, as an important dimension of national human resource development and as a vital contribution to peace, human rights, tolerance, intercultural understanding and sustainable development" (*idem*, p. 8). Thus, UNESCO aimed at playing a value setting role in EFA II, and in particular on the notion of quality. Indeed, "quality, equity and ownership" are the three guiding principles of UNESCO's activities in follow up of EFA II established in the Strategic Review. Particularly important is the attention on quality since it is also one of the Strategic Objectives identified.

In fact, UNESCO's Director-General developed four strategic objectives in support of EFA II for the period 2005-2015. These strategic objectives were:

- Strategic objective 1: Delivering policy advice and capacity-building in support of planning for EFA in the context of sector-wide approaches and national poverty reduction strategies.
- Strategic objective 2: Promoting enhanced international coordination, monitoring, analysis and advocacy for EFA.
- Strategic objective 3: Lead international initiatives in three areas of comparative advantage for UNESCO: literacy, teacher training in sub-Saharan Africa, and HIV/AIDS and education.
- Strategic objective 4: Assist in the development of quality education.

Particularly relevant was the need to place EFA II at the heart of international development discourses because "public perception of EFA remained weak" (UNESCO, 2005c, p. 15), and the associated need to enhance the advocacy and communication

activities. Furthermore, UNESCO identified some “niches” on which it can have the comparative advantage and on which it can advance specific initiatives such as the Literacy Initiative For Empowerment (LIFE) supporting the UNLD, the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education (EDUCAIDS). Finally, within the fourth strategic objective on assisting in the development of quality education, UNESCO aimed at emphasizing education for sustainable development, within the context of the UNDES, as an intrinsic dimension of quality education.

The Working Group on EFA in 2005 welcomed the Global Mapping, and further suggested that:

UNESCO must strengthen its role as chief coordinator of EFA; it needs to further develop the vision and expertise that will lead the world to reach the EFA targets by 2015. The global mapping of the roles and responsibilities of major EFA stakeholders will provide the basis for a more coordinated and effective approach to achieving the Dakar goals (UNESCO, 2005*d*, p. 8).

Indeed, based on the global mapping, the Strategic Review, and the UNESCO’s Strategy, the Organization started developing a Joint Plan of Action for achieving EFA II by 2015. The High Level Group strongly supported the development and implementation of this Plan, which should provide coherent strategy to work together in a more efficient way. It thus suggested UNESCO to develop it in close collaboration with the other EFA II partners, in order to make it really a “Joint” Plan, suggesting that the interagency meeting planned for 2006 could serve as the platform to discuss and validate the Plan. Moreover, both the Working Group and the High Level Group discussed the need for UNESCO “to assume a stronger, more visible, and more vocal role in EFA coordination” (*idem*, p. 26).

At the 174th session of the Executive Board in 2006, UNESCO presented the “Global Action Plan for achieving success in EFA” (UNESCO, 2006*b*), developed in consultation with key EFA II partners and stakeholders during the High Level Meeting on EFA, a Ministerial Round Table on EFA in 2005, and during discussions at the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO. This Global Action Plan aimed at establishing a common platform and strategy to support national action, to give coherence in international partnerships in support of EFA II, to identify venue for global coordination, to outline the

strategic directions of EFA II international partners, and finally to find ways to translate international framework to national action. One of the main achievements of this Plan is to have identified five areas of joint action at the global level in support of national plans: i) communication and advocacy; ii) capacity building; iii) refocusing on mobilizing resources; iv) effective use of aid to EFA II (in line with the Paris Agreement of Aid Effectiveness of the same year); and v) monitoring progress in EFA II through peer evaluation (UNESCO, 2006b). Another important achievement was to further advance in mapping global action and activities of EFA II partners. Looking at strategic plans of each of the partners, the Plan provided an overview of the directions of action and priorities of the co conveners. This exercise showed also the diversity of approaches to EFA II, as well as the different prioritization within the same international agenda. For example, while UNESCO demonstrated attention to issues of literacy, equity, teacher training and quality, UNICEF put its attention on early childhood, universal primary education and gender parity. The World Bank education strategy was aimed to basic education within the framework of the MDGs, as well as focused on education for the knowledge economy (*idem*).

Although the Plan was welcomed at the Executive Board in 2006, several areas lacked clarity. Indeed, during the seventh Working Group on EFA in 2006, concerns were raised on the need for more clarity on the sharing of roles and responsibilities among international partners. For example, UNICEF argued that:

- Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders—the Plan does not explicitly document the roles and responsibilities among different international organizations nor does it give explanations on linking roles and responsibilities with capacity to deliver results and performance;
- Specific goals of the Plan remain unclear; no evaluation mechanisms are documented;
- Data collection and analysis—improving data collection and analysis to chart progress and link education data with wider social and economic indicators is necessary (UNESCO, 2006c, p. 31)

Thus, the Global Action Plan was perceived as a “dynamic” document rather than static, and that “while the present draft of the Global Action Plan represents a strong point of departure, more work is required. In particular, greater clarity is needed concerning the

specific roles and responsibilities of the stakeholder agencies as well as to the precise goals of the Plan” (UNESCO, 2006c, p. 10).

UNESCO conducted two other consultations with EFA convening agencies between the Working Group and the High Level Group. Hence, the High Level Group in 2006 examined an improved version of the Global Action Plan. The High Level Group, welcoming “the improved version of the EFA Global Action Plan: Improving Support to Countries in Achieving the EFA Goals” (UNESCO, 2006d, p. 36), and warning that “the Global Action Plan should not be seen as a UNESCO document, but one to which all UN agencies are equally committed”, stated that the Plan should be used as a “dynamic tool that advances the global effort” for EFA II (*ibidem*), and it should be applied at country level recognizing the importance of existing coordination structures and mechanisms. This version of the Global Action Plan was thus reported to the Executive Board in 2007 at its 176th session and it was approved together with its changes. In particular, these changes aimed at ensuring greater ownerships of countries and a higher level of coherence and wider linkages with the UN reform process, the UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS), the UN development frameworks, as well as already existing mechanisms at country level toward achievement of MDGs and other development strategies (UNESCO, 2007a).

These changes in coordination strategy based on the work on the Global Action Plan took place in a broader context of changes in the international development landscape. Indeed, 2005 was an important year for the UN system which saw the launch of the “Delivery as One” corresponding to the implementation of the UN reform. Moreover, in 2005 head of States and leaders signed the Paris Agreement on Aid Effectiveness which reaffirmed the importance of country ownership in international cooperation. In the same year, the World Summit was held at the UN and it reaffirmed that EFA II is at the heart of development while launching the UN Secretary General’s MDG Africa Initiative. A year later, in 2006, the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg welcomed the Global Action Plan, reaffirming the UNESCO leadership in coordinating partners of EFA II. The Global Action Plan was also welcome by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), which sent it to its Resident Coordinators at country level with the request to integrate it in the process of drafting the UNDAF.

Coordination mechanisms changed after the Global Action Plan. In particular, the sequencing of the EFA II mechanisms and structures was modified. Indeed, the Working Group was positioned later in autumn, when the GMR was already published, so that the Working Group could be more focused in its discussions and in shaping the agenda for the High Level Group. Moreover, in 2007, the Director-General of UNESCO created the International Advisory Panel, replacing the “Sherpa group”, comprised by high level representative of EFA II partners, to advise UNESCO in coordination and to prepare the agenda and the Communiqué of the High Level Group. They “provide a structure year-round consultation and follow up process among a representative group of the main EFA partners” (UNESCO, 2008c, p. 2).

In these years, the Working Group and the High Level Group concentrated their attention on a number of EFA II topics. In particular in 2007 issues of equity, quality and financing were the most discussed (UNESCO, 2007b; 2007c). Moreover, the High Level Group expressed concerns on the fact that “three EFA goals – on early childhood care and education (ECCE), learning opportunities for youth and adults, and adult and youth literacy – are neglected” (UNESCO, 2007c, p. 24) and agreed to redouble efforts to attend them. Another important theme that the High Level Group addressed was the need to enhance advocacy strategy; in particular the advocacy work had to be performed by all EFA II partners and not just by UNESCO. In 2008 the issues of equity and financing education acquired even more prominence, and discussions on effective pro poor governance strategies were debated on the basis of the annual GMR (UNESCO, 2008d). The High Level Group of 2008 underlined the challenges of financing EFA II, in particular in light of the recent economic crisis that was beginning. In the Oslo Declaration (UNESCO, 2008e) the participant of the High Level Group urged countries to maintain their commitments to education equity and quality. Moreover, they agreed to “better plan and coordinate global advocacy efforts for all six EFA goals” (*idem*, p. 31), and created the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA II.

The attention of financial aspects of EFA II is also demonstrated by the growing importance and relevance the EFA-FTI had. UNESCO aimed and tried to enhance its role within the EFA-FTI (UNESCO, 2008c). Moreover, in 2009, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to provide an overview of the impact of the global financial crisis on the achievement of EFA II. Several concerns were expressed that

countries were cutting budgets of social services and of international aid to education. Indeed, the Working Group of 2009 (UNESCO, 2009b) discussed the impact of the economic crisis on education and marginalization. Paucity of financial resources exacerbated a perceived negative trend: countries were selecting some goals over others, and thus limiting the broad view of EFA II. Indeed, the EFA II agenda constituted an holistic view of education and development. In response to this trend, EFA II partners developed a twofold strategy. On the one hand, they tried to enhance coordination, in particular at country level. EFA II co-conveners wrote a letter to country representatives with the request to strengthen cooperation and align priorities and plans. On the other hand, EFA II partners enhanced global advocacy. In 2008, EFA II co-conveners wrote a “Statement from UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and World Bank the EFA convening agencies, on the occasion of the High Level Group 2008 (16-17 December)” addressing the need to invest in education. In particular, UNESCO focused on the key element of “inclusive education”. Indeed, UNESCO aimed at mainstreaming the inclusive education concept, it produced the “UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion”; the GMR of 2009 was on inequalities and governance while the one of 2010 on marginalized. Finally, UNESCO participated in several global initiatives that addressed issues of inclusion such as the UNGA thematic session of education in emergencies in 2009.

Despite these initiatives, in 2010 it has been recognized that EFA II goals would not be achieved if current trends persisted. In particular the goals of equity and quality education. Once again, the coordination structure was still perceived weak and not effective enough as also stated in the Addis Ababa Declaration of the ninth High Level Group (UNESCO, 2010d).

Participants shared ideas about why the HLG and related EFA coordination mechanisms should be reinvigorated. Concern was expressed that the HLG was not making a real political impact, due in part to the lack of high-level representation from participants, particularly from donor countries and UN agencies, and in part to the nature of the Group which is not sufficiently political (*idem*, p. 11).

It was also expressed the need to enhance political will and to develop capacity at country level. These considerations led UNESCO commissioning a report on “Enhancing the Effectiveness of EFA Coordination” (UNESCO, 2010c) which was developed in 2010. This document analysed several aspects of the EFA II coordination and showed the

challenges that were faced during these years. In particular, it recognized a low “degree of interaction between global, regional, and national levels” (UNESCO, 2010c, p. 8), the need to enhance the political mobilization and to restructuring the mechanisms of coordination at the global level, as also suggested by the High Level Group in 2010 (UNESCO, 2010d). The Director-General, reporting to the Executive Board, expressed that:

The consultation process [leading to the Enhancing the Effectiveness of EFA Coordination] resulted in the identification of the following needs: (1) stronger political will and commitment by all EFA partners must be built and accountability and monitoring in terms of delivering on the commitments improved; (2) more inclusive processes must be developed whereby global coordination is driven by needs on the ground and better informed by EFA activities at the national and regional levels; (3) countries and populations must be better targeted; (4) existing mechanisms must be built on and better used; (5) functions must be clarified; (6) coordination resources must be increased; and (7) the knowledge base must be strengthened through more cutting edge analytical work and relevant information used through the national and regional EFA processes (UNESCO, 2011b, p. 3).

Particularly interesting is noting that the links between global coordination of EFA II and the agenda-setting process are recognized. Indeed, while stating that agenda-setting work has been carried out by High Level Group and the Working Group, it is also expressed that: “EFA coordination efforts have attempted to influence the agenda-setting exercises of influential international meetings. That a number of declarations of major global events such as the G8 Summits, and the 2005 MDG Summit, included language on EFA-related issues is evidence of some degree of achievement” (UNESCO, 2010c, p. 11).

In light of these recommendations and the options advanced, the Director-General proposed to the Executive Board at its 186th session a “reform of the global education for all coordination mechanism” (UNESCO, 2011a). The development and implementation of this reform opened a new phase of the global coordination architecture.

Third Phase 2011 – 2015

This last phase of the EFA II coordination entailed two interconnected efforts. On the one hand, EFA II partners reshaped the coordination architecture in order to generate “one

last big push” toward the achievement of the EFA II goals by 2015. On the other hand, several activities and structures were established in order to prepare the international education agenda beyond 2015. While analytically separable, these efforts were pursued simultaneously by EFA II partners.

Based on the findings of the consultation, the Director-General submitted an Information Document to the Executive Board on the “Reform of the Global Education for All Coordination Mechanisms” (UNESCO, 2011a). This reform aimed at facing the numerous challenges that were surfaced during the High Level Group and Working Group meetings. In particular, the structures built aimed to enhance the advocacy beyond education sector, increase and expand the knowledge base of EFA II, establish better links between global and national coordination structures, and improve the commitments of all EFA II co conveners. Approved by the Executive Board at its 187th session urging “the Director-General to put the new mechanism in place by the end of 2011” (*idem*, p. 4), and requested by the High Level Group in the Jomtien Statement “to pursue its reform to enhance the effectiveness of EFA coordination jointly with the other EFA convening agencies” (UNESCO, 2011c, p. 3), UNESCO reformed the global EFA II coordination mechanisms with effects in 2012.

Hence, UNESCO established four new types of coordination structures at the global level: i) the EFA High Level Forum; ii) the EFA Steering Committee; iii) the Global EFA Meeting; and iv) the Task Force on EFA beyond 2015. The High Level Forum had the purpose of high level advocacy beyond education sector, bringing together world leaders and champions of education. This Forum had to be informed by the Global EFA Meeting and aimed at placing education at the heart of the development agenda. Although it was conceived as an annual meeting, it is recorded only the first one in 2012 at the launch of GEFI.

The EFA Steering Committee replaced the International Advisory Panel. In the concept note and the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee it is explained that its purpose “is to provide strategic direction, monitor progress in the period up to 2015 and beyond, and advise on how to facilitate urgent and strategic actions to scale up efforts in order to meet the six EFA goals” (UNESCO, 2012c, p. 1). It had a mixed composition from Member States, IGOs, civil society and the private sector. The first Steering Committee

held in 2012 had the aim to discuss the governance of the Committee, prepare the High Level Forum of 2012, as well as the Global EFA Meeting. Moreover, during the Steering Committee it has already been discussed issues of the post-2015 education agenda. The Steering Committee played an important role in drafting the Global EFA Meeting Statements, as well as in preparing the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (see § 5.5.5).

The Global EFA Meeting was a biennial meeting that merged the functions of the High Level Group and the Working Group. Based on the findings provided by the GMR, it had the aim of “critically review the world’s progress toward the six EFA goals [...], and to hold the global community accountable” (UNESCO, 2011a, p. 4). It comprised a technical and a political component with representatives of governments and all EFA II partners’ constituencies. The first Global EFA Meeting was held in 2012 and clearly showed how efforts were twofold. Indeed, on the one hand it was requested to accelerate progress toward achieving EFA II; on the other hand, the Statement explicitly contained measures to prepare for the post-2015 agenda, urging “UNESCO to take the leadership in facilitating broad-based and innovative consultations on the post-2015 EFA agenda” (UNESCO, 2012d, p. 4). The second meeting, held in Oman, developed the “Muscat Agreement” (UNESCO, 2014g). During this GEM the EFA II partners agreed on a formal shape of what should be the post 2015 international education agenda (see § 5.5.5). Acknowledging that “the worldwide movement for Education for All, initiated in Jomtien in 1990 and reaffirmed in Dakar in 2000, has been the most important commitment to education in recent decades and has helped to drive significant progress in education” (UNESCO, 2014g, p. 3), participants in the GEM suggested UNESCO to take the lead in ensuring that education will be placed at heart of the global development agenda.

The Task Force on EFA beyond 2015. UNESCO led the efforts of shaping the future education agenda. Already the opening ceremony of the High Level Group in 2010 included a special panel on “Considerations for the EFA Agenda beyond 2015” that initiated a debate on the future of the EFA II agenda from a longer-term perspective. The preparation of the post 2015 was one of the most demanding activity performed by the Organization and it was a constant focus of all meetings related to EFA II.

The third phase of EFA II coordination was marked by a decisive alignment with the post 2015 development agenda. In all UNESCO’s documents related to EFA II, there were mentions to the participation in the shaping of the broader development agenda. Thus, the international community aimed at merging efforts and constituting a unique development agenda with education at its core. Indeed, the World Education Forum held in May 2015 proclaimed the Incheon Declaration without a Framework for Action. In fact, the targets and indicators of the Framework for Action would be established and agreed later in the year when the UNGA Resolution “Transforming our World” would have formalized the SDG-4 targets.

Table 23: Timeline of EFA II Global Coordination Architecture

YEAR	EFA II COORDINATION STRUCTURES	EFA II INITIATIVES	UNESCO / UN MAIN EVENTS ON EDUCATION
2000	World Education Forum, Dakar. Adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action. 1 st Meeting of the Working Group	Launch of UNGEI, FRESH, International Network of Education in Emergencies, AIDS, school and education.	Millennium Summit, UN New York. Adoption of the Millennium Declaration. World Conference on health promotion and health education
2001	2 nd Meeting of the Working Group 1 st High Level Group Meeting 1 st Meeting of CCNGO/EFA 4 th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting Establishment of Regional EFA Fora		46 th International Conference on Education
2002	3 rd Meeting of the Working Group 2 nd High Level Group Meeting	EFA GMR Launch of the EFA-FTI UNLD Education for Rural People Flagship Programme on the Rights of Persons with disabilities 1 st Global EFA Week “An international strategy to put the Dakar	UN Millennium Project

		Framework for Action on Education for All into operation”	
2003	4 th Meeting of the Working Group 3 rd High Level Group Meeting 2 nd Meeting of the CCNGO/EFA 5 th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting		UNESCO Ministerial roundtable on quality education
2004	5 th Meeting of the Working Group 4 th High Level Group Meeting 3 rd Meeting of the CCNGO/EFA		Strategic Review 47 th International Conference on Education
2005	6 th Meeting of the Working Group 5 th High Level Group Meeting		UN World Summit UN DESD (2005-2014)
2006	7 th Meeting of the Working Group 6 th High Level Group Meeting 6 th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting	“Global Action Plan: Improving Support to Countries in Achieving EFA Goals” Working Group on Debt Swaps for Education	
2007	8 th Meeting of the Working Group 7 th High Level Group Meeting 4 nd Meeting of the CCNGO/EFA		
2008	9 th Meeting of the Working Group 8 rd High Level Group Meeting 7 th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting	Creation of the International Task Force on ‘Teachers for EFA’	48 th International Conference on Education.
2009	10 th Meeting of the Working Group		World Conference on Higher Education CONFINTEA VI
2010	9 th High Level Group Meeting 8 th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting	Creation of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack	2010 UN Summit on the MDGs World Conference on ECCE
2011	11 th Meeting of the Working Group	FTI Rebranded and Reshaped as GPE	

	10 th High Level Group Meeting		
2012	1 st Steering Committee Meeting 2 nd Steering Committee Meeting 1 st Global Education Meeting (GEM) 3 rd Steering Committee Meeting 9 th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting	GEFI Creation of Emergency Coalition for Global Education Action	Beginning of post 2015 Consultations
2013	4 th Steering Committee Meeting 5 th Steering Committee Meeting		High Level Political Forum
2014	6 th Steering Committee Meeting 7 th Steering Committee Meeting 2 nd GEM 8 th Steering Committee Meeting 10 th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting		High Level Political Forum Nagoya Conference on Education for Sustainable Development
2015	9 th Steering Committee Meeting 10 th Steering Committee Meeting World Education Forum Incheon High Level Meeting on Education 2030		High Level Political Forum

4.2.3 Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (2015 – 2030)

The current international education agenda is entailed in the broader international development agenda agreed at the UN level. This international development agenda followed and substituted the MDGs which were established in 2000.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (2000 – 2015)

In September 2000, Heads of States and government gathered at UN Headquarters and approved the UN Millennium Declaration with the resolution A/RES/55 (UN, 2000). This declaration set out principles and commitments for States with the aim of realizing the

common aspiration to peace, development and cooperation. The elaboration of the declaration has been inspired by the recognition of common principles of “human family”. Among them, besides the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the declaration promoted concepts such as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, as well as shared responsibility. Based on the text of the declaration, a small group of experts drafted the “International Development Goals”, later called with the name “Millennium Development Goals”. These goals constituted the international development agenda of the UN and they were extremely important for the work of the entire Organization. MDGs constituted the “political guidelines of international cooperation” (Gandolfi and Rizzi, 2013, p. 96). UNDESA argued that all other agendas on specific aspects of development (such as health, education, environment) paved the way for the realization of this broader and overarching effort (UNDESA, 2007). The MDGs developed were 8 with 20 associated specific targets.

Table 24: Millennium Development Goals and Targets

GOALS	TARGETS
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce by half the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day. • Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. • Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.
4. Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce by two thirds the mortality of children under five.
5. Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters. • Achieve universal access to reproductive health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. • Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it. • Halt and reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse the loss of environmental resources. • Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. • Improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020
8. Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. • Address special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and Small Island developing States. • Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt. • In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries. • In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies.

Literature has widely commented shortfalls and achievements of MDGs (Clemens and Moss, 2005; Fehling et al., 2013). In particular, the limitations of its structure and design have been recognised as mostly unachievable and focused mainly on developing countries. Indeed, this design was reflected in uneven commitments by countries: the last two goals, which entailed obligations for developed countries were the ones that showed less progress. As the Millennium Development Goals Report stated “global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) have increased by more than 46 per cent since 1990. [...] Nearly one third of marine fish stocks have been overexploited [...] and many species are at risk of extinction, despite an increase in protected areas” (UN, 2013*a*, p. 42).

As it can be seen, two MDGs are related to education. Goal two “Achieve universal primary education” with the target of “ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling”, and goal three “Promote gender equality and empower women” with the target of “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015”. These two goals constituted the international education agenda entailed in MDGs and this international education agenda is parallel to the international education agenda of EFA II.

Literature showed that there were several important differences between these two international education agendas. Indeed, the overarching goal of EFA II was established in the Jomtien Declaration and it entailed meeting the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. A broad vision of education, which is lifelong and comprehends the four pillars of learning. MDGs was basically related to universal primary schooling.

Moreover, MDGs lacked of the fundamental aspect of quality education. As have already noted, quality was one of the fundamental pillar of EFA II and this absence constituted a profound separation between the two agendas. According to Tawil (2013, p. 1), “this narrowing of the international education agenda consequently implies a focus on lower-income countries where the challenge of ensuring access to a complete cycle of primary schooling is the greatest”. And with the MDGs overshadowing EFA II, “this has also progressively led to a lower perceived relevance of the EFA agenda to middle-income countries, emerging economies, as well as to OECD countries where there is greater concern with the expansion of relevant education and skills development opportunities for youth at secondary and tertiary levels” (*ibidem*).

Table 25: Differences between EFA II goals and education related MDGs (Tawil, 2013)

From EFA to the MDGs: A progressive narrowing of scope and focus	
From EFA Goals - To education-related MDGs	
From a focus on:	To a concern with:
Basic Education	Primary Education
Children, youth and adults	Children
Formal and Non-formal Education	Schooling
Access <i>and</i> Learning Achievement	Completion of primary education

POST 2015 DEBATE

Starting from 2011, the UN began a broad process of consultation in view of building the post-2015 structure of the international development agenda. The process of building the new development agenda was complex and required multiple efforts of different kinds. In the same period, UNESCO was reforming the coordination structure of EFA II in order to achieve the goals by 2015 and it constituted a Task Force on EFA beyond 2015. Hence, these two parallel agendas, close to the target year, were wondering what would have been the shape of them after 2015.

Between 2010 and 2015, the process of establishing a post 2015 education agenda can be described as a twofold process: 1) the discussions on shaping the post 2015 development agenda; and 2) the different ways in which UNESCO and the international education community tried to advocate for and set the international education agenda within the international development agenda.

1) In order to prepare the post 2015 agenda, the United Nations Secretary-General established a multi-layered process. On the one hand, following the Rio+20 Member States requested the creation of an Open Working Group (OWG), a small committee on sustainable development finance, as well as a High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development. The OWG was of particular importance since it had the mandate to develop and formulate the tentative list of sustainable development goals:

We resolve to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly. An open working group shall be constituted no later than at the opening of the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly (UN, 2012*b*, p. 47).

On the other hand, the Secretary General constituted a series of organs and groups that could help the formulation of goals and inform the process of establishing a development agenda beyond the goals. Among these, the following ones were the most relevant in shaping the agenda. The Secretary General established the UN System Task Team on the post 2015 UN Development Agenda (UNTT) in 2011 “to coordinate system-wide preparations for the agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders” (UNTT, 2012*a*, p. 1). The UNTT requested UN Agencies to develop 20 UNTT Thematic Think Pieces on a particular set of issues⁵, which would form the basis of the technical support to the OWG. The Team produced also two reports to the Secretary General: “Realizing the Future we Want for All” in 2012, and “Renewed Global Partnership for Development” in 2013.

Furthermore, Secretary General established in 2012 a group of 26 persons from governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society called the “High Level Panel of Eminent Persons”. The Panel had the aim of advice the Secretary-general on a bold

⁵ Countries with special needs; Culture: a driver and an enabler of sustainable development; Disaster risk and resilience; Education and skills for inclusive and sustainable development beyond 2015; Emerging development challenges for the post-2015; UN development agenda: Employment; Imagining a world free from hunger: Ending hunger and malnutrition and ensuring food and nutrition security; Governance and development; Health in the post-2015 development agenda; Towards freedom from fear and want: Human rights in the post-2015 agenda; Addressing inequalities: The heart of the post-2015 agenda and the future we want for all; Science, technology and innovation and intellectual property rights: The vision for development; Macroeconomic stability, inclusive growth and employment; Migration and human mobility; Peace and security; Population dynamics; Social protection: A development priority in the post-2015 UN development agenda; Building on the MDGs to bring sustainable development to the post-2015 development agenda; Sustainable urbanization.

and practical development agenda. Associated to them there will sit ex officio the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General for Post-2015. The outcome report of the Panel's work ("A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development. The report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda") should include:

- a) Recommendations regarding the vision and shape of a Post-2015 development agenda that will help respond to the global challenges of the 21st century, building on the MDGs and with a view to ending poverty.
- b) Key principles for reshaping the global partnership for development and strengthened accountability mechanisms;
- c) Recommendations on how to build and sustain broad political consensus on an ambitious yet achievable Post-2015 development agenda around the three dimensions of economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability; taking into account the particular challenges of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations (UN, 2013b, Terms of Reference).

In addition, Secretary General requested the UNDG to coordinate a series of eleven Global Thematic Consultations⁶. These consultations were jointly organized by UN entities. Each of the consultations provided a final report that would contribute to the reflections of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons. Moreover, the UNDG coordinate national and regional consultations on the post 2015 agenda.

Finally, the Secretary General launched an independent global network of research centres, universities and technical institutions called the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), which had the aim of helping in finding already existing or new solutions toward sustainable development. The SDSN issued an important report in 2014 "An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development. Report for the UN Secretary-General" which resulted in an effort "to mobilize global scientific and technological knowledge on the challenges of sustainable development including the design and implementation of the post-2015 global sustainable development agenda" (SDSN, 2014, p. 1).

⁶ Themes of global thematic consultations: Conflict and Fragility; Education; Environmental Sustainability; Governance; Growth and employment; Health; Hunger, food and nutrition security; Inequalities; Population Dynamics; Energy; Water

Figure 6: Post-2015 United Nations Process - Actors and Communication Lines (UNESCO, 2013c)

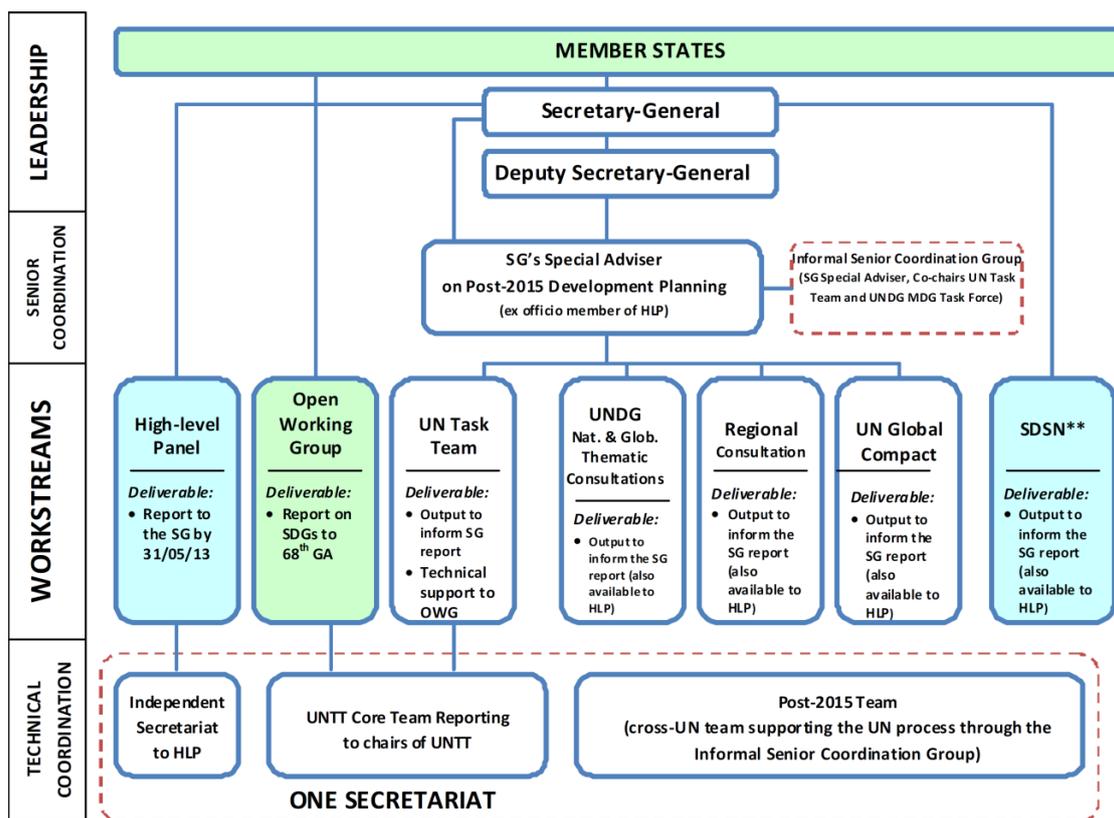


Table 26: Milestones in post 2015 development and education agenda

Date		Coordinator / Author	Event
2010	Sept	UN	United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals
2011	Sept	UN	Establishment of UNTT on the post 2015 UN development agenda
2012	May	UNESCO	UNTT Thematic Think Piece: "Education and skills for inclusive and sustainable development beyond 2015".
	Jun	UNTT	"Realizing the future we want for all". Report to the Secretary General of the UNTT
	Jun	UN	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
	July	UN	Establishment of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
	Aug	UN	Launch of Sustainable Development Solutions Network
	Set	UN	Launch of GEFI
	Nov	UNESCO	Global EFA Meeting Statement

2013	Jan	UN	Establishment of the OWG
	Mar	UNTT	Report: “Renewed Global Partnership for Development”
	Mar	UNESCO / UNICEF	“Making Education a priority in the post-2015 development agenda”. Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the post 2015 Development Agenda
	May	UNESCO	UNESCO’s principles on education for development beyond 2015
	May	HLPEP	“A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development”. The report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
	Nov	UNESCO	Concept note on the Post-2015 education agenda
2014	Feb	UNESCO	UNESCO Position Paper on Education post 2015
	May	UNESCO	“Muscat Agreement”. Global EFA Meeting Final Statement
	July	OWG	Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals
	Dec	UNSG	“The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet”. Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda
2015	May	UNESCO	World Education Forum – Incheon Declaration
	Sept	UN	“Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. A/RES/70
	Nov	UNESCO	Education 2030 Framework For Action

2) The post 2015 debate began when UNESCO was still concentrated on developing better coordination structures to achieve EFA II goals. However, the speed of these consultations required UNESCO to start looking at what should come next to the EFA II.

The first contribution of UNESCO to the post 2015 debate was the elaboration in early 2012 of the UNTT thematic think piece: “education and skills for inclusive and sustainable development beyond 2015” (UNTT, 2012*b*). The post 2015 was not yet defined in terms of goals, nor it was even imagined or proposed as such. Thus, this thematic think piece did not proposed education as a goal within an international development agenda. However, it stressed the idea that education “is a key lever of sustainable development” (*idem*, p. 2) and that “with a stronger focus on sustainable human development, equity and inclusive growth, education should be at the centre of the international development agenda beyond 2015” (*idem*, p. 7). Recalling the

achievements of EFA II, as well as underlying “that the MDG framework narrowed the international education agenda to Universal Primary Education (UPE) and gender equality (narrowly equated with parity)” (*ibidem*), the thematic think piece illustrated ideas such as education as a human right, its socialization function, as well as its importance in ensuring equitable and inclusive societies. The three main educational values and principles promoted were equity, quality and lifelong learning: “The starting point for the focus in education should be equity” (*ibidem*).

Some months later, with the Rio+20 Conference and the creation of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons and OWG tasked to propose sustainable development goals, the position of having one, unique, broad international development agenda with education integrated in it gained prominence in international education arenas. This position was not yet defined in the Global EFA Meeting of 2012. During the Global EFA Meeting, a side event was held completely dedicated to the post 2015 and in which was debated a vision for the post 2015 education agenda. Indeed, the Statement of the Global EFA Meeting explicitly said:

We urge UNESCO to take the leadership in facilitating broad-based and innovative consultations on the post-2015 EFA agenda. When considering the post-2015 agenda, we should make full use of the successes as well as tackle the reasons behind stagnation and bottlenecks preventing the achievement of EFA, which have been analysed and documented by the EFA Global Monitoring Report year by year. We emphasize the importance of working towards ambitious and clear post-2015 education goals, of *placing education on the post-2015 international development agenda*, and of ensuring that *EFA and the international development goals* are coherent and mutually-reinforcing (UNESCO, 2012d, p. 4. Emphasis added).

In this Statement, it is suggested a clear post-2015 education goals and a post-2015 international development agenda. Although participants requested to be coherent and mutually-reinforcing, they still saw them as two separate entity.

In March 2013, some month after the Global EFA Meeting, UNESCO and UNICEF co-led the Global Thematic Consultation on Education. Drawing from an online consultation, four regional EFA II meetings discussions, the side event of the Global EFA Meeting, as well as consultation with civil society and private sector, the two

Organization organized the Global meeting of the Thematic Consultation on Education in the post-2015 Development Agenda and prepared the report “Making Education a Priority in the post-2015 development agenda” (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2013). Among the findings and recommendations of the report, it has to be noticed that it is suggested that instead of having two agendas (albeit coherent and mutually reinforcing), “there [should] be a single harmonized global education framework, informed by the successes and challenges of the MDG and EFA agendas” (*idem*, p. 12). The report also developed the thematic priority areas that this agenda should have and proposed an overarching education goal: “equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all” (*idem*, p. 39).

Still in March 2013, the UNESCO’s research and foresight unit developed the “UNESCO principles on education for development beyond 2015” (UNESCO, 2013*b*). This short publication set out 10 principles related to education and its linkages to the international development agenda. The third principle “strengthening the link between education and other development sectors” stated that “holistic educational policy and planning can contribute effectively to societal development” (*idem*, p. 1). Moreover, the publication promoted and reaffirmed fundamental principles such as the “right to quality education”, “education as a public good”, as well as “a humanistic vision of education”. Finally, it also promoted the ideas of lifelong learning systems, the notion of quality education, relevant education, as well as some thematic priorities such as teachers and TVET.

In the same month, the Director-General of UNESCO reported to the Executive Board at its 191st session on “UNESCO’s participation in the processes for preparation of the post-2015 development agenda, and on the overall strategy of the Organization to influence the shaping of this agenda in general, and on UNESCO’s advocacy efforts for education in this specific context” (UNESCO, 2013*c*, p. 3). In this report, the Director-General clearly expressed that an “effective engagement in preparing this agenda will be crucial in several respects: the post-2015 agenda will have a direct impact on UNESCO’s main programmatic documents [...]; at the same time, UNESCO is committed to integrating its areas of competence in the developing post-2015 agenda” (*idem*, p. 4). Therefore, the design of the post 2015 development agenda is one of the main priorities of work of UNESCO and it is also reflected in the integration of the post-2015 debate within the agenda of EFA II meetings.

In May 2013, the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons issued their report which urged to have one single agenda for sustainable development and “recommend[ed] to the Secretary-General that deliberations on a new development agenda must be guided by the vision of eradicating extreme poverty once and for all, in the context of sustainable development” (UN, 2013*b*, p. 5). One of the most important recommendation of the Panel was the choice of a global goal format, as well as the time span of it. Indeed,

We believe that the combination of goals, targets, and indicators under the MDGs was a powerful instrument for mobilising resources and motivating action. For this reason, we recommend that the post-2015 agenda should also feature a limited number of high priority goals and targets, with a clear time horizon and supported by measurable indicators. With this in mind, the Panel recommends that targets in the post-2015 agenda should be set for 2030 (*idem*, p. 13).

The Panel also proposed a tentative set of 12 goals for sustainable development and it included an educational goal “Provide Quality Education and Lifelong Learning” with four targets: a) Increase by x% the proportion of children able to access and complete pre-primary education; b) Ensure every child, regardless of circumstance, completes primary education able to read, write and count well enough to meet minimum learning standards; c) Ensure every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to lower secondary education and increase the proportion of adolescents who achieve recognized and measurable learning outcomes to x%; and d) Increase the number of young and adult women and men with the skills, including technical and vocational, needed for work by x%.

In September 2013, the Executive Board of UNESCO in its 192nd session requested the Director-General to report on the post 2015 perspective of EFA to the 37th session of the General Conference. The Director-General thus presented in November 2013 the “Concept note on the Post-2015 education agenda” (UNESCO, 2013*d*). This concept note finally established that for UNESCO the international education agenda should be integrated into the broader international development agenda. As the concept note stated:

UNESCO advocates for a single clearly defined global education agenda which should be an integral part of the broader international development framework. UNESCO is not suggesting ending the EFA agenda. On the contrary, it supports a strengthened and broadened EFA vision within the international development framework. Such a global

education agenda should be framed by a comprehensive overarching goal which would need to be translated into a number of global objectives in order to identify measurable global targets and related indicators. Beyond the global education framework, in order to respond to diverse national priorities and contexts, specific target setting and indicator development should also take place at the national level based on the global objectives and targets. 26. In addition to being a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 development agenda, education should also be integrated into other development goals as an important means for their implementation, thereby highlighting the interaction of education with other goals. 27. With a view to reaching a global agreement on the final scope and structure of the post-2015 education framework, UNESCO will continue to lead and facilitate future consultations with Member States and key stakeholders guided by the following vision and principles (UNESCO, 2013*d*, p, 5).

From this concept note, UNESCO and the international education community participated in the post 2015 development agenda-setting, trying to incorporate specific educational priorities within the broader UN development agenda. Thus, it became interesting noting the kinds of priorities that were proposed and promoted by UNESCO in shaping the education goal. In the concept note for example, the Organization aimed at reaffirming fundamental principles (the ones delineated in the “UNESCO principles on education for development beyond 2015”), as well as promoted notions of quality, equity, gender equality in a lifelong learning perspective. Moreover, a set of thematic priorities has been proposed. These included ECCE, youth and adult literacy, the importance of teachers in quality education, the emphasis on skills for life and work, and education for sustainable development and global citizenship (UNESCO, 2013*d*). Finally, the concept note proposed “ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030 as a possible overarching global education goal, aiming to achieve just, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies” (*idem*, p. 7), which was the same of the UNESCO/UNICEF co-led Global Thematic Consultation on Education.

Some months later, in February 2014, the Director-General of UNESCO presented to the Executive Board the “UNESCO position paper on education post 2015” (UNESCO, 2014*h*). This position paper set out the first formulation by UNESCO on a tentative overarching goal (ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030) and ten specific targets. In particular, it displayed the targets within six priority areas: basic education; post basic and tertiary education; youth and adult literacy; skills for work

and life; quality and relevant teaching and learning; and financing of education. The Executive Board endorsed this proposal and requested the Director-General to transmit it to the Global EFA Meeting that would have been held in May 2014, and later on to the Secretary General and to the OWG.

Before the Global EFA Meeting, the EFA II Steering Committee prepared a Joint Proposal of the EFA Steering Committee on Education Post-2015. This Proposal reshaped the UNESCO's position paper. It proposed as an overarching goal: "Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030". Moreover, it delineated 7 targets of two kinds: input targets and outcomes targets. This division implied that the 2 input targets are "enabler conditions" for the achievement of the 5 outcomes target.

The Global EFA Meeting of 2014, examined the UNESCO position paper, the EFA II National Assessments, as well as the Joint Proposal of the EFA Steering Committee on Education Post-2015 declared the "Muscat Agreement". The Muscat Agreement is the proposed set of overarching goal ("Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030") and seven targets discussed, developed and agreed by the international education community on the post 2015 agenda. This agreement entailed also the "Vision, principles and scope of the post-2015 education agenda" and the following steps to ensure that the proposal can be translated into the post 2015 official goal. The Muscat Agreement was thus transmitted to the Secretary General, to the OWG, and to all UNESCO's Member States in order to prepare to the World Education Forum of May 2015 and the High-Level UN Summit of September 2015.

In July of the same year, the OWG released its report: "The Open Working Group proposal on Sustainable Development Goals". The UNGA at its 68th session decided that this report should constitute the basis for drafting the final formulation of goals and targets one year before the end of MDGs agenda and EFA II. In this report education had an overarching goal ("Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"), seven targets, and three means of implementation.

The envisioned challenge for UNESCO was thus to "ensure that the outcome of the World Education Forum 2015 to be held in Incheon, which aims at adopting an agreed position on education, and the education goal and targets of the global development agenda to be

adopted at the high-level UN Summit in September 2015, are fully aligned” (UNESCO, 2014*i*, p. 3).

This complex process ended with the adoption of the A/RES/70 Resolution of the UNGA in 2015: “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (UN, 2015), which established the current international development agenda which entails an international education agenda encapsulated in the formulation of SDG-4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

WORLD EDUCATION FORUM – INCHEON. TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD AND EDUCATION 2030

In May 2015, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR convened the World Education Forum in Incheon (Republic of Korea). The World Education Forum gathered more than 1600 participants from all EFA II constituencies and beyond. They adopted the “Incheon Declaration. Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all”. The relatively short Declaration expanded the vision of Jomtien and took stock of the theoretical advances and achievement in education made during the EFA I and II periods. Indeed, the vision of the world education forum on education entails directly lifelong learning, moving beyond basic education. Moreover, having analysed the challenges and shortfalls of EFA II agenda and the National EFA II Assessments, it strongly underlined the issues of inclusion and equity, quality, gender equality, as well as education for sustainable development and global citizenship. Finally, it agreed on the proposed scheme of SDGs agenda:

Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs. We commit with a sense of urgency to a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no one behind. This new vision is fully captured by the proposed SDG-4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and its corresponding targets (UNESCO, 2015*c*, p. 1).

In September of the same year, the high-level UN Summit at the UN Headquarters proclaimed “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This Resolution set the international development agenda and it entails seventeen

sustainable development goals with a hundred and sixty-seven targets. Within this development agenda is contained the international education agenda, which is called by the international education community and by UNESCO as the “Education 2030 agenda”. The Education 2030 agenda is constituted by the SDG-4, formed of an overarching goal, seven targets and three means of implementation, as well as by other five targets entailed in five other SDGs.

Table 27: Education 2030 Agenda

<p>SDG-4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes • Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education • Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university • Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship • Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations • Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy • Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development • Means of implementation 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all • Means of implementation 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries • Means of implementation 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training

in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States
<p>SDG 3 Health and Well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
<p>SDG 5 Gender Equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 5.6: Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education
<p>SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 8.6: By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
<p>SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 12.8: By 2030 ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
<p>SDG 13: Climate Change Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning

In November, UNESCO organized a High Level Event in Paris, convening the Education 2030 partners and Ministers of Education. At this event, it has been endorsed the “Education 2030 Framework for Action”, which serves as a guide to implement and follow the Education 2030 agenda, providing “guidance for the implementation of SDG4 at country, regional and global levels” (UNESCO, 2016*b*, p. 15). Moreover, it gives substance and explanation to the goal and targets.

As UNESCO has already explained: “as a global education agenda, SDG4 differs from both the education-related MDGs and from EFA in scope, geographical coverage and policy focus” (*idem*, p. 14). Indeed, it comprehends a lifelong learning perspective that goes beyond basic education, and it is universal since it addresses challenges for all countries. Particularly interesting is seeing that the formulation of targets comprehends the “means of implementation”, a sort of “input targets” proposed by the Joint Proposal of the EFA II Steering Committee. Moreover, it includes educational themes such as education for sustainable development and global citizenship which were not part of the EFA II agenda. All the elements for which UNESCO and the international education community advocated for were all integrated either in the formulation of goal and targets, or/and in the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

UNESCO also made an important clarification. The commitments entailed in this agenda are of two kinds: as global targets and/or as global signposts (UNESCO, 2016*b*). Global targets explicitly define a particular standard that all countries should achieve, while global signposts

... do not articulate a global (quantitative) target for all countries to reach. [...] These signposts express global commitments that need to be contextualized and reflected in national education policy priorities. As global signposts for national educational development, these targets require the setting of quantifiable targets at national level (UNESCO, 2016*b*, p. 16).

FOLLOW UP AT UN AND UNESCO

Since Education 2030 is entailed in the broader UN development agenda, the follow up mechanisms established are more complex and comprise both UNESCO led coordination mechanisms on Education 2030, as well as UN led coordination mechanisms on SDGs in general.

Indeed, UN has the ultimate responsibility to coordinate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at global level. In the UNGA Resolution A/70/684 “Critical milestones toward coherent, efficient and inclusive follow up and review at the global level”, there are outlined the processes of monitoring and coordinating actions toward SDGs globally. In particular, “at the global level, the main building blocks of the review architecture are already in place. This architecture will be centred around the high-level political forum” (UN, 2016, p. 4). The work of the high-level political forum would be integrated and informed by other organs, such as the UNGA, the Economic and Social Council, functional commissions and other intergovernmental bodies and fora (such as the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and Global Education 2030 Meetings), regional and national perspectives in consultations with other stakeholders such as civil society and academia. The high-level political forum is an annual forum and serves as a catalyst of international development and monitoring, and it provides informational and the knowledge base for the UN Secretary General annual report on SDGs implementation.

In terms of the follow up to the Education 2030 Agenda, the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action established some specific mechanisms of coordination and follow up. In particular, the Incheon Declaration stated:

16. We call on the WEF 2015 co-convenors, and in particular UNESCO, as well as on all partners, to individually and collectively support countries in implementing the Education 2030 agenda, by providing technical advice, national capacity development and financial support based on their respective mandates and comparative advantages, and building on complementarity. To this end, we entrust UNESCO, in consultation with Member States, the WEF 2015 co-convenors and other partners, to develop an appropriate global coordination mechanism. Recognizing the Global Partnership for Education as a multi-stakeholder financing platform for education to support the implementation of the agenda according to the needs and priorities of countries, we recommend that it be part of this future global coordination mechanism. 17. We further entrust UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, to continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 agenda, in particular by: undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment; facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and standard setting; monitoring progress towards the education targets; convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide the implementation of the agenda; and functioning as a focal point for education within the overall SDG coordination architecture (UNESCO, 2015c, pp. 3-4).

Moreover, the Education 2030 Framework for Action, in its third part on “Implementation Modalities”, explicitly mandated UNESCO to coordinate the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda:

UNESCO, as the specialized UN agency for education, will continue in its mandated role to lead and coordinate the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda, in particular by: • undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment; • undertaking capacity development; • facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and standard-setting and providing policy advice; • promoting South-South and triangular cooperation; • monitoring progress towards the education targets, in particular through the work of the UIS and Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report; • convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda; • functioning as a focal point for education within the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development coordination structure. All of UNESCO, including its field offices, institutes, networks and relevant platforms, will work towards implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2015a, p. 57).

In particular, a series of coordination structures at international level were built, which mostly derived from the EFA II global coordination architecture: i) SDG-Education 2030

Steering Committee; ii) CCNGO/EFA; iii) Global Education 2030 Meeting; iv) E-9 meetings; v) flagship initiatives. Moreover, UNESCO (UIS) led a Technical Advisory Group to prepare and draft the specific indicators for the SDG-4 in consultation with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.

Beyond and besides the global coordination architecture, UNESCO established a set of regional and national consultations and mechanisms of follow up. In particular, it started a cycle of regional consultation to “regionalize” Education 2030 Agenda. Moreover, it constituted a pilot programme of capacity building in ten countries in view of implementing the education 2030 agenda (UNESCO, 2016e).

The 2016 was thus the first year of the Education 2030 Agenda and it served to establishing roles and responsibilities among partners, as well as building and making functioning the structures appointed for global coordination. This preparation phase was witnessed by the agenda and expected outcomes of the first two meetings of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee. Indeed, in May 2016, the first SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee was held at UNESCO Headquarters. In its agenda there was the discussions on the Terms of Reference, as well as its linkages with the broader SDGs follow up. In late 2016, UNESCO convened again the Steering Committee and the expected outcome was: “further definition of the role and activities of the Steering Committee (SC) in terms of advocacy, reviewing progress, financing, and regional strategies and coordination” (UNESCO, 2016d, p. 5).

The 2017 was thus the first year of actual implementation of SDG-Education 2030 agenda. During this year, UNESCO organized the E-9 Ministerial Meeting, a CCNGO Global Meeting, as well as the third meeting of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee. This third meeting took place at the UN Headquarters the day after the High-level SDG Action Event on Education chaired by the President of the UNGA.

Table 28: Timeline of SDG-4 global coordination architecture

Years	MAIN SDG-4 COORDINATION	PARTNERS INITIATIVES	SDGs COORDINATION
2015	World Education Forum Incheon High Level Meeting on Education 2030	Rebranding EFA GMR in GEMR Oslo Summit on Financing global	High-Level UN Summit High Level Political Forum

		education opportunities	
2016	1 st Steering Committee Meeting 2 nd Steering Committee Meeting		High Level Political Forum
2017	E-9 Ministerial Meeting CCNGO Global Meeting 3 rd Steering Committee Meeting	High-level SDG Action Event on Education	High Level Political Forum

5. ANALYSIS

5.1 First Period (1990 – 1995)

5.1.1. Context

The years comprised between 1990 and 1995 were years in which great changes took place that constitute a breakthrough in contemporary history. These years were characterized by changes in the social, economic and political domains. The greatest historical turn was undoubtedly the dissolution of the Soviet Union the 26th of December of 1991. This had important effects and influences on the world order and power relations globally. The end of a bi-polar world led to the rise of the cultural hegemony of the West, the establishment of open societies, liberal economies and the spread of neoliberal ideology throughout the world's continents.

Although with the fall of the Berlin Wall and with the dissolution of the Soviet Union the era of the Cold War seemed to be concluded, these years were also characterized by regional and local conflicts. The regions that experienced cruel conflicts were the Middle East, with the first Gulf War (August 1990 – February 1991) and the continuation of the First Intifada, the Balkans, with the series of Yugoslav Wars from 1991, as well as Central Africa with the Somalian civil war (which started in 1991) and the horror of the Rwanda Genocide in 1994.

However, seeds of hope and peace were also spread. The First Intifada ended in 1993 with the Oslo Accords giving the impression of a possible lasting peace between Palestine and Israel. Several countries affirmed their independence and in 1994, with the election of Nelson Mandela as the first black president of South Africa, the African State was running towards the end of Apartheid.

In the social and economic domains, these years were revolutionary for digital technologies. In 1990, the World Wide Web was launched and the programmes for personal computers were on the rise. These were also years in which environmental concerns started to be eared by governments and head of States. After the Brundtland Report (1987) the concept of sustainable development was diffused and in 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro with the development of the Agenda 21. After these events, the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change was created. These years were also characterized by the so-called “Third-wave feminism”. In 1995, the UN organized the Fourth World Conference on Women with the Beijing Plan of Action. Particularly relevant in the economic domain is the institution of the WTO in 1995 with the Marrakesh Agreement.

UNESCO AND UN

The UN experienced a change in its leadership. In fact, after two mandates as Secretary General (1982 – 1991), the Peruvian Javier Pérez de Cuéllar resigned in favour of Egyptian Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who remained in charge for only one mandate (1992 – 1996) but marking the UN history with a thrust in the direction of rethinking the UN role. Three important contributions of these years were the Agenda for Peace (UN, 1992), the Agenda for Development (UN, 1995) and the Agenda for Democratization in 1995. Despite the weight of these productions, the effects and impacts were not easily measurable in the course of its mandate.

The UN saw great years of prestige thanks to a renovated spirit of collaboration within the Security Council. It is assessed that “there was a rapid increase in the number of peacekeeping operations. [...] the Security Council authorized 20 new operations between 1989 and 1994, raising the number of peacekeepers from 11,000 to 75,000” ([UN website: UN Peace Keeping Operations](#)).

During these years, there was a spectacular production of conventions and declarations related to education. Among these there were the Jomtien Declaration on Education for all; the World Declaration and a Plan of Action for the survival, protection and development of children; the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; the Declaration and Programme of Action on Human Rights; the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women; the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action; the World Programme of Action for Youth; and the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (UNESCO). Moreover, the UN proclaimed 1990 as the International Literacy Year; the 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous people; the 1994 as the International Year of Family and of Sport and the Olympic Ideal; and the 1995 the United Nations Year for Tolerance.

Numerous were the conferences held during this period, such as the WCEFA; the World Summit for Children; the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; the International Congress on Population Education and Development; the World Conference on Human Rights; the World Conference on Education for Special Education Needs; the International Conference on Population and Development; the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women; and the World Summit for Social Development. In addition, several decades and plan of actions were established. Indeed, in these years, the following international agendas with educational components were developed:

Table 29: International agendas and plan of actions with educational components 1990 - 1995

1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
International Plan of Action on Ageing														
UN Decade for Disabled Persons														
2 nd Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination								3 rd Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination						
			UN Decade for Cultural Development											
			UN Decade of International Law											
			International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction											
			UN Decade Against Drug Abuse											
			2 nd Industrial Development Decade for Africa											
			International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism											
			UNESCO's Horizon 2000 for the promotion of African Languages											
			Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000											
			Plan of Action for the survival, protection and development of children											
			EFA I											
3 rd UN Development Decade					Fourth United Nations Development Decade									
													United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education	

Spaniard Federico Mayor became UNESCO's Director-General in 1987 and stayed in office until 1999. Under his leadership, UNESCO produced and promoted three treaties:

- Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. 10 November 1989
- Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education. 13 November 1993
- Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. 16 November 1995

At the 25th session of the General Conference (1990) the number of Member States was 158, while at its 28th session (1995) it was 185. As this data shows, this period is characterized by important changes in membership of UNESCO and of UN in general. In fact, with the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), newly formed States decided to join the Organization. Eighteen out of the twenty-six States that joined UNESCO in this period were formerly part of the USSR. The Member States of UNESCO were the following one:

Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; Angola; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Bahamas; Bahrain; Bangladesh; Barbados; Belgium; Belize; Benin; Bhutan; Bolivia; Botswana; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Burma (Myanmar, 1989); Burundi; Byelorussian S.S.R.(Belarus, 1991); Cameroon; Canada; Cape Verde; Central African Republic; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Comoros; Congo; Cooks Islands; Costa Rica; Cote d'Ivoire; Cuba; Cyprus; Czechoslovakia (Slovakia, 1993); Democratic Kampuchea (Cambodia, 1990); Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Democratic Yemen (Yemen, 1990); Denmark; Djibouti; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; El Salvador; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Fiji; Finland; France; Gabon; Gambia; German Democratic Republic (Germany, 1990); Federal Republic of Germany (Germany, 1990); Ghana; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Hungary; Iceland; India; Indonesia; Islamic Republic of Iran; Iraq; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Japan; Jordan; Kenya; Kiribati; Kuwait; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Lebanon; Lesotho; Liberia; Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; Luxembourg; Madagascar; Malawi; Malaysia; Maldives; Mali; Malta; Mauritania; Mauritius; Mexico; Monaco; Mongolia; Morocco; Mozambique; Namibia; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; Norway; Oman; Pakistan; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Republic of Korea; Romania;

Rwanda; Saint Christopher and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Samoa; San Marino; Sao Tome and Principe; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Spain; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Suriname; Swaziland; Sweden; Switzerland; Syrian Arab Republic; Thailand; Togo; Tonga; Trinidad and Tobago; Tunisia; Turkey; Uganda; Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukraine, 1991); Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Russian Federation, 1991); United Arab Emirates; United Republic of Tanzania; Uruguay; Venezuela; Viet Nam; Yemen (Yemen, 1990); Yugoslavia; Zaire; Zambia; Zimbabwe.

During this period, these 26 Member States joined UNESCO:

Table 30: Member States joining UNESCO 1990 - 1995

Lithuania	7 October 1991	Czech Republic	22 February 1993
Latvia	14 October 1991	Tajikistan	6 April 1993
Estonia	14 October 1991	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 June 1993
Tuvalu	21 October 1991	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	28 June 1993
Kazakhstan	22 May 1992	Turkmenistan	17 August 1993
Slovenia	27 May 1992	Eritrea	2 September 1993
Republic of Moldova	27 May 1992	Solomon Islands	7 September 1993
Croatia	1 June 1992	Andorra	20 October 1993
Kyrgyzstan	2 June 1992	Niue	26 October 1993
Azerbaijan	3 June 1992	Uzbekistan	26 October 1993
Armenia	9 June 1992	Vanuatu	10 February 1994
Georgia	7 October 1992	South Africa	12 December 1994
Slovakia	9 February 1993	Marshall Islands	30 June 1995

5.1.2 Educational themes

An intense focus on basic education is what marks this period. Although UNESCO reports that its notion of basic education is the expanded one entailed in the Jomtien Declaration (see § 5.1.4), the preeminent activities in favour of basic education are mainly related to the following educational issues: literacy, adult education, and universal primary education. Other important educational themes related to basic education were early childhood care and post literacy activities. An educational theme of great importance for these years is continuing education. In fact, UNESCO extends its focus from basic education, in order to comprehend activities on higher education. Associated

to continuing education, there are activities on non formal education and alternative education delivery systems, as well as out of school scientific activities.

Science and technology education deserved great attention both in terms of budget allocation and of activities performed. Science and technology are some of the issues that are encouraged to be inserted in curricula. In fact, curricula review was an activity strongly undertaken. It aimed at promoting a humanistic dimension of education and orienting education for the quality of life. Components such as preventive education, environment education, population education, and physical education are some of the other issues sponsored by UNESCO. A great deal of activities and budget is related to technical and vocational education and the links between education and employment needs. Issues of relevance, quality and effective learning outcomes can be encountered within the programmatic documents.

Teachers' status is another important theme. It is related to broader reflections on the education personnel capacities, from teachers to the personnel in Member States responsible for management, planning, and decision-making. Research and knowledge production and sharing in education were perceived as extremely important, particularly on issues related to innovation (open and distant education) and technologies in education.

5.1.3 Global Challenges

The documents analysed for the first period (UNESCO, 1990a; 1990b; 1991a; 1992; 1994a) show a convergent trend in identification of what are the global challenges perceived.

It is possible to identify three major global challenges and five subordinate, interlinked and interdependent challenges. The three major global challenges are: 1) peace, 2) environment, and 3) development; while the five subordinate challenges are: 1) global transformations, 2) inequalities, 3) basic education, 4) relevance of education, and 5) educational systems. The three major global challenges constitute the core of the challenges perceived by UNESCO. In fact, all the other challenges are influenced and derive from these three.

The 25 C/4 document directly points that the challenges that humankind faces in the 1990s are: “development, the protection of environment and peace” (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 12). These three global challenges are interrelated as it is recognized in the text: “The growing awareness within the international community of the close links connecting peace, development, protection of the environment and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 13). The text explores each of these challenges and these are reflected within other challenges perceived and within the following Programme and Budget documents.

PEACE - Creative significance to peace

The challenge of peace is constant in UNESCO’s reflection during this period and particularly in the documents less related to practical activities (UNESCO, 1990a; UNESCO, 1991a). The identification of peace as a challenge might come from both endogenous and exogenous factors. Building peace is one of the elements that characterize UNESCO’s mandate. In fact, it is notably known that the construction of peace in the minds of men and women is enshrined in UNESCO’s constitution with its famous preamble: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 16).

Exogenous factors might have contributed to identify peace as a challenge for that period. In fact, as demonstrated, while these years were characterized by the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union, several hotbeds of conflicts were on the rise. Although not mentioned by UNESCO’s documents, in 1992 the UN Secretary General produced the Agenda for Peace demonstrating how reflections on peace keeping and peace building were common in these years. Peace is perceived by UNESCO not just as absence of war. In the vision outlined in the texts, there is a need to provide a creative significance to peace which is not based just on military considerations. Peace is conceived as based on human rights, human dignity, fundamental freedom as well as “the free self-determination of peoples, the welfare of individuals and the development of societies in a spirit of solidarity” (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 14). This is testified by the numerous activities during these six years in support of African national liberation movements (UNESCO, 1992), as well as the declared support for Palestinians.

The concerns related to peace are not only the persistence of active conflicts, but also social injustices and inequalities which are seen as seeds of conflicts. Prime example are the activities on reconstruction of an education system in post-apartheid South Africa (UNESCO, 1994a). A South Africa that joined UNESCO after 8 months by the election of Nelson Mandela as a President of the country.

ENVIRONMENT – Making peace with environment

The environment is listed as one of the major global challenges. Even if it takes up fewer paragraphs than the others do, its conceptual relevance, as well as its influence and presence in other challenges, is high. The concern for the environment is not just related to the ecological constraints and the deterioration of natural resources, but also it is seen as an integral aspect of peace and development, linking these two to an intergenerational vision and to the idea of a shared future by humanity. As the 25 C/4 shows: “The fact is that peace and development today must also be seen in terms of the interactions, in space and time, between human beings and their environment as well as in terms of intergenerational relations” (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 16).

The attention to the environment is placed in a broader context, that of the entire UN System. In fact, in 1992 the UN organized the United Nations Conference on Environment & Development which produced the so-called Agenda 21 which reaffirms the concept of sustainable development while taking actions against “unsustainable patterns of production and consumption” (UNSD, 1992, chapter 4). UNESCO’s proximity to environmental issues, and specifically the ones that are expressed during the Conference on Environment and Development, is demonstrated by several activities in favour of Agenda 21. In addition, within the wider reflections on the relevance of education (see § 5.1.4), UNESCO proposed to insert environment components in curricula (UNESCO, 1992).

DEVELOPMENT - People-centred, equitable and sustainable with cultural aspects

Development deserved great attention within the documents. In fact, development is presented as one possible solution to the problems related to injustice such as extreme poverty, suffering, discrimination and exclusion. The texts recalled the international

commitments for development of that period, in particular the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991 – 2000). Several other challenges are associated and linked to development. For example, challenges such as illiteracy, lack of access to education and knowledge, cultural, scientific and technological dependence, situations of discrimination or exclusion, unequal distribution of resources, and irrational management of the environment.

Hence, development is seen as necessitous of a new, fresh and far-reaching vision which goes beyond the mere economic aspects of it. In the reflection of UNESCO, the ethical, cultural and human dimensions of development are taken into consideration. In UNESCO's documents, development is seen as a collective construction to improve all humankind (UNESCO, 1990*a*) and it should be people-centred, equitable and sustainable (UNESCO, 1994*a*). This vision of development is linked to the broader reflections on development that took place in the same period in the UN. These were the years in which the very concept of human development is elaborated, conceived and utilized within the first Human Development Report:

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and change over time. But at all levels of development, the three essential ones are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible (UNDP, 1990, p. 1).

Moreover, development should be constructed on two building blocks: education and culture. The cultural dimension of development is strongly recognized. In fact, UNESCO dedicated great attention, efforts and budget to the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988 – 1997)⁷. The works on the World Decade for Cultural Development does not only lay under Major Programme Area III (Culture: past, present and future) with a dedicated budget (from 700,000 USD in 1990 to more than 2,000,000 USD in 1994 of regular budget), but also shape the work programme of the other Major Programme Areas, orienting projects, activities and budget allocation. As the 25 C/5 stated (UNESCO, 1990*b*, p. 216): “the objectives of UNESCO's third Medium-Term Plan [1990 – 1995] were drawn up in co-ordination with the Plan of Action of the Decade”. In fact,

⁷ Proclaimed by the UNGA at its forty-first session (UNGA resolution 41/187 dated 8 December 1986).

in the appendices of the three C/5s, there is a dedicated chapter on “Summary of activities relating to the World Decade for Cultural Development”.

Lastly, a set of universal values are also listed as the bases for the realization of development (but also of peace and the protection of the environment). These indispensable principles are human rights, human dignity, social justice and fundamental freedoms. Although they are not specifically a concern, they are at the core of the reflections around global challenges and around development specifically. Human rights are the “common heritage of human kind” and they are at the core of any process of development.

GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS – Science and technologies, employment needs and structures, demography.

UNESCO’s programmatic documents revealed the perception of a world that is experiencing important global transformations. In particular, “the world economic, social and cultural environment is changing”. (UNESCO, 1991*a*, p. 44). Historical events happening in that period justified this perception. Naturally, the concern for the future of humankind in the domains of peace, environment and development is expressed with the depth explained above.

However, UNESCO perceived other three important challenges facing humankind. These are innovations and changes in sciences and technologies, changes in employment needs and structures, as well as demographic changes. The concern on changes in sciences and technologies is closely related to the concern for inequalities. In fact, differences in science and technology advance between countries led to persisting inequalities and technological dependence. Moreover, these changes questioned the relevance of what is taught in schools. Several are the activities which deal with the efforts of keeping pace with the transformation of technologies as well as the changes in employment needs. Furthermore, it is stressed the idea that “world population growth poses a tremendous challenge for the ideal of education for all” (UNESCO, 1991*a*, p. 22). UNESCO perceived other important changes, such as social transformations, the rate of population growth, deterioration of environment, patterns of production of knowledge, unequal distribution of resources, and the economic constraints affecting some countries preventing them to sustain their educational systems.

INEQUALITIES – Between countries and within education (women, minorities, special needs, refugees).

It is quite undoubted that UNESCO perceives inequalities as a global challenge for this period. In particular, texts show two kinds of inequalities: the one between countries and inequalities within education. Firstly, inequalities persist between developed and developing (or non-industrialized) countries, which are affected by foreign debt problems, decline in the price of raw material, deterioration of trade, and increase in the rate of population. Because of it, inequalities are seen as the sources of injustice, seeds of conflicts, as well as a break for development. Several activities in the work programme try to target a limited proportion of countries. These are often LDCs, while sometimes the focus is on the nine most populated countries on earth that hold the lowest educational levels (E-9 countries). The assumptions for focusing on these countries are that thanks to the rate of population the challenges are brought on scale and that the highest number of out of school children lives in these countries. Thus, inequalities are testified by financial constraints that affect some and that cause several and severe difficulties in sustaining education systems (UNESCO, 1991*a*).

However, deep reflections are dedicated to inequalities in education. In fact, “while the global tendencies in the development of education and the learning environment over the past quarter century are readily apparent, they are not manifested to the same degree in all countries” (*idem*, p. 16). Several activities concentrate their focus on target groups which are marginalized, or simply that do not enjoy educational opportunities like the others. Among the section of population that deserved greater attention are women. Women’s education is one of the priorities of UNESCO in this period and it is perceived as a global concern. Besides women’s education, there is the challenge of education for minorities, and people living in rural areas. Great attention is paid to the educational needs of children with disabilities whose right to education is often denied. Moreover, UNESCO perceived the challenge of providing education for refugees and people living in emergencies. Conflicts are perceived as global challenges not only *per se*, but also because of the consequences and repercussions they produce.

However, it is important to recognize that the inequalities in education perceived are often seen as inequalities in access to education, rather than an expanded vision of it. While

there are some reflections on the outcomes of education, inequalities in learning outcomes are not really taken into consideration. Out of school children are perceived as an important challenge by UNESCO. Basic education is thus a global challenge.

BASIC EDUCATION – Literacy as the absolute priority

Although the texts explain that basic education is conceived in an expanded manner, the greatest challenge related to basic education is one: literacy. In fact, even if 27 C/5 specifies that basic education is considered “in the expanded vision of the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All” (UNESCO, 1994a, p. 30) which comprehends all basic learning needs (learning tools and learning content), the programmes and activities are closely linked to the literacy and to universal primary education, and adult education. Literacy figures as the main concern in basic education from which the other two derive. The fight against illiteracy was named as a UNESCO priority so that it deserves also a dedicated “Mobilizing project on ‘Combating Illiteracy’”.

With literacy, the texts include also functional and technological literacy and it is seen as a foundation for continuing education. The widespread phenomenon of illiteracy, and in particular adult and women illiteracy, is considered the “absolute priority” (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 20). The activities on and the attention to literacy are linked to a broader framework of the fight against illiteracy that is promoted in the UN and lies on the UNESCO’s Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 (see § 5.1.5) which led to the establishment of the International Year of Literacy in 1990 and the WCEFA.

Related to literacy there is the challenge of universal primary education. As 25 C/4 notes (*idem*, p. 195): “Primary education is, as a rule, the principal means whereby literacy is spread throughout society”. Therefore primary education and out of school children were the second main concerns related to basic education challenge and it is seen as such in light of the main concern which is illiteracy. The text also calls for an assumption of responsibility of all Member States to ensure universal primary education. Universal primary education is in fact observed with the development of indicators and closely monitored in the World Education Reports. Indeed, 25 C/4 provides figures about enrolment rates and put particular emphasis on the segment of population most in danger

to be excluded by access to educational opportunities: girls, people living in rural areas, special needs and disable children.

Adult education and specifically adult literacy was the third major challenge of basic education. UNESCO often recalled the Recommendation on Development of Adult Education (UNESCO, 1976*b*) and its attention to adult education led to propose for the subsequent biennium (1996 – 1997) the fifth International Conference on Adult Education.

EDUCATION RELEVANCE – The needs of people in changing societies.
Pedagogical approach, content of curricula, purposes of education and policies.

This is one of the strong concepts and challenges for UNESCO in this period. In fact, as explained above, UNESCO perceived that the world was facing many transformations and tensions. The contexts and structures of the world of work were changing, as well as innovation, science and technologies are drastically on the move. These have great impact on the reflections upon what education is needed for future generations. The needs, and especially the learning needs, and the life skills required for children, youth and adults are no longer the same as in previous periods. As an example, the very concept of literacy is questioned with the principles of functional and technological literacy. As 27 C/5 puts it (UNESCO, 1994*a*, p. 38): “The challenges facing societies at the threshold of the twenty-first century call for a fundamental review of education worldwide”.

UNESCO’s considerations led to the birth of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century established under the chairmanship of Mr Jacques Delors during the 26th session of UNESCO’s General Conference. This Commission had the mandate to reflect upon the question: “What kind of education is needed for what kind of society in the future?”. This question has to do with the relevance of education in this period of changes. Virtually all the activities of the 27 C/5 had the aim of helping and facilitating the work of the Commission. Within this framework, other pedagogical considerations were advanced. For example, the fact that education should focus on life skills and that education should foster critical and creative thinking. Central to this discourse are the reflections upon the roles of higher education, which is called to adapt itself to the needs of societies, as well as technical and vocational education, which is called to respond to the needs of employment.

Another important aspect of the relevance of education is related to the consideration of the need to update and review the content of education. In fact, UNESCO encouraged inserting some components in curricula, perceiving them as relevant. These components are preventive education (dealing with AIDS epidemic and drug abuse⁸), environment education, education for peace and international understanding, as well as multilingual education.

Finally, a correlated challenge is the one on developing relevant policies. The entire education system should be rethought in light of the challenges of changing societies. In a period of financial constraints with major changes in technologies, employment structures, as well as growing demands for education, educational systems should be prepared to adapt to these changes and should be fostered by high level management techniques. Shortages of funds call for cost effective innovations and a long term vision in programming.

EDUCATION SYSTEMS – Policies, financing, structures, personnel.

Education systems are conceived as deserving attention and they constitute a challenge for the period. In fact, there are four elements that UNESCO perceived as global challenges related to educational systems: policies, financial constraints, structures, and personnel. Appropriate and relevant educational policies are needed. Several activities of UNESCO aim at reviewing legislation, policies and programmes, as well as producing policy papers and policy briefs for Member States. Related to it, there is the concern for inequalities between States that leave some countries in financial constraints, preventing them to adequately finance their education systems. This led UNESCO to seek and propose cost effective strategies in management of education sectors through the provision of “technical support in the search for solutions to problems of educational financing in critical economic situations” (UNESCO, 1990*b*, p. 28), the “dissemination of information on low-cost teaching materials” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 29), or through activities of “co-operation with ILO and the World Bank in policy studies on austerity, adjustment and human resources” (*idem*, p. 42).

⁸ There are activities performed in co-operation with the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and within the framework of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse (1991 – 2000).

As to the infrastructure of education, the two interrelated challenges are the educational buildings, as well as the materials. Drawing from the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction⁹, UNESCO developed activities to advance techniques and guidelines for reinforcing educational buildings to withstand natural disasters and ensure safe educational buildings. It is argued that scarce and outdated educational equipment and learning materials, such as textbooks, damage the full appreciation of education.

Finally, educational personnel are perceived as of key importance. On the one hand, educational planners are called to assume greater responsibilities in the subsequent years. Thus, the improvement of their planning, management and research capacities is a crucial goal of UNESCO's training activities. On the other hand, teachers are perceived as strongly important and their status should be enhanced. For this reason, UNESCO strongly promotes the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers. Moreover, several activities are oriented to upgrade pre-service and in-service training for teachers and trainers. In particular in the field of the use of ICTs in education.

5.1.4 Notion of education

As it is explained in the theoretical framework, the notion of education can be drawn from the educational ideas, concepts and values which are promoted directly or indirectly. These values, concepts and principles are numerous. In fact in the five documents analysed 361 passages have been identified in which a particular concept, principle or value is promoted. These values, concepts and principles constitute a heterogeneous constellation. Although they are almost all correlated and linked, they deal with different aspects of education and sometimes they present contradictions. The values, concepts and principles belongs to six macro categories which are of major importance: a humanistic vision of education, education relevance, equity in education, enabling function of education, innovation in education, and continuing education.

These values, concepts and principles are not only linked to one another, but they are also closely linked to the global challenges perceived in the period. In fact, some of the values, concepts and principles promoted can be understood only in connection with other principles or with the challenges they respond to. It will be present the six macro

⁹ Approved by UNGA Resolution 44/236.

categories of values showing the values, concepts and principles they entail and the values which link the families.

HUMANISTIC EDUCATION – Purposes and content. Improving the quality of life and preparing people to foster their all-round personal fulfilment. Cultural dimension of education.

The texts strongly reflect upon a humanistic vision of education. In fact, this is the first macro category of values in terms of occurrences and values entailed. Reflections on humanistic education are concentrated on two main lines. The first one is related to the purposes of education, while the second on the content of a humanistic education.

UNESCO clearly and directly stated that a humanistic vision of education should be promoted. In UNESCO's reflections, education should aim at improving the quality of life and preparing people to foster their all-round personal fulfilment (UNESCO, 1990*a*). Indeed, the World Education Report recalled the Universal Declaration of Human Rights regarding the purposes of education that "shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UNESCO, 1991*a*, p. 17). UNESCO's vision of humanistic education sees education as a means to foster peace (UNESCO, 1994*a*), international understanding (UNESCO, 1990*b*; 1991*a*), democracy (UNESCO, 1992), as well as ethical values. For UNESCO, cultural pluralism is also a concept that should be promoted through education. In addition, numerous are the activities which promoted the concept that education has the responsibility and a primary role in contributing to cultural development. Of undoubted influence was the aforementioned United Nations Decade for Cultural Development (see § 5.1.3).

The reflections on the purposes of education necessarily have an impact on the considerations on the content of education. UNESCO, in these years, put forward several pedagogical reflections for the century to come. These reflections covered a wide range of pedagogical areas but the central theme was the process of learning (UNESCO, 1994*a*). In addition, there are numerous components that UNESCO encouraged to insert in curricula. Of major importance are environmental issues, physical education, and preventive education. Moreover, additional principles were promoted such as critical and creative thinking as something that education should deal with, as well as civic education

and human rights education¹⁰. Finally, UNESCO encouraged to introduce arts within curricula.

The idea of a humanistic education is linked to the other five macro categories of principles. In fact, there are values, concepts and principles that have to do with, and bridged, both the concept of humanistic education and the concept of continuing education. For example, several times it is stressed the importance of ECCE as fundamental for continuing education (UNESCO, 1992). Associated to it, the important role of the family in caring for children is promoted *via* the development of integrated programmes on early childhood. Another issue that is promoted in UNESCO's programme is non formal education. This issue suggests on the one hand that for UNESCO education can happen outside formal schooling, and on the other hand that education can happen not only during the years of schooling (generally between 5 and 17). Therefore, this concept not only promotes a vision of education that is lifelong and life wide, but also suggests that a lifelong and life wide approach to education is valuable for the development of the person. In fact, although UNESCO's work is principally concentrated on literacy and on primary education, there are also reflections on all levels of education both formal and non-formal.

Humanistic education is associated also with the relevance of education. In fact, the pedagogical reflections characterizing this period led to a focus on learners and their learning process. It is the beginning of the learner centred approach, which states that any education process should take into account the situation and needs of learners. With the WCEFA, the concept of basic education is expanded taking into consideration the learning needs. In UNESCO's reflections, education should be sensitive to the local and national context. It is important to recognize that in these years the concepts of "Acceptability" and "Adaptability" were still to come (Tomaševsky, 2001). UNESCO's considerations and activities in reforming curricula through humanistic lenses started with the recognition that any intervention on education should take into account local learning needs (UNESCO, 1992). One more principle associated with humanistic education and promoted in this period is that education should enable youth to take part of the life of

¹⁰ Human Rights Education Decade (1995 – 2004). However, it was not possible to assess the impact of this decade in UNESCO's work since the last programmatic document (27 C/5) was dated 1994, one year before the launch of the Decade.

their communities, reaffirming the idea that education contributes to community development.

Humanistic education is also linked to equity. UNESCO, through the promotion of intercultural education, is encouraging the inclusion of all cultures as valuable. In addition, several works and activities were related to the concept of inclusion and integration. For example, the promotion of physical and sports education for social integration, as well as the normative work on the UNESCO's Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960). At the end of this period, UNESCO produced a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (16 November 1995) in which article 4 is dedicated to education for tolerance, highlighting the importance of education in countering exclusion (UNESCO, 1995).

The concept of humanistic education is also closely related to the notion of the enabling function of education. In fact, in UNESCO's vision, a humanistic education should be concentrated in developing life skills. Education has an enabler function for both people and communities, enabling people to fulfil their potential and enabling communities to develop. In addition, through education people can enjoy their rights and contributes to the lives of their communities (UNESCO, 1990*b*). The idea that education is fundamental for human development is in fact directly promoted in the texts. Additionally, the humanistic vision of education led to think that basic education is what is needed for continuing learning.

Finally, some concepts promoted in UNESCO's programmatic documents link a humanistic education with innovations. In fact, the global transformations characterizing the sciences led to rethink the way in which knowledge is acquired. A new principle is promoted within curricula: interdisciplinarity along with a reflection on the role of teachers as developers of critical and creative thinking. Scientific activities paved the way to rethink what constitutes literacy. Functional and technological literacy are new concepts framed in a humanistic vision of education. Within the programmes, out of school scientific activities were promoted and encouraged.

EDUCATION RELEVANCE – Learning needs are defined in local contexts.
What kind of education for what kind of society.

The concept of education relevance is a central concept for this period. As it was possible to infer, the relevance of education was perceived by UNESCO as one of the global challenges of these years. In fact, global transformations required a reflection on both the content, as well as on the purposes of education. The first idea promoted in UNESCO's programmatic texts related to relevance is that learning needs are defined locally. Since education should build the foundation for lifelong learning, what the "foundation" is depends on national cultural, social and economic circumstances. Indeed, the same paragraph links education with particular communities: "[education] enables the individual to participate effectively in the life and activity of his or her community" (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 27). The appeals to the linkages with local needs and communities are particularly strong and continuous. An example of it is an activity of the first biennium (UNESCO, 1990b, p. 20): "support for non-formal education aimed at preparing young people from marginalized socio-cultural environments for creative participation in the civic and cultural life of their community".

These reflections are closely related to several activities performed in these six years in reforming content and structures of curricula and textbooks. For example, the provision of technical assistance "in revising primary-school curricula to meet local learning needs" (UNESCO, 1992, p. 29). Moreover, as already expressed above, the concept of functional literacy and technological literacy is a reflection of the need to reformulate the idea of literacy through the lenses of relevance. Finally, UNESCO strongly calls into question the role that higher education institutions should play in the development of society and their contributions to the education system as a whole.

An important distinction on the concept of quality education has to be made. In fact, the concept of quality education is not self-evident and clear throughout the texts. In fact, this concept was not developed and inserted in UNESCO's work programme from the beginning of the period. Only from the second biennium does the sub programme 1.2 "Towards universal primary education" add the concept of "quality" to primary education (sub programme 1.2 "Towards universal quality primary education"). The use of the terminology "quality education" grew over this period; however, rarely does it stand

alone. Indeed, the use of the term quality is often accompanied by the terms “relevance” (in most cases) and “efficiency” and it is also used closely to considerations on learning achievements. Learning outcomes and learning achievements are conceived as one part of quality of education, which appears to be something broader than that (UNESCO, 1991*a*, p. 74). Thus, it seems that the notion of quality education is still in a process of development, and it does not have a stand-alone meaning. While it appears to be initially a complementary concept with education relevance, due to the frequency of their proximity, the concept of quality came near to efficiency and effectiveness of learning achievements.

In the programmatic texts there are some concepts which link the ideas of relevance and continuing education. As explained above (see § 5.1.3), the UNESCO’s broader view of continuing education entails the concept of life wide education, which means that UNESCO recognizes as important the education that happens outside schools. Therefore, UNESCO directly promotes of community based education (UNESCO, 1990*b*; 1992), which is likely more adaptable to local learning needs, and more relevant for the life of people. In addition, in this period UNESCO focused its attention on different levels of education, among these higher education is one of the most discussed. The reflections related to higher education are not only concentrated on human resource development, but also on enhancing the relevance of it. In fact, during the second biennium, a sub programme was dedicated to “enhance quality, relevance and efficiency of national higher education systems” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 38).

Reflections on relevance would not exist without reflections on innovations. UNESCO’s activities became more and more concentrated on relevance during the course of the biennia until the creation of the International Commission on Education for 21st Century. As already explained, this Commission had the mandate to rethink education with the lenses of relevance. Some concepts that linked relevance and innovation were particularly important, such as the considerations on the role of ICTs in education. These led to activities such as in service training of teachers training in order to properly use technologies in classrooms, not to mention, the concept of technological literacy.

Relevance is related to the idea of education as a process that enables the creation or expansion of human possibilities and life skills. Several times the idea that education

should respond to the employment needs is promoted. This is particularly evident in the reflections of technical and vocational education. For example, the organization of symposia “on ways of achieving better understanding and assessment of the impact of constantly changing employment needs on the content and methods of education and training, and on the relevance of present education and training to employment trends” (UNESCO, 1990*b*, p. 21). Therefore, UNESCO promotes the idea of an education that enable people to develop particular skills and competences that are relevant to the employment trends. Another issue promoted that links relevance to the enabling function of education is a particular role of teachers. In the texts, it is possible to infer that teachers are seen as the enabler of development and they should be trained according to the changing needs of local contexts (UNESCO, 1990*b*).

Among UNESCO’s promoted values and principles, there are some that connect relevance and equity, the pedagogical idea of mother tongue teaching is a good example of it. This idea takes into account both concerns about relevance and concerns about equity. In fact, while on the one hand mother tongue teaching is anchored to the local context, on the other it protects linguistic minorities. Several times, UNESCO’s activities deal with the most disadvantaged sections of population (such as children with disabilities and refugees), requesting education to respond to their special needs. Many are the examples of activities on special needs education, as well as education for refugees or in emergencies.

EQUITY – Human Right approach, education as a basic social service.

Several concepts, values and principles promoted by UNESCO are correlated with the notion of equity. This is witnessed by UNESCO’s consideration of education as a human right, which is UNESCO’s approach to education in this period. This concept is not only directly promoted, but can be inferred from the accent put on “education for all”, and on the responsibilities of all Member States to respect the right to education of everyone. UNESCO’s work also focuses on disadvantaged populations. Among these are women, children with disabilities, people living in remote and rural areas, refugees and people in emergency situations. Several activities in the work plans targeted the marginalized. UNESCO maintained its attention on the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and participated in important international conferences on education for people

whose right to education is endangered. For example, UNESCO organized the World Conference on Education for Special Education Needs in 1994. Another key principle promoted by UNESCO related to equity is the importance of teachers and their status, in particular the status of women teachers. The activities promoting teachers' status are concentrated on normative actions within the framework of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966).

UNESCO promoted concepts and values that link equity and the notion of continuing education. UNESCO's vision of education as a human right extends beyond the right to primary education and entails the right of general basic education. This means that it includes the right of literacy, regardless of the age of the learner. In UNESCO's work, adult education and post-literacy programmes, which are strongly related to the concept of continuing education, are promoted with a right based approach. Thus, the right to basic education, a principle related to equity, is a foundation for promoting adult education.

As noted above, UNESCO sees education as a human right, a basic need of the world population, as well as a basic social service (UNESCO, 1990*a*). These concepts relate equity with the view of an education which has an enabling function. In fact, not only the right to education has to do with equity, but it is perceived that the enjoyment of this right enables the enjoyment of other rights and enables development. On the one hand, it is already demonstrated that UNESCO sees education as important for personal and cultural development; on the other hand, it enables the empowerment of sections of population who experience inequalities and difficult situations. Exemplary is the case of woman. As already demonstrated, woman are often conceived as deserving special attention for equity. Several activities deal with the right to education of woman with the aim of empowering them through education and promoting the participation and the advancement of women in all areas of education and of civic life (UNESCO, 1992).

Equity is also aligned to innovation. In fact, the idea that new technologies and technological innovations can fill some of the gaps of inequalities is stressed in this period. Reflections and considerations on distance and open education are often associated with issues of reaching the marginalized. For example, the UNESCO activity in the third biennium: "facilitating the pursuit of higher education, through the promotion

of distance education or open university systems, by young people who are unable to attend regular university courses” (UNESCO, 1994*a*, p. 162). Moreover, new projects and innovative policies are called to recover the inequalities that traditional systems may have produced like “innovative projects designed to enable missing children in urban slums, minorities and those living on islands and other remote areas to have access to basic education services” (UNESCO, 1994*a*, p. 31).

ENABLING FUNCTION OF EDUCATION – Empowering people, key right for the enjoyment of other rights, training for employability

Education is conceived as a human right, and a basic social service. In fact, in UNESCO’s Medium Term Plan, it is expressed the concern for the continue trend in financial constraints and cutting for basic social and public services, among which UNESCO included education (UNESCO, 1990*a*). In UNESCO’s reflections, education expands the possibilities of human beings, and plays an enabling function for human development, which is conceived as sustainable and people centred. In the World Education Report it is recognized an essential role of education in “alleviating poverty, reducing infant mortality and improving public health, protecting the environment, strengthening human rights, improving international understanding and enriching the national culture” (UNESCO, 1991*a*, p. 16).

Particularly important are the reflections on education and its linkages with the world of work. As noted above, among the global challenges UNESCO perceived the transformations in the employability structures and needs. UNESCO’s activities on technical and vocational education are often oriented to developing skills and competences which are needed by the world of work. Education opportunities should be rendered efficient leading to effective learning outcomes and developing human resources. Notable reflections are done around teachers as the enablers of the learning process. Their status, as well as their competencies should be fostered and raised.

UNESCO promoted concepts that relate innovations with the vision of the enabling function of education. As explained above, the reflections on changing needs of employment have an impact, as well as require innovation, on the technical and vocational education content and aim. In addition, access to higher levels of education is expanding and higher education institutions should be enabled to be more effective and efficient.

Interuniversity cooperation, studying abroad, and academic mobility are some of the concepts promoted which tried to link innovations to an expanding field of competences development. Moreover, the use of ICTs in education is promoted and perceived as an innovative frontier for enlarging people's learning.

Continuing education concept helps expanding the idea of enabling function of education. In fact, competencies can be developed at any time, from early childhood to adult education programmes. Particularly explanatory is the attention to adult education and adult literacy. In addition, two declared aims of the period "the overall level of education must be raised and more people must be assisted in achieving higher levels of education" (UNESCO, 1990a, p. 34) deal with a reinforcement of higher level of education. Universities are called to enhance their role. Thus, the idea of interuniversity cooperation and academic freedoms as ways to develop the quality of higher education institutions is also promoted.

INNOVATION – Science and technology opens new possibilities.

There are several principles and concepts promoted which are linked to the idea that education is experiencing innovations, that innovative education is required and that innovations taking place in education should be promoted. In particular in the case of science and technology. In fact, the global transformations in science asked for innovative ways to teach science and technology education. The use of ICTs in education and the training of teachers in using ICTs are also strongly encouraged. Moreover, there are many projects, activities and reflections on a renovated higher education system. Distance and open education are concepts which required attention, dedicated programmes, publications and research. Furthermore, innovative policies, management techniques and financing models are investigated and promoted in the period. For example, in a context of education which was still predominantly managed by public authorities, a "comparative study on the role and financing of private secondary schools" has been performed (UNESCO, 1992, p. 44).

Innovation in education is closely linked to the concept of continuing education. Not only because of the relevance of higher education level in the reflections of both concepts, but also because on the promotion of non-formal education. Specifically and most

importantly, the idea of alternative educational delivery systems is promoted (UNESCO, 1992).

CONTINUING EDUCATION – A lifelong process which entails several levels of education

The concept of continuing education is directly promoted with two names “continuing education” and “lifelong education”¹¹. Although basic education, and particularly literacy and universal primary education, is the focus of UNESCO’s work, basic education is conceived as a foundation for continuing education. In fact, all levels of education are entailed in UNESCO’s activities. Concepts like adult education, functional literacy, and in service training clearly show UNESCO’s attention to an education which happens lifelong. In addition, UNESCO promotes non-formal education systems, such as community based education, and out of school activities. These concepts show how lifelong education has a broader meaning, taking into account learning which is life-wide.

5.1.5 Agenda-setting Mechanisms

As noted in the theoretical framework, five agenda-setting mechanisms has been identified that are utilized by UNESCO: value setting, capacity building, goal setting, standard setting, and financial leveraging. At a first glance, it is possible to see that there are some mechanisms used more than others. Value setting and capacity building are the mechanisms that UNESCO preferred by far. After these two, similar figures for goal setting and standard setting have been encountered, while financial leveraging is poorly used.

VALUE SETTING

Value setting is the most used mechanism with more activities carried out in the period. However, it has been assessed that almost all the other mechanisms have components that help in setting values. In fact, in the coding process, when it came to decide whether to put an activity under one mechanism or another, the choice was often between value setting and another mechanism. The activities performed within this mechanism are of different nature.

¹¹ Very few occurrences for “lifelong learning”.

The first kind of activities entailed in this mechanism is building networks. These networks have often the aim of sharing ideas and experiences. The values set by UNESCO depend on the types of network created, as well as the types of ideas that are encouraged to be shared. Of particular relevance and importance in these years is the creation and launch of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. This programme, which in its creation was mainly devoted to universities in developing countries, promoted international inter-university cooperation and networking to enhance institutional capacities through knowledge sharing and collaborative work (UNESCO, 1992). During the second and third biennia UNESCO proposed the creation of UNESCO Chairs on particular educational issues, orienting research and knowledge exchanges on it.

Another kind of activities performed under the value setting mechanism is knowledge base expansion. Often referred to as the “clearing house” function, the aim of these activities are to collect, analyse, and distribute research findings on a particular theme. Although the budget allocated specifically to research in education in the Programme and Budget document was not high, there are numerous examples of commissioned research under the other lines of the programme. Comparative studies or national case studies were often held in cooperation with other UN Agencies, as well as NGOs or National Commissions.

UNESCO produced a high number of publications on different themes. Some publications have a special focus on a particular concept and issue for example the monographs on literacy, post-literacy and civic education for women (UNESCO, 1990*b*). Other publication have a broader and general scope and they deal with different educational issues. Of great importance is the publication of the World Education Report, as well as World Guide to Higher Education, Study Abroad, Handbook for Technology Teachers and Prospects. UNESCO published several other kinds of publications such as newsletters, bulletins and research of different nature.

There are also other publications whose target is decision makers. UNESCO’s technical capacity enables it to produce a large amount of guidelines, strategies, policies, and curriculum designs. While helping decision makers in their functions, UNESCO can vehicle numerous values with these technical publications. Of particular example is the political and technical support provided in the third biennium with the following activity:

“Policy support will be provided to ministers of education through ministerial briefs on specific aspects of educational development. These briefs will address issues related to access and equity in education that are identified in the above activities and will draw on the experiences of Member States, UNESCO (including its international institutes), NGOs and professional organizations” (UNESCO, 1994a, p. 49). As it is clear, these ministerial briefs are oriented to promote equity in educational policies.

Related to its technical competence, UNESCO supported the activities of NGOs in building their national campaigns. This technical support helped UNESCO in building alliances and partnerships for promoting its preferred notion of education. For example, UNESCO provided “technical and financial support to national adult education institutions and specialized NGOs for the renewal of continuing education for adults” (UNESCO, 1990b, p. 15), and “produced, under contract with competent educational NGOs information materials designed to reinforce national campaigns and other activities in favour of universal primary education” (*idem*, p. 17).

Values have also been set through global advocacy measures in order to inform public opinion and appeal to political decision makers. The global advocacy measures carried out took form in the organization of International or Regional Conferences on a particular education issue with a broad audience. For example, in the 25 C/5 it is stated that the organization of the WCEFA had “the aim of creating greater awareness of the urgent need to mobilize national and external resources for basic education” (*ibidem*). These conferences can be of more technical character, such as a roundtable of experts, regional meetings with parliamentarians, as well as ministerial meetings. An interesting project was the organization of the regional Conferences of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning. Global advocacy entailed also a close link with the media. In this period, UNESCO perceived the importance of having a media strategy to support global public awareness. It held a “seminar for briefing of journalists and other media personnel” (*idem*, p. 14), co-produced “information videos with television stations” (*idem*, p. 18), as well as prepared “radio programmes on early child development in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in the Arab region” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 30).

Among the activities of the value setting mechanism there are the celebrations of international years, weeks, or days. For example, 1990 was characterized by the organization of promotional activities for International Literacy Year, and the annual celebration of International Literacy Day. Related to global celebrations are the creation of special prizes and special events. These two activities have the aim at focusing global attention to the issue promoted in the prizes and during the events. For example, UNESCO instituted its literacy prize and supported “the organization of international Olympics in physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and computer science, and regional Olympics in science, as well as other projects aimed at promoting out-of-school scientific activities” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 34).

Finally, the mechanism of value setting was used through the establishment of the International Commission on Education for 21st Century (see § 5.1.3). The pluriennial work of the Commission was supported by international, regional and national seminars and debates, focusing the attention to the notion of relevance of education for the next century. As noted above, these values, principles and concepts are promoted not only directly, but can be also inferred looking at other mechanisms and activities, as well as from the global challenges perceived.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The second most used agenda-setting mechanism is capacity building. As explained in the theoretical framework, this mechanism entails two sub mechanisms and different activities.

Firstly, UNESCO’s use of this mechanism focuses on providing technical assistance to Member States in designing specific policies, in revision and design of curricula, in management and planning, in the design of textbooks, as well as in formulating national plans. Numerous are the examples of activities of assisting governments in defining appropriate policies or to help design relevant learning processes. To cite some of the most paradigmatic, one can find the “provision of technical support for the formulation of national plans to eliminate illiteracy” (UNESCO, 1990*b*, p. 15) and the “collaboration with Member States in the reformulation of their national plans for basic education” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 24). Other related activities can be of more specific and legislative nature and these are often related to the mechanism of setting a standard through

normative activity. For example the provision of “technical support for ratifying countries to help them improve the application of the convention [Draft Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education] and to carry out the recommendations of the committees” (*idem*, p. 40). Associated to these there are activities of policy reviews and “the preparation of national educational policy reports” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 42).

Another line of activities within this mechanism is training. UNESCO conducted and provided technical guidance for conducting in service training for teachers, as well as training of Member State specialists and ministerial personnel to enhance their planning, management and research capacities. However, the training sessions were not only organized for Member State officials, but they were also provided to NGOs and community leaders. For example, UNESCO trained “community leaders to develop and establish community-based parent education programmes” (UNESCO, 1990*b*, p. 19).

The other sub mechanism entailed in capacity building is sharing best practices. It promotes the creation of networks for sharing best practices and experiences. It is closely linked to the value setting mechanism. However, the aim of these exchanges is not simply to promote a particular educational concept, but to learn from experience of “what works” in other countries and what can be borrowed or replicated in order to solve local challenges. Often these exchanges of information and practices are related to innovation, ICTs, higher education, literacy and technical and vocational education. Of particular importance is the creation of an international UNESCO-led Technical and Vocational Education Project (UNEVOC) “aimed at fostering the international exchange of ideas, information and experience and studies on policy issues, strengthening national research and development capabilities and facilitating access to data bases and documentation” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 37).

Other activities that are performed by UNESCO within this mechanism are the production of ministerial briefs, the organization of ministerial conferences, as well as regional and local workshops and seminars, training sessions and round table of experts. Particularly innovative are the production of video training and “an interactive training package [...] to support subregional training in policy analysis” (UNESCO, 1994*a*, p. 49). Finally,

UNESCO developed activities to provide “rapid policy advice to those countries experiencing emergency conditions” (*idem*, p. 50).

The educational themes that are mostly dealt with within this mechanism are literacy, educational planning, special needs education, ICT use in education and innovations. Teachers, ministries and educational planners are the people to whom these activities are addressed. Other important activities for capacity building relate to the development of higher education systems, as well as technical and vocational education and continuing education.

GOAL SETTING

This mechanism has the same importance and relevance as the standard setting mechanism. During the course of the period, it seems to acquire more prominence through an expansion of activities performed with the purpose of establishing common goals. Yet, goal setting entails not only the actual establishment of an array of international written goals, but also all the activities that aimed at creating interdependence and a shared pathways for education development.

UNESCO participated in the creation of international decades and plans of action, and created its own set of goals and frameworks for action. Among the international decades with which UNESCO was entrusted by the UN there is the Decade for Cultural Development which was observed under the auspices of the UN and UNESCO (see § 5.1.3). The World Decade for Cultural Development had four main objectives: i) acknowledging the cultural dimension of development, ii) affirming and enriching cultural identities, iii) broadening participation in culture, and iv) promoting international cultural cooperation. UNESCO was also engaged in activities in favour of United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983 – 1992) proclaimed by UNGA with Resolution 37/52 and adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Moreover, a great impact on UNESCO’s programme was the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990 - 2000) designated in 1987 with the Resolution 41/169 of the UNGA (see § 5.1.3). This Decade had five goals: i) to improve the capacity of countries to mitigate the effects of natural disasters; ii) to devise appropriate guidelines and strategies for applying existing knowledge; iii) to foster scientific and engineering endeavours; iv) to disseminated new and existing information related to measures for the

assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters; and v) to develop measures for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters through programme of technical assistance.

More marginal, but entailed in UNESCO's programmatic documents, is the UN Vienna International Plan of Action on Aging which has specific recommendations on education. Particularly relevant is the Recommendation number 45: "the need for continuing adult education at all levels should be recognized and encouraged". In addition, there is the Project 2000+ Science education for all which was a collaborative partnership between eleven major international agencies and IGOs with particular concerns and responsibilities for research and development in the field of science and technology education. Finally, the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education is surely important for UNESCO although, since the programmatic documents analysed arrived in 1994 and the Decade started in 1995, it was not possible to assess whether this Decade shaped UNESCO's activities for the last year of the period. This Decade, proclaimed by the UNGA in 1994 with Resolution 49/184, had a Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education whose implementation was coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

With the Resolution 42/104 the UNGA proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year giving to UNESCO the mandate to coordinate and prepare the activities for this year. Another project coordinated by UNESCO in this period was "SHARE": Scheme of Humanitarian Assistance for Refugee Education. This international scheme was developed to co-ordinate activities related to the education of refugees and displaced persons. Finally, there was also UNESCO's Horizon 2000 for the promotion of African Languages.

However, UNESCO's plans of action that had major impact on its work were two. First and foremost the UNESCO's Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000. Secondly the EFA Framework for Action which resulted from the WCEFA.

During the 23rd session of the General Conference (Sofia, 1985), with the resolution 4.6, UNESCO recognized illiteracy as a matter of special urgency. Member States invited the Director-General to prepare, for the following Medium Term Plan, a UNESCO Plan of Action "to help Member States in all regions of the world to eradicate illiteracy by the

year 2000” (UNESCO, 1989, summary). Consequently, the 25th General Conference adopted the UNESCO Plan of Action to Eradicate Illiteracy by the Year 2000 (*idem*). This Plan of Action set forth the priorities for UNESCO. In the introduction of the Plan, it is recognized that UNESCO cannot combat directly illiteracy since it is a responsibility of Member States. However, UNESCO “must play its essential part by encouraging and facilitating action by governments and other partners. Thus, the Plan of Action is essentially a plan for encouraging, facilitating and assisting action by Member States” (UNESCO, 1989, p. 1). The Plan of Action had four broad aims:

- i) to alert world public opinion to the scope and magnitude of illiteracy - in its different forms - and to the danger this poses to the harmonious development of society;
- ii) to rally the international community to the cause of literacy in order to ensure a conducive environment for literacy work within Member States and international solidarity among them;
- iii) to pursue, with increased resources and resolve, the regional projects and programmes for combating illiteracy, including the extension and strengthening of the network based at the UNESCO Institute for Education (Hamburg) for exchanging experiences in preventing and combating functional illiteracy in the industrialized countries; and
- iv) to provide more effective technical co-operation to Member States, including in particular an enhanced flow of documents and information on national experiences and a reinforcement of training activities for national specialists (*idem*, p. 2).

This Plan of Action entailed different activities of different mechanisms of agenda-setting. In fact, the celebration of the International Literacy Year, as well as the creation of the International Literacy Day, are part of the broader strategy of the Plan of Action and specifically contributing to the first aim of “alerting world public opinion”. Most importantly, the text of the Plan unveils its relations with the WCEFA and its global education agenda. As a matter of fact, in order to pursue the second aim of the Plan (rallying the international community):

it was logical and necessary for the Director-General of UNESCO to take the lead in forging an alliance of major agencies to promote education for all. The World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs has this as its prime objective. [...] For UNESCO, the World Conference and its follow-up are key elements in the plan for mobilizing international agencies, and more particularly the United Nations family, in support of literacy. The World Conference will provide a forum in which Specialized

Agencies and multilateral and bilateral funding sources can work out modalities of co-operation among themselves and with interested Member States as a means for providing more effective and sustained support to national educational efforts. It can, as well, be expected to establish programmes of joint co-operation for implementing the objectives of the World Conference which closely correspond to those of the UNESCO Plan of Action. Universal literacy will be ultimately achieved if education for all is progressively ensured (UNESCO, 1989, p. 7).

It thus seems clear that for UNESCO International Literacy Year (a value setting activity), as well as the WCEFA and the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action (goal setting activities) are components of the Plan of Action to Eradicate Illiteracy by the Year 2000. All these activities are interrelated as the Executive Board argues: “It is obvious, however, that these four objectives are closely interrelated and that progress in one area facilitates advance in others” (UNESCO, 1991*b*, p. 2).

An important issue on the notion of education resulted from this relationship. UNESCO preferred “literacy work” rather than “basic education”, noting that these are two different terms but for UNESCO their meaning are equivalent. In fact, during its 136th session, the Executive Board received a report of the Director-General on follow up to the International Literacy Year and the WCEFA, in which it is expressed that UNESCO:

has favoured the term 'literacy' because it stresses what is uniquely and distinctively human - the use of symbols - and cautions against the notion of a limited or second-class education emphasizing the practical and utilitarian while neglecting the symbolic, theoretical and ethical dimensions of learning. [...] However, literacy is not a term with which all feel comfortable. [...] It is also evident that a partnership must possess both shared ideas and a common and agreed terminology. 'Basic education' was, thus, the term chosen by the sponsors of the World Conference. [...] *The point that should be noted is that 'literacy' and 'basic education' are different terms, but usually refer to essentially the same activities (idem, p. 3. Emphasis added)*

As to the activities that are performed within goal setting mechanism, these are of different nature. Firstly, there are coordination activities that are done with UN institutions, and with Member States. The coordination activities with UN institutions are for example the establishment of an Interagency Secretariat or Commission that should follow the work of that particular agenda, as well as the periodic interagency consultations

and workshops to frame joint activities such as the two co-sponsor of EFA meetings done in fall 1990 and beginning of 1991 to frame and set up the International Consultative Forum of EFA. The EFA Framework for Action gave UNESCO the responsibility to “facilitate provision of services needed for reinforced international co-ordination and cooperation” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 61). Thus, in the “Follow up Decisions of the World Conference on Education For All”, the co-sponsors of the Conference (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank) agreed “to increase support to basic education within each of their own planning frameworks, structures and resources allocation mechanisms and decided to meet annually to co-ordinate their own activities in the educational field” (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 65). In particular, UNESCO’s programme stated that “activities undertaken under Programme I. 1 [Toward Basic Education For All] will be prepared and expanded through inter-agency co-operation” (UNESCO, 1992, p. 24) and for that purpose UNESCO led the International Consultative Forum on EFA.

Coordination activities with Member States entailed the organization of regional conferences, regional consultative committee, and ministerial meetings. For example the Consultative Committee for the Regional Programme for the Eradication of Illiteracy in Africa (*idem*). In addition, there is the production of joint strategies and plan of action for specific themes and for specific countries and contexts such as the Regional Programme for Universal Provision and Renewal of Primary Education and Eradication of Illiteracy in Asia and the Pacific (*idem*) or the Regional Advisory Committee on the Renewal of Science and Technology Education in Africa (*idem*). Of particular importance are the ministerial and decision makers’ conferences such as Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in the Arab States convened in 1994 in co-operation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), ISESCO and the Egyptian Government (UNESCO, 1994*a*).

Other related activities are monitoring exercises of development in the areas of the goal and plan of actions set such as the joint UNESCO/UNICEF project on monitoring education-for-all goals (*idem*). However, monitoring exercises were not systematic and with high frequency. Interesting noting that the formulation of framework for action could have been targeted for particular groups of countries or section of population. For

example, there was the establishment of coordination with the nine most populated countries (*idem*), the framework for refugee's education (*idem*) and disable children.

STANDARD SETTING

The standard setting mechanism entails two sub mechanisms: normative actions, and the production of data, benchmarks and assessments. The normative actions are performed through Conventions, Recommendations and Declarations. These can be both developed and written by UNESCO, as well as by other international institutions. Of these treaties, during the period analysed, UNESCO referred to and worked on the following: Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); UNESCO's Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (1993); UNESCO's Recommendation on the development of adult education (1976); the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966); the UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); and UNESCO's Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989).

Regarding the production of data, UNESCO monitored the indicators related to the goals and plan of action of EFA. However, this monitoring exercise was not systematic. Important was the mid-term evaluation of Education for All in order to "determine the extent and nature of the EFA-targeted gains to date" (UNESCO, 1994a, p. 31), and the creation of regional databases on education development (UNESCO, 1992). Another significant activity was the development of World Education Indicators that were used for the production of World Education Reports (*idem*). Finally, UNESCO performed countries case studies sporadically and encouraged Member States to submit national reports to the International Conference on Education.

UNESCO did not perform direct testing of teachers or students. However, it had an impact on testing with the development of guidelines to assess student learning achievements; for example with the preparation of a "practical guide on methods for assessment of students' learning achievements in technical and vocational education" (*idem*, p. 37).

The kind of activities performed are research activities with data production, as well as development of guidelines for the production of data and research. For the normative action, UNESCO convened international experts, created international committees with

the mandate to draft conventions as well as monitoring their implementations. Moreover, UNESCO provided technical support associated to the normative action for the actual implementation of the conventions. Standards are also set with the updates of International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

The themes and subjects of these standards created by UNESCO were on literacy, technical and vocational education, higher education, drugs abuse, teacher status, and adult education.

FINANCIAL LEVERAGING

UNESCO, as a Specialized Agency, is not a fund and does not have the mandate to finance external projects. Therefore, the mechanism of financial leveraging is not really used by UNESCO. However, although there are no specific activities that can be related to this mechanism, there are three kinds of activities that indirectly facilitate funds to initiate projects consistent with UNESCO's notion of education and priorities.

The first one is providing "seed money". This is the case of the creation of activities that are expected to be funded by external sources. As an example, for the work of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century UNESCO allocated only 496,600 USD. However, it was expected "that the regular budget funds will be supplemented by voluntary contributions from governments, organizations and private sources, to enable the Commission to carry out the activities envisaged" (UNESCO, 1994*a*, p. 40).

A second kind of activity is providing assistance in order to identify and mobilize external resources. Rather than directly financing a particular activity, a technical service for fundraising is provided. Examples of these activities, done in the first biennium, are the following: "identification and mobilization of supplementary funding for educational development, especially for the LDCs; consultative services for educational financing at national level and for preparing projects for external funding; co-publication and distribution of a directory of external funding sources, multilateral and bilateral, governmental and non-governmental" (UNESCO, 1990*b*, p. 28).

The third kind of activity related to financial leveraging is the direct provision of financial support through a subvention. Often this subvention is linked to technical support and it

is released for civil society in order to perform joint projects or programme support (i.e. to continue doing what they are doing). For instance, the already mentioned activity of “provision of technical and financial support to national adult education institutions and specialized NGOs for the renewal of continuing education for adults” (UNESCO, 1990*b*, p. 15), as well as the “subvention to the World Organization for Early Childhood Education for participation in the implementation of the Special Project” (*idem*, p. 18).

5.1.6 Budget

The analysis of the budget reveals important information on the prioritization of actions and themes at UNESCO. The Organization experienced, in these years, a significant increase in its total budget. This is due to an increase of 21% in both regular and extra budgetary support from the first to the second biennium. Slight increase (1.5%) is recorded from the second to the third biennium.

Table 31: Total budget first period biennia

	Regular Budget	Extra Budget	Total Budget	% increase
1990-1991	378,788,000	216,533,000	595,321,000	
1992-1993	444,704,000	274,875,000	719,579,000	20.87
1994-1995	455,490,000	274,894,200	730,384,200	1.50

Despite the increase in the total budget, the share of total budget allocated to Part II (see § 4.1.2) fell from 74% to 71%.

Table 32: Total budget programme first period biennia

	Regular Budget Programme	Extra Budget Programme	Total Budget Programme	% of Total Budget
1990-1991	234,182,500	204,497,000	438,679,500	73.69
1992-1993	229,136,700	244,342,000	473,478,700	66
1994-1995	270,493,000	246,650,000	517,143,000	70.80

As to the budget allocated to Major Programme Education, it is possible to see a trend of growth in terms of absolute number. In addition, there is a growth in percentage terms. In fact, the Major Programme Education received respectively the 33%, 35%, and 39% of the budget allocated to Part II and figures as the first priority of the Organization.

Table 33: Total budget education first period biennia

	Regular Budget Education	Extra Budget Education	Total Budget Education	% of Total Budget Programme
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1990-1991	72,135,300	74,350,000	146,485,300	33
1992-1993	84,304,200	81,350,000	165,654,200	35
1994-1995	97,297,200	102,690,000	199,987,200	39

Looking in depth at the Programme and Budget of the Education Sector (see tables 34; 35; 36) it is possible to infer that some areas of work deserved prioritization. The work on basic education figures as the absolute priority in terms of budget allocation. In fact, the programme Toward Basic Education for All has the greatest share of budget compared to the other two in every biennium. It received 36%, 46% and 51% of the entire budget of education. Thus, the budget allocated to activities of basic education increases steadily during the course of the period. In fact, during its 136th session, the Executive Board “noted with satisfaction the report submitted to it” by the Director-General on the follow up activities to the International Literacy Year and the WCEFA, in which it is expressed an increased in the budget support to activities of basic education:

The follow-up to WCEFA and ILY has required a major restructuring of the Education Sector of the UNESCO Secretariat and the establishment of a Basic Education Division, which is by far the largest unit within the Sector in terms of both staff and budget, charged with promotion and co-ordination of the whole range of basic education services which had previously been dispersed among several divisions. In conformity with UNESCO's Plan of Action to Eradicate Illiteracy by the Year 2000, *it is projected that the allocations to literacy and basic education will steadily increase, throughout the decade, both in absolute terms and in relation to total programme expenditures.* (UNESCO, 1991b, p. 2. Emphasis added).

Within basic education activities (mainly literacy, early childhood care and universal primary education), literacy is undoubtedly the most important area of work. In fact, more than the half of budget to basic education goes to financing activities in favour of literacy. Literacy is also the most financed educational issue among all the others by far. For example, in the first biennium, the sum of the budget allocated to activities on literacy in programme Toward Basic Education for All plus the one allocated to the Mobilizing Project Combating Illiteracy amounts to 4,621,600 USD which is very close to the amount dedicated to the entire second programme Education for the 21st century (4,844,000 USD).

Table 34: Education programme and budget 1990 - 1991

25 C/5		Budget	%
1. Toward Basic Education for All		6,119,000	36
	1.1 Literacy	3,711,000	
	1.2 Toward Universal Primary Education	1,906,000	
	1.3 Young child and Family Environment	502,000	
2. Education for the XXI century		4,844,000	28
	2.2 Education for the quality of life	339,000	
	2.3 Education and the world of work	1,118,000	
	2.4 Science and Technology Education	1,418,000	
	2.5 Higher Education and the changing needs of societies	1,669,000	
3. Promoting Educational Development		5,249,900	31
	3.1 Promoting Educational policies and strategies	1,647,000	
	3.2 Management and Planning of Education Development	1,283,000	
	3.3 Innovation, Technology and research	1,172,000	
	3.4 Information clearing house on education	1,147,900	
4. Mobilizing Project combating illiteracy		920,600	5

Table 35: Education programme and budget 1992 - 1993

26 C/5			%
1. Toward Basic Education for All		8,567,200	46
	Overall coordination	1,450,000	
	1.1 Promotion of literacy for youth and adults	3,509,800	
	1.2 Towards universal quality primary education	2,335,000	
	1.3 Intersectoral project - The young child and the family environment	661,200	
	1.4 Mobilizing Project - Combating illiteracy	611,200	
2. Education for the XXI century		5,491,800	29
	2.1 Renewal of educational content and methods	2,086,000	
	2.2 Education and the world of work	1,200,000	
	2.3 Higher Education	2,638,500	
3. Promoting the Advancement of Education		4,566,400	25
	3.1 Educational policies and strategies	1,351,400	
	3.2 Educational planning, management and buildings	1,013,000	
	3.3 Educational innovations, technologies, research and information	2,202,000	

Table 36: Education programme and budget 1994 - 1995

27 C/5			%
1. Toward Basic Education for All		9,350,300	51
	1.1 Expanding and improving provision of basic education	4,927,700	
	1.2 Improving the quality and relevance of basic education	4,422,600	

2. Education for the XXI century	9,317,000	49
2.1 International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century	496,600	
2.2 Renewal of Secondary Education	959,200	
2.3 Technical and Vocational Education	1,082,600	
2.4 Higher Education	3,303,900	
2.5 Educational innovation, research and information	1,773,000	
2.6 Reconstruction of education systems	1,701,700	
2.7 Environment and population education and human development	2,218,500	

The second priority area are the activities related to the issue of relevance of education (the programme Education for the XXI century). These activities entailed the revision of curricula, as well as the work on technical and vocational education. The importance of these activities grew over time as witnessed by the increase in budget allocation. In fact, while in the first biennium this programme received less budget than the third programme ‘Promoting Educational Development’, starting from the second biennium it exceeds the other programme. The last programme on “promoting and advancing educational development” drastically decreased in terms of budget allocation. If in the first biennium it received 5,249,900 USD, in the second it received 4,566,400 USD, while in the third, although it disappeared as a stand-alone programme, the activities that used to be inscribed in it received just 3,474,700 USD. However, the activities on innovations in education and on technologies within this sub programme remained high. Among the activities of the second programme, higher education is definitely the most prioritized during all biennia.

An important figure is the one that appears during the second biennium. In fact, within the programme Toward Basic Education for All, there is a budget allocated to overall coordination of activities for EFA I. This line of budget appears only in this biennium.

5.1.7 Synthesis

These six years were important for UNESCO in terms of changes in membership and dynamism. From the programmatic texts and the flagship publication it is possible to see a certain prioritization of some issues and mechanisms over others.

UNESCO’s work reveals its perception of a world in transition, in which global transformations are occurring and that constitute global challenges for humankind.

Particularly relevant in UNESCO's reflections are the challenges of peace, environment and development which are at the core of UNESCO's concerns within the Medium Term Plan. A development that needs a fresh vision and it should be people-centred, equitable and sustainable (UNESCO, 1994*a*). Peace, as well, needs a creative significance and it should not be considered as absence of wars, but based on respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. A broad understanding of peace which entails "making peace with the environment" in a context in which the UN System push for the Agenda 21. Among the other global transformations that constitute challenges figure the changes occurring in sciences and technologies, in employment needs and structures and in demography. Moreover, the global transformations widen the inequalities existing between countries. Thus, inequalities between countries constitutes a major challenge for UNESCO and are seen as sources of injustice and conflicts.

Inequalities are also perceived within the education systems. Particularly relevant are the principles and ideas promoted regarding equity in education. UNESCO promoted a human rights approach to education, perceiving that education has an enabling function, which empowers people and improves life conditions. In its view, education is not only a human right but also a basic social service and UNESCO paid particular attention to the equity dimension of education. Women and girls education deserved great attention in UNESCO's work, as well as activities in favour of minorities, people living in rural areas, marginalized, and disable children.

Among the activities performed by UNESCO to promote equity there are activities of value setting, as well as standard setting activities. In particular, the normative component of the standard setting mechanism was focused on equity. In fact, in these years three new normative instruments were produced: the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education, the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education, as well as the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. Other important activities in the normative dimension of this mechanism are the follow up of already existing treaties and the technical support for countries in order to respect the treaties. For example in these years UNESCO concentrated its focus on: the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), UNESCO's Recommendation on the development of adult education (1976), the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966),

the UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), and UNESCO's Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989).

Education was perceived as key in any development discussions. In UNESCO's work education sector received the largest share of budget among all the Major Programme Areas. The majority of education budget was allocated to activities for basic education (Programme I: Toward Basic Education for All). Basic education was considered as the greatest challenge of the period. In particular, the fight against illiteracy was considered the "absolute priority" of the Organization. UNESCO adopted in 1990 the UNESCO's Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 which guided its work in order to help Member States to eradicate illiteracy. This Plan of Action entailed two important activities. I) The celebration of the International Literacy Year in 1990, which can be inscribed within the value setting mechanism. Value setting mechanism was the most used by UNESCO in these years and it was pursued through different activities. Among these there are global advocacy activities such as the international celebrations of the International Literacy Years and other international days, as well as organized special prizes and special events. II) The organization of the WCEFA and the subsequent Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action which lies under the goal setting mechanism.

As to the goal setting mechanism, UNESCO programme was focused on two elements: i) the participation in the creation of international decades and plans of action, and ii) the creation of its own set of goals and frameworks for action. International plan of action shaped UNESCO's activities with the alignment of work according to the specific Plan of Action, such as the case of the UN Decade for Cultural Development. Among the activities performed there are coordination activities with UN institutions (Interagency Secretariat or Commission - interagency consultations and workshops to frame joint activities) and coordination activities with Member States (regional conferences, regional consultative committee, and ministerial meetings).

Related to the WCEFA, UNESCO developed other standard setting activities. For example the production of benchmarks and data. UNESCO performed the monitoring of the goals established in Jomtien with indicators development and the request for a mid-term evaluation. Regional databases of education are produced and UNESCO encouraged Member States to submit national reports to the International Conference on Education.

Several capacity building activities were also performed such as sharing of best practice through the creation of networks such as the UNEVOC and UNESCO Chairs UNITWIN, as well as through the organization of ministerial conferences and regional and local workshops and seminars. Training sessions for teachers and ministers officials and round table of experts were performed.

Another major challenge perceived is education relevance, and it also constitutes a strong concept promoted in the period. In this sense, important was the statement that learning needs of people are defined in local contexts. Education should be made relevant for the need of people in changing societies. A changing context in which evident are the innovations taking place in the fields of sciences and technologies. In particular, it is stressed the idea of the need to use new ICTs for educational purposes. In addition, the changing needs and structures of employment led to a rethinking of the relevance of technical and vocational education programmes. In fact, these are the years of the creation of the UNEVOC project.

The considerations on what kind of education is needed for what kind of society carry significant weight, which was the question that the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century had to respond to. The establishment of the International Commission was one of the greatest value setting activity of these years. Educational was thus perceived as in need of a rethinking in light of relevance. This perception guided UNESCO's activities in its rethinking of pedagogical approach, the content of curricula, the purposes of education, as well as the educational policies. Indeed, education systems are perceived as a global challenge and particularly in four dimensions: educational policies, which should take into account the learning needs of people; education financing, since financial constraints are affecting the provision of basic social services such as education; the educational structures, which need to be safeguarded from natural disasters; and education personnel, both teachers and Ministers officials. Capacity building mechanism was used through the provision of technical assistance in support for policy definition and technical and legislative support was provided for the implementation of recommendations. Finally, UNESCO conducted policy reviews and curriculum design.

In its mechanism of value setting, UNESCO promoted the principle of continuing education. Different levels of education are considered, from early childhood to higher education. The reflections on higher education are dealing with the reflection on the role of higher education in societies questioning in a broad sense the relevance of higher education. However, the strongest notion of education set is a humanistic approach to education. UNESCO directly proposed and promoted the idea that the purpose of education is to improve the quality of life and preparing people to foster their all-round personal fulfilment. It had also impact on the reflection on the content and purposes of education. Particularly significant is the cultural, ethical and international aspect of education. This is testified by the major importance of the activities performed under the World Decade for Cultural Development. Reviewing curricula, inserting certain components such as preventive education, sports and arts is one of the major activity of the capacity building and value setting mechanisms.

Table 37: Global challenges, notion of education, agenda-setting mechanisms first period

First Period 1990 – 1995		
GLOBAL CHALLENGES	NOTION OF EDUCATION	AGENDA-SETTING MECHANISMS
<p>PEACE Creative significance to peace</p>	<p>HUMANISTIC EDUCATION Purposes and content. Improving the quality of life and preparing people to foster their all-round personal fulfilment. Cultural dimension of education</p>	<p>VALUE SETTING Building networks; clearing house expanding knowledge; Technical guidelines, strategies, policies, and curriculum designs; global advocacy measures; celebrations of international years, weeks, or days; Special prizes and special events.</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT Making peace with nature</p>	<p>ENABLING FUNCTION OF EDUCATION Empowering people, key right for the enjoyment of other rights, training for employability</p>	<p>CAPACITY BUILDING creation of networks; ministerial briefs; organization of ministerial conferences, as well as regional and local workshops and seminars, training sessions and round table of experts; Technical support for policies; Technical and legislative support for recommendations; policy reviews; training of Member State specialists and ministerial personnel.</p>
<p>DEVELOPMENT People-centred, equitable and sustainable with cultural aspects</p>	<p>INNOVATION Science and technology opens new possibilities.</p>	<p>GOAL SETTING Participation in the creation of international decades and plans of action; Creation of its own set of goals and frameworks for action; Alignment of work according to the Decade/Plan of Action; coordination with UN institutions; coordination with Member States; monitoring exercises of development</p>
<p>GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS Science and technologies, employment needs and structures, demography.</p>	<p>EQUITY Human Right approach, education as a basic social service.</p>	<p>STANDARD SETTING Production of Conventions, Recommendations and Declarations; Follow up of existing Treaties; Technical support for respect of treaties. Monitoring goals; Databases production; National Reports; Technical guidelines for assessment.</p>

<p>INEQUALITIES Between Countries and within education (women, minorities, special needs, refugees).</p>		<p>FINANCIAL LEVERAGING Provision of “seed money”; Provision of assistance in order to identify and mobilize external resources; direct provision of financial support.</p>
<p>BASIC EDUCATION Literacy as the absolute priority</p>	<p>CONTINUING EDUCATION A lifelong process which entails several levels of education</p>	
<p>EDUCATION RELEVANCE The need of people in changing societies. Pedagogical approach, content of curricula, purposes of education and policies.</p>	<p>EDUCATION RELEVANCE Learning needs are defined in local contexts. What kind of education for what kind of society.</p>	
<p>EDUCATION SYSTEMS Policies, financing, structures, personnel.</p>		

5.2 Second Period (1996 – 2001)

5.2.1 Context

The years that go from 1996 to 2001 were characterized by events in the economic, political, scientific and social domains. These years saw the consolidation of economic powers of the Western economies, the rise of globalization and the spread of capitalism and neoliberalism. Market-based ideas and policies, such as extensive economic liberalization, privatization, deregulation, and free trade affected several domains and fostered incipient globalization. In the public sector, great influence had discourses of “the new public management”, in which the idea of a public sector managed with the same standard and ways of the private sector was promoted. These ideas had also an important impact on education.

In the international political domain, the process of consolidation of the importance of IOs continued. However, in order to make these Organizations useful and functional, a deep reflection on their role was considered necessary. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequences associated to it, the literature on global governance and debates on the new world order flourished. As examples, the UN created a specific Commission on Global Governance and wide discussions rose from the publication of “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order” (Huntington, 1996).

Several regional and national conflicts took place in this period. Particularly cruel was the situation of the Balkans with the Yugoslav and Kosovo War (1998), which shocked world opinion with the Srebrenica massacre. In the Middle East, wars broke out in different regions: in Chechen region; in Pakistan, where Pakistan Army overthrew the democratically elected government of Pakistan in 1999; in Afghanistan with two civil wars (1992 – 1996 and 1996–2001); in Tajikistan; in Iraq with the Iraqi Kurdish Civil War; and in Palestine with the beginning of the Second Intifada (2000 – 2005). Civil wars affected also several African countries such as Somalia, Algeria, Burundi, and the Republic of Congo.

In the scientific domain, great advances in technologies were witnessed in the period. In particular, the Human Genome Project began and UNESCO was sensitive to this project promoting the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997).

In the social domain, the World Social Summit (1995) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) contributed to advances on issues such as multiculturalism and the importance of diversities, and the relevance of gender instances. UNESCO demonstrated again its sensitiveness to these issues with the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and with the attention and prioritization paid to women in its programmatic documents.

In education, one of the most significant changes is the rise of the use of the lifelong learning concept. This concept gained prominence in discourses and policies as the organizing principle for educational reforms. Although the idea of lifelong learning was not new and it was preceded by the concept of lifelong education (UNESCO, 1972), the semantic change of these years brought with it a novelty:

... some authors (Bosher, 1998; Griffin, 1999) stated that the change of lifelong learning was not only a semantic change, but also a substantial one. While lifelong education was associated to a wider and more integral purpose of development of people and of more human communities, the dominant interpretation of lifelong learning during the '90s was tied to capacity development and learning of new skills that helped people to deal with the demands of fast changing world of work (Medel-Añonuevo, Ohsako and Mauch, 2001). At the same time, lifelong learning assumed a more individualistic orientation than lifelong education, which had more links with the community (Vargas Tamez, 2015, p. 8. Author's translation).

Thus, the reflections occurring in the domain of lifelong learning in these years have important impact on the notion of education and approach to education policies of the proponents of this concept. The focus on the economic performance and the economic perspectives of the period influenced the conceptualization of lifelong learning which is viewed as the organizing principle of educational reforms which should contribute to the creation of "knowledge workers" and favour the knowledge-based economy. In fact, according to Vargas Tamez (2016, p. 9), in these years "education policy [...] has been informed by – and responsive to – economic imperatives like promoting employment, fostering competitiveness and economic growth".

The UN was sensitive to this vision and promoted it. Indeed, the UN seemed to embrace the economic significance of education, which should be adapted to employment needs.

This is witnessed by an Secretary General report in preparation of the Millennium Summit “We the people: The Role of the United Nations in the Twenty-First Century”. In this report, education has been referred in light of economic trends. While the chapter on education opens saying that: “Education is the key to the new global economy, from primary school on up to lifelong learning” (Annan, 2000, p. 24), the chapter on employment specifies that: “Education is the first step” (*idem*, p. 25). For some scholars, even UNESCO was keen on (although partially) accepting the vision of adaptability of education to the needs of employment, market and economies, and it is witnessed by the particular promotion of the concept of lifelong learning in the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century (Vargas Tamez, 2015*b*).

UNESCO and UN

The UN experienced a change in its leadership. After only one mandate, the Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992 – 1996) resigned in favour of Kofi Annan, of Ghana, (1997 – 2006). The UNGA appoints Kofi Annan by acclamation as the seventh UN Secretary General. Mr. Annan's appointment marked the first for a UN staffer to emerge from the ranks and for a Sub-Saharan African to serve as Secretary General. Mr. Annan served from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2006. The years of Annan are marked by great will and thrust of change within the UN, a transformational phase, as observed by the great framework built in favour of the MDGs which saw the entire UN system participating in a common development effort. UNESCO recognized it also in one of its programmatic documents (UNESCO, 1996*a*) affirming that the UN system should be entirely rethought and should be changed in order to respond to the present challenges.

The perception of the need of change is witnessed by the production of two important publications: “Our Global Neighbour”, which is produced by the UN Commission on Global Governance (UN Commission on Global Governance, 1995), and the Secretary General publication “We The Peoples. The Role of the United Nations in the XXI Century” (Annan, 2000), which is one of the milestones contributing to the process of establishing the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs.

Indeed, the breakthrough of these years at UN level is the organization of the “Millennium Summit” from 6 September to 8 September 2000, in which world leaders met at the United Nations headquarters in New York City to discuss the role of the United Nations

for the XXI century. At the end of the Summit, the leaders ratified the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which would be the basis of the MDGs, the international agenda for the following 15 years (see § 4.2.4). Another important meeting in 2000 was the World Education Forum organized by UNESCO in partnership with the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, UNHCR, UNFPA, and ILO (see § 4.2.3). This Forum, reaffirming the Jomtien Declaration and advancing a different Framework for Action, is the basis of the new global education agenda for 15 years. These two important events would have an extremely important impact on the following years; thus, the results of these fora will be analysed in the following period.

Besides the UN Millennium Summit and the World Education Forum, in this period were held numerous international conferences which placed education as their fundamental element. There were the World Food Summit; the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II); the UNESCO's 45th and 46th International Conference on Education; the Second International Congress on Education and Informatics; the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education; the International Conference on Child Labour; the World Conference on Higher Education; the International Conference of Technical and Vocational Education; Special Sessions of the UNGA for the 5 Year Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and on HIV/AIDS; and the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Moreover, several declarations were promoted such as the Rome Declaration on World Food Security; Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements; the Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations (UNESCO); the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (UNESCO); the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work; the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace; the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium; the UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS; the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action against racism; and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

Furthermore, it has been observed the international years: the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996); the International Year of Ocean (1998); the International Year of Older Persons (1999); International Year of Culture of Peace (2000); while 2001 was the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Finally, a number of decades and plans of action were followed in this period:

Table 38: International agendas and plan of actions with educational components 1996 - 2001

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
3 rd Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination															
UN Decade of International Law															
International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction															
UN Decade Against Drug Abuse															
2 nd Industrial Development Decade for Africa															
International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism										2 nd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism					
UNESCO's Horizon 2000 for the promotion of African Languages															
Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000												United Nations Literacy Decade			
Plan of Action for the survival, protection and development of children															
EFA I										EFA II					
Fourth United Nations Development Decade										Millennium Development Goals					
				International Programme of Action on Population and Development											
				Decade of the World's Indigenous People											2 nd Decade
				Decade for Human Rights Education											
				Plan of Action for follow-up to the United Nations Year for Tolerance											
				World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond											
				Plan of Action for Science and Technology Education											
				Decade for African Education											
				World Food Summit Plan of Action											
				Agenda for the future of Adult Education											
				Decade for The Eradication for Poverty											
				Programme of Action for the LDCs											
				Programme of Action for the Culture of Peace											

UNESCO experienced a change in leadership. The biennium (2000-2001) was under the leadership of Japanese Kōichirō Matsuura. During this period, UNESCO produced the following treaties:

- Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. 11 April 1997.
- Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. 2 November 2001.
- Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel. 11 November 1997
- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. 2 November 2001
- Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. 11 November 1997
- Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations. 12 November 1997

The Organization experienced also a change in its membership with six new Member States, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland re-joined UNESCO in 1997 after 12 years from its exit.

Table 39: Member States joining UNESCO 1996 - 2001

Nauru	17 October 1996
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1 July 1997
Palau	20 September 1999
Micronesia (Federated States of)	19 October 1999
Cayman Islands (associate)	30 October 1999
Serbia	20 December 2000
Tokelau (associate)	15 October 2001

5.2.2 Educational themes

Like the previous period, a focus on basic education marks these years as it is evident from the analysis of the documents selected (UNESCO, 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1998; 2000a). However, the notion and the specific focus of basic education slightly differ from the first period. In fact, while during the first years of the 1990s the preeminent activities in favour of basic education were mainly related to literacy, in these years basic education

activities are more related to ensuring universal primary education and basic learning needs in light of the Jomtien Declaration. Other important educational themes related to basic education were ECCE and second chance education.

An important and innovative theme is the one of learning environments which relates to the development of the concept of “inclusive schooling and education”. This concept was developed in light of the challenges posed by education for people with special needs and resulted from the Salamanca conference on inclusive education in 1994.

As to the content of education, particularly new and relevant for these years were the programmes on human rights education and education for peace. The first one is part of a broader framework of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, while the second is witnessed by the creation of a specific sub programme “Toward a culture of peace”. UNESCO responded to an appeal from the UN, the Secretary General’s “An Agenda for Peace” (UN, 1992), and promoted the innovative concept of “building a culture of peace”.

However, the most preeminent themes are related to the concept of lifelong learning. In fact, UNESCO extends its focus from basic education, comprising activities on all levels of education. Associated to lifelong learning, which received a great deal of attention and consideration, UNESCO performed activities on general secondary education, on adult education (organizing the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education-CONFINTEA V), on higher education (organizing the World Conference on Higher Education) and promoting two specific treaties related to it, and on alternative delivery systems.

5.2.3 Global Challenges

The texts of this period strongly recalled for a global approach in order to face challenges and problems that now affect the entire human race (UNESCO, 1996a). However, it is mentioned that this approach should be grounded on local perspectives: “UNESCO needs to define global strategies so as to deal with world problems, but such strategies can only be effective if they are adapted to the specific problems of different countries and population groups” (UNESCO, 1998, p. xi).

The challenges perceived are not only related to education but deal with a complexity of issues to which education is envisioned as one of the solutions. The exchange of ideas

was perceived as a good tool to effectively withstand problems of global nature. An example of it are the international conferences organized by UNESCO that provided

[an] ideal opportunity to consult each other in order to find solutions to common problems. These conferences led to specific programmes of co-operation, such as the regional literacy programmes, the educational innovation for development networks, and the regional news agencies (the Pan-African News Agency, the Caribbean News Agency, etc.) which sprang up in the various regions thanks to the impetus given by UNESCO (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 3).

In this period, UNESCO seems to perceive global challenges related to six macro categories. These categories are: development and peace, inequalities, education relevance and quality, basic education, lifelong education, and education systems.

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE – The culture of peace. Peace for development and development for peace

These two major global challenges are clearly stated at the beginning of the period by the Medium Term Strategy:

The aim pursued by UNESCO within the framework of its Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001 will be to contribute, through action in its fields of competence, to the attainment of the two objectives common to the United Nations system as a whole, namely, development and peace (*idem*, p. 15).

In fact, the entire C/4 is divided in two strands: the strategies contributing to development and the strategies contributing to peace. Knowing that peace and development were already identified as global challenges in the first period, the concerns for these challenges were refreshed by the appeals made by the Secretary General of the UN with the two documents: “An agenda for peace” (UN, 1992) and “An agenda for development” (UN, 1995). These two challenges are seen as indissolubly linked and intertwined: development for peace and peace for development are the two main strands (UNESCO, 1996a). And the contribution of UNESCO “for the development of education in its Member States, [is perceived] as a vital tool for promoting development and building a culture of peace” (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 11).

One of the most important concepts promoted in these years is the “culture of peace”. This concept was developed in the foreword of the 28 C/4 by the Director-General:

To counter the culture of war, let us build a culture of peace, that is to say a culture of social interaction, based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, tolerance and solidarity, and respect for all human rights; a culture that rejects violence and, instead, seeks a solution to problems through dialogue and negotiation; a culture of prevention that endeavours to detect the sources of conflicts at their very roots, so as to deal with them more effectively and, as far as practicable, to avoid them (UNESCO, 1996a, foreword).

The challenge of building the culture of peace is reflected throughout UNESCO’s programmes of the period with a special transdisciplinary, inter-sectoral project entitled ‘Towards a culture of peace’. In 2000, the International Year for the Culture of Peace was celebrated and UNESCO contributed to it with activities for the “development of national plans and programmes of education for a culture of peace” elaborating a proper Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 51).

Peace and development challenges are also linked with the perception of a growing insecurity. This insecurity is due to poverty, exclusion and social injustice (UNESCO, 1996a). There is a perception that the world is in transition and the international systems created after the Second World War are incapable of giving proper answers to these problems. Particularly the United Nations system is considered as in need for a restructure and a reform in order to “take-up present and foreseeable challenges, which are those of world development” (*idem*, foreword). These years were the ones in which the Secretary General of the UN gave fresh impulse towards the reform of the UN system inheriting the major contribution of the former Secretary General. In fact, in 1995 a UN Special Commission on Global Governance published an important report entitled “Our Global Neighbours” which posed important questions on the role of the United Nations in the global context of governance.

Some of the challenges that affect the achievement of peace and development are related to the wide inequalities between countries. LDCs are one of the priorities of UNESCO which sees the inequalities affecting LDCs not only in financial terms but also in terms of representation capacity. Inequalities of opportunities for youth created a phenomenon

that is now recognized as brain drain. This phenomenon alters the capacity of a country to benefit from their youth for national development. UNESCO performed activities to “enable countries to draw benefit from the capacity of their expatriate citizens, the ‘return of talents’ to the home country for brief periods of time will be promoted” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 27). Youth, and in particular marginalized youth, are in fact another declared priority of the period reflected in the creation of a special project on the enhancement of learning opportunities for marginalized youth (*idem*).

Other important challenges related to peace and development are the respect for human rights and tolerance. In its work programme, UNESCO developed a transdisciplinary project called ‘Towards a culture of peace’, which intended to make a direct contribution to the building of a culture of peace based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition, UNESCO took a decisive role in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (UNESCO, 2000a). UNESCO strongly encouraged education for tolerance which is one of the bases of mutual and international understanding. In fact, UNESCO proposed to insert tolerance within educational curricula (UNESCO, 1996a). Finally, the challenge of health is said to affect global development, and education thus has a role in promoting healthy behaviours. UNESCO’s programmatic documents revealed a concern for the expansion of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS when proposing to insert elements of preventive education in curricula (UNESCO, 1996b).

INEQUALITIES - Between countries and within education. Reaching the unreached and Inclusive schooling.

Exactly as the previous period, the inequalities accounted for in the C/4 are of two kinds: between countries and within education. Inequalities and disparities between countries are perceived as a “scandal” (UNESCO, 1996a, foreword) and directly undermine the process of development and peace (UNESCO, 1998, p. 121). On the one hand, there are financial inequalities, which prevent some countries from ensuring basic education for all (UNESCO, 1996a). In addition there are disparities in ICTs (*idem*). Emphasis was given to countries in transition (UNESCO, 2000a), countries in emergencies (UNESCO, 1996b), and LDCs (UNESCO, 1998). Particularly relevant is the continuation of work in

education with the nine high-population developing countries following-up the New Delhi Education for All Summit (UNESCO, 1996b).

The second kind of inequalities are the ones within education. The strong concept of “reaching the unreached” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 17) is promoted in the period. This concept does not only entail a concern for those who have no access to education, but also for “those who are seeking a second-chance opportunity to learn or upgrade skills” (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 34). It means that reaching the unreached required innovative approaches to the provision of education (UNESCO, 1998); to reach out of school children, the ones that dropped out, adults and people living in marginalized areas and so on. It also implies that there is a problem in educational systems. In particular, the efficiency of education systems is questioned with capacity building activities for Member States in their analysis capacity (UNESCO, 1996b) and in monitoring “education systems so as to reduce educational wastage” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 20). Particularly, UNESCO perceived the need to build flexible and diversified educational systems (UNESCO, 1996b).

Out of school, street and working children are part of the challenge of inequalities. The issue of marginalized children is approached with a rights-based approach. In fact, several are the activities that promote children’s right. For example, UNESCO worked “in close co-operation with UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP) and ILO’s International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour” (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 37), celebrated “the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 18), and mobilized the educational community to ensure that “children are educated in keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 19).

Among the people perceived as disadvantaged and marginalized there are three groups: women, adults and people with special needs. Special emphasis is given to women declared as the first priority (*idem*) following-up the Platform of Action of the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (UNESCO, 1996b). Adult education received a fresh impulse thanks to the organization of the CONFINTEA V, held in 1997 in Hamburg (UNESCO, 1998). Finally, people with special needs deserved particular attention with activities following the Salamanca World

Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1998) and promoting the principle of “inclusive schooling” (UNESCO, 2000a).

RELEVANCE AND QUALITY – Useful, responsive, adaptable and adequate education to changing needs of society.

Education relevance is still a great challenge of this period. In the texts, the appeal to educational relevance is often related to the one on quality education, even if they seem to take different directions and separate meanings. Challenges close to the relevance of education are the calls for useful, responsive, adaptable (UNESCO, 2000a; 1996b), and adequate education (UNESCO, 2000a). In the 28 Programme and Budget (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 35), it is recalled that “throughout the programme, efforts focus on improving the quality, relevance and usefulness of the education and training provided”. While in the Medium Term Strategy (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 18), it is said that “education must therefore be made responsive to the changing needs of society and focus on empowering individuals throughout their lives”.

UNESCO thus perceived that “contemporary societies are undergoing accelerated changes, which place increasing demands on individuals to acquire new knowledge and skills in order to cope with both the challenges of social transformations and the changing requirements of the world of work” (*idem*, p. 17). Education is thus called upon to give an effective answer to these new needs. Of particular importance is the work of the International Commission on Education for the XXI century which, after having analysed the tensions and challenges of contemporary societies, proposed four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together.

Like in the first period, the challenge of relevance led to rethink the content of what is taught in school. In order to face the challenges, UNESCO promoted to insert preventive education (UNESCO, 1998), but also educating for a culture of peace (UNESCO, 2000a), “Education for peace, human rights, democracy, international understanding and tolerance” (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 160), and educating for a sustainable future (UNESCO, 1998).

A great challenge of the relevance of education is related to the role of higher education in society. In fact, in 1998 UNESCO organized the World Conference on Higher

Education and in the Medium Term Strategy it is clearly stated that “the role and functions of higher education systems and institutions should also be re-examined in the light of the profound transformations occurring in society today” (UNESCO, 1996*a*, p. 22), and that it would be done looking at issues of quality, internationalization and relevance. Efforts would be made “to improve the quality and relevance of higher education” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 50) and to strengthen its role in societies.

Particularly interesting is noting that discourses of educational relevance took into account the cultural aspect of education with a particular focus. In fact, with the end of the World Decade for Cultural Development there is no longer the concentrated attention to the importance of culture in development of people and societies throughout the programmes. However, greater attention is paid to indigenous knowledge within the framework of the Plan of Action of the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People. In particular, UNESCO’s activities in education were sensitive to this issue:

Assistance will be provided to indigenous communities for elaborating learning materials relevant to their needs in their national languages [...] Community education activities will build on the culture, indigenous knowledge and skills of the communities (UNESCO, 1998, pp. 17 and 19).

Finally, a global challenge perceived by UNESCO related to relevance is the one on quality education. In fact, during this period, the concept of quality education started assuming a precise and separate meaning from the one of relevance (see § 5.2.4). The challenge of how to define quality is also assessed in the documents of Education for All agenda. In fact, in the background publication for the Second International Consultative Forum on EFA (Education for All. Status and Trends) there is a chapter entitled “The quality puzzle” questioning “What is ‘quality’ in education? What factors contribute to it? And how can it be defined in operational terms that permit it to be measured?” (International Consultative Forum on EFA, 1993, p. 21). The debate on quality education within EFA in 1993 is fully reflected in UNESCO’s programme for the following years. Several times in the programmatic documents of UNESCO education quality is recalled as deserving attention. And the challenge of quality seems to be related not only to relevance but also with effective learning. For example in the first biennium there is a sub programme specifically related to “enhancing the quality and relevance of basic

education” and the main line of action corresponding to this sub programme was “to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process in basic education” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 39). Quality education became so important that it was thus inserted in one of the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000*b*). However, quality education has also other related challenges, such as quality of teaching (UNESCO, 1996*c*) and the quality of learning environments (UNESCO, 1996*a*).

BASIC EDUCATION – Expanding access to basic education opportunities

Basic education still remained a global challenge from the first to the second period. However, the focus within basic education changed. In fact, although basic education encompasses “early childhood and primary education, as well as literacy and life skills training for youth and adults” UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 34), the main focus of the programme related to this challenge is to expand access to basic education rather than eradicating illiteracy which was the major challenge of the first period (see § 5.1.3). The Mid-Decade Review Meeting on Progress Towards Education for All gave a renewed impetus to the thrust of expanding access to basic education highlighting the uneven progresses achieved by countries in this field (UNESCO, 1998). The shortcomings highlighted are related to literacy, universal primary education, youth and adult education.

Literacy is still perceived as a challenge but its importance decreased considerably. In fact, there is less attention paid to it. If in the first period literacy was called the “absolute priority”, here it is just a component of basic education. In terms of programmes, there is no longer the “Mobilizing Project: Combating Illiteracy”, and there are no longer mentions to UNESCO’s Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 in UNESCO’s programmatic documents. Therefore, UNESCO’s notion of basic education acquired effectively the broader meaning of the Jomtien Declaration entailing not only literacy works. Community education initiatives are strongly encouraged as a means to provide learning opportunities to marginalized groups or to those who do not even enter the formal system (UNESCO, 1998). Non-formal education is thus conceived as part of basic education which is not strictly limited to primary schooling.

However, the main challenge of basic education is that of the expansion (and sometimes renewal) of primary education systems and the achievement of universal primary education. This is thus one of the goals of the renovated Education For All movement.

To tackle the challenge of primary education UNESCO focused its attention to the E-9 countries. In fact, “activities will have a priority focus on these countries which hold the key to achieving literacy and primary education for all on a global scale” (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 35).

Even thanks to the CONFINTEA V adult education remained one of the key aspects of the challenge of basic education. However, the challenge of adult education is not limited to literacy. In fact, programmes of continuing education for youth and adults for the acquisition of life skills are strongly encouraged (UNESCO, 1998). In fact, in the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000b) there are two goals related to adult education. The fourth goal has to do with adult literacy while the third is related to ensure “that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs” (*idem*, p. 16).

Finally, it is perceived that basic education is a matter of lifelong education. In fact, basic education activities are targeted to learners of all ages in any circumstances. It is a process that goes from early childhood to older ages. Early childhood is in fact one of the areas of basic education and UNESCO elaborated a specific Strategic Plan for UNESCO’s Early Childhood and Family Education Programme (UNESCO, 2000a).

LIFELONG LEARNING – Access to lifelong learning opportunities and recognition of experiential learning.

One of the most important challenges of this period is related to the ideas of “continuing education”, “lifelong education”, “education throughout life”, “learning throughout life” and “lifelong learning”. These terms have similar but not equal meanings (see § 5.2.4). However, the challenge perceived with these terms is of an education that should be rethought in a broader way encompassing “learning”, and, in particular, learning that happens lifelong and life-wide. As the International Commission put forward:

... there is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. Not only must it adapt to changes in the nature of work, but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming whole human beings - their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the critical faculty and the ability to act” ... [learning throughout life] goes beyond the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education. It meets the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world (UNESCO, 1996c, pp. 19-20).

Of great relevance is the perception of the need to move towards a ‘learning society’ (*idem*) in which every aspect of life provides occasions for learning. Hence, what seemed to be challenging for UNESCO were two aspects: i) access to learning opportunities (UNESCO, 1996*a*), and ii) “the recognition and certification of the results of learning” (*idem*, p. 18), and the “accreditation of 'experiential' learning throughout life and of learning acquired through non-formal education” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 40). These challenges require a complete reform of the education systems which, from this period on, started to be called also with the term “learning systems” (UNESCO, 2000*a*). Moreover, the challenge of accreditation posed important concerns on the way of assessing learning outcomes and the efficiency of learning systems.

As to the access to learning opportunities, UNESCO strongly relied on the possibilities of new open learning systems, community education and non-formal education, which not only expand the opportunities, but also introduce diversification in education (UNESCO, 1996*b*; 2000*a*). Of particular importance is the work done by UNESCO on education for adults with the CONFINTEA V in Hamburg. The follow up strategy of UNESCO is to support Member States in “designing and implementing policies and strategies directed towards lifelong learning, including innovative skills training in the mother tongue, with the active participation of all elements of society and the appropriate use of information and communication technologies” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 23). Another significant contribution is the work done by the Executive Board's ad hoc Forum of Reflection which “recommended that open-learning systems should be fostered, enabling all people throughout the world to obtain access to all forms and levels of education, within the context of lifelong education” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 33).

Related to lifelong learning is yet another important challenge, the expansion of access to post basic levels of education. Rising demand for education worldwide resulted from the great impetus of Education For All which led Member States and UNESCO to deal with secondary education and youth education. In fact, while in the first period youth educational needs were addressed in light of technical and vocational education with the UNEVOC project, in this period general secondary education (its structures, quality and relevance) became a focus of activities (UNESCO, 1998). As Delors pointed out:

... if after the essential step forward taken by the Jomtien Conference on basic education one had to point to an emergency situation, it would be to secondary education that we would turn our attention, given that the fate of millions of boys and girls is decided between the time they leave primary school and the time they either start work or go on to higher education (UNESCO, 1996c, p. 30).

EDUCATION SYSTEMS – Renewing and diversifying in light of lifelong learning: educational methods, strategies, policies, management, and delivery systems.

The multiple challenges illustrated before have led UNESCO to perceive the need to advance “towards renewing and diversifying education systems as a whole” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 21). In particular, this tension towards renewing education is done in light of the concepts and challenges posed by lifelong learning. In fact, in all three biennia there is a dedicated programme which deals with the challenge of education systems and lifelong learning: “Reform of education in the perspective of lifelong education” (UNESCO, 1996b); “Reform of education in the perspective of education throughout life” (UNESCO, 1998); and “Reform of education in the perspective of education for all throughout life” (UNESCO, 2000a). This reform of education systems implied a rethinking of the content of learning and teaching methods (*idem*); educational strategies (UNESCO, 1996b); educational policies and management (UNESCO, 1998); and education delivery systems (UNESCO, 1996a).

One of these challenges is thus rethinking what is taught in schools (UNESCO, 1998). This means revisiting the content of education and school curricula. In this perspective, IBE was mandated to focus on “the adaptation of content to the challenges of the twenty-first century” (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 40). Another important factor is the teaching process. Teachers are at the heart of this process and it is perceived that the status of teachers should be improved, mainly of those responsible for basic education (UNESCO, 1996c). The training and retraining of teachers and education personnel is one of the challenges to insure that teachers can be successful in their educational efforts. Particularly important is the advancement of knowledge in the field of pedagogy, which can support teachers in implementing new teaching methods (UNESCO, 1998).

UNESCO perceived the importance of improving educational management (UNESCO, 1998). In fact, in its activities, UNESCO promoted training for Member States to “foster

the strategic management of education systems” and effective use of the resources (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 21). In this respect, particularly relevant is the promotion of policies for decentralization and devolution of authorities (UNESCO, 1996a; 1996b; 1996c). Another important issue of concern is the internal efficiency of the systems. High levels of drop out (UNESCO, 1996c) and repetition (UNESCO, 1996b; 1998) led UNESCO to assist Member States in its analysis capacity (UNESCO, 1996b) and in monitoring “the internal efficiency of various education systems so as to reduce educational wastage” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 20).

The reform of educational systems should also advance towards the concept of “reaching the unreached” providing diversification of delivery systems, non-formal education opportunities and open and distance education. In this respect, one of the challenges perceived is the educational systems in emergency and of countries facing particular periods of transition (UNESCO, 1996b). Therefore, UNESCO promoted post conflict reconstruction of education systems and learning opportunities for refugees and displaced persons (UNESCO, 2000a).

5.2.4 Notion of Education

The notion of education of UNESCO in this period received great impact from the work done by the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century and the Executive Board's ad hoc Forum of Reflection (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 33). Within the programmatic documents it is possible to infer the direct or indirect promotion of numerous values, concepts and principles which belong to six macro categories. These macro categories are: humanistic vision of education, lifelong learning, equity, education relevance, education quality, and learning to do. These macro categories are strongly interconnected and entail a vast variety of concepts, which can belong to more than one single category.

HUMANISTIC EDUCATION – Four pillars of education

Although the programmatic documents of this period do not promote directly a humanistic vision of education like the first period did (see above), it is still possible to infer that the vision of education that UNESCO had is strongly grounded in a humanistic perspective. Firstly, it should be recognized that UNESCO’s approach to development is

people centred. As the Director-General Federico Mayor stated in the Medium Term Strategy:

We should therefore concentrate our efforts on the development of human resources in order to return, after decades of strategies marked by a narrow economism, to the very heart of development, i.e. the human being (UNESCO, 1996a, p. foreword).

Hence, this approach to development has its consequences to the ways in which UNESCO sees the role of education. As the International Commission of Education for the XXI Century stated: “Education has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development” (UNESCO, 1996c, p. 11).

One of the most important impacts of this approach to education can be seen in how UNESCO perceived what the purposes and the aims of education are. For UNESCO, education has the aim of developing a personal system of values and it should encourage peace, human rights and democracy, tolerance and international understanding (UNESCO, 1996a; 1998). In fact, the strategy of the Medium Term Strategy contributing to peace directly proposed this view of the purposes of education.

Education for peace and education for peace building are concepts that are reiterated several times throughout the texts and in all three biennia there is a transdisciplinary project called “Towards a culture of peace” which entails numerous activities of education. The culture of peace and peace building is strongly related to the idea of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. UNESCO in these years is particularly active in leading, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (UNESCO, 2000a).

Therefore, among the purposes of education, promoted in its humanistic vision, there are: education for responsible civic life (UNESCO, 1996a), for appreciating cultural diversity (UNESCO, 1996b) and “human and civic values and attitudes conducive to democratic and active citizenship” (*idem*, p. 46). In addition, such a humanistic education has the aim of valuing intergenerational relations. In fact, in this period, the Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations is adopted (1997) and in all three biennia there is a transdisciplinary project related to environmental protection.

The great thrust towards an affirmation of a humanistic vision of education came from the reflections of the International Commission of Education for the XXI Century. In fact, the Commission revisited the aim and purposes of education in light of the challenges of the period. One of the most significant results of the Commission is the ideation of the four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. Although “learning to be” was already proposed by UNESCO’s publication “Learning to be. The world of education today and tomorrow” (1972), these pillars constitute a breakthrough in UNESCO’s notion of education. The pillars build the foundations of learning throughout life and each of them opens landscapes on some aspects of education. The four pillars underline the multidimensionality of human existence and the multiple purposes education might serve. The pillars learning to live together and learning to be have particular significance for the humanistic vision of education highlighting the social and cultural dimensions of education. In fact, learning to live together is perceived as the foundation of the others. Learning to live together means

... developing an understanding of others and their history, traditions and spiritual values and, on this basis, creating a new spirit which, guided by recognition of our growing interdependence and a common analysis of the risks and challenges of the future, would induce people to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way (UNESCO, 1996c, p. 20).

Thus, this pillar is strongly related to and it encourages the building of a culture of peace, a sense of solidarity and international understanding.

In addition, the title of the Report (“Learning: The Treasure Within”) and the pillar learning to be, suggest that every person has inner talents, such as “memory, reasoning power, imagination, physical ability, aesthetic sense, the aptitude to communicate with others” (UNESCO, 1996c, p. 21) which goes beyond the mere utilitarian vision of education as a means to develop skills. Education has the aim of helping people to develop and express these talents and the International Commission of Education for the XXI Century suggested so as an imperative: “none of the talents which are hidden like buried treasure in every person must be left untapped” (*ibidem*).

One of the results of this attention to humanistic education and the learning society is the concentration and promotion of a learner-centred approach to education. In particular, learner-centred curricula are promoted “literacy, numeracy, human and civic values, ethics and basic skills” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 17). Hence, on the one hand, great effort is spent considering what are the purposes of education, and on the other hand, UNESCO also reflected on how this humanistic education should look like and what its components are. In fact, UNESCO promoted some issues to be inserted into curricula: such as human and civic values, universal values, environmental issues, as well as health education (UNESCO, 1996*b*).

LIFELONG LEARNING – A broad vision: a continuous process of forming whole human beings toward learning societies.

The concept of lifelong learning is one of the most important of this period. In fact, there is a growing trend in using and promoting this concept in programmatic documents. As already expressed before, UNESCO has used concepts such as “continuing education”, “lifelong education”, “education throughout life”, “learning throughout life” and “lifelong learning”. These terms have similar but not identical meanings, and are perceived as global challenges of the period. The use of these terms changed over time in the texts. While in the Medium Term Strategy and in the first biennium the most used concepts were “continuing education” and “lifelong education”, from the second biennium to the third there is a shift in the use of terms with a prevalence of “education throughout life”, “learning throughout life” and “lifelong learning”.

The reflections on lifelong learning received important contributions from the International Commission of Education for the XXI Century, the Executive Board's ad hoc Forum of Reflection, and the CONFINTEA V.

The International Commission recalled the concept of the “learning society”, a concept already developed in UNESCO’s publication “Learning to be. The world of education today and tomorrow” (UNESCO, 1972). This concept was also the theme of a global dialogue “Building Learning Societies – Knowledge, Information and Human Development among policy-makers, experts, practitioners and young people” organized by UNESCO and World Bank (UNESCO, 2000*a*). A learning society is the goal that the

International Commission envisioned and suggested to achieve. In this society, every person is both a learner and a teacher, sharing knowledge with the others.

The truth is that every aspect of life, at both the individual and the social level, offers opportunities for both learning and doing” ... [Within the learning society] there is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. Not only must it adapt to changes in the nature of work, but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming whole human beings - their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the critical faculty and the ability to act (UNESCO, 1996c, p. 19).

Therefore, the concept of lifelong learning, in the Commission’s view goes beyond “the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education” (*idem*, p. 20). It encompasses the possibility of learning everywhere, at any time, from anyone. As a consequence, this poses significant challenges for the formal provision of such learning opportunities. In fact, what is promoted in UNESCO’s programmatic documents is a stronger and better linkage between formal and non-formal sectors of education and “the development of diversified education delivery systems” (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 34) is encouraged. The Executive Board's ad hoc Forum of Reflection achieved similar conclusions promoting the development of open learning systems in which all people throughout the world could obtain access to all forms and levels of education, within the context of lifelong education (UNESCO, 1993c; 1996b).

A lifelong learning approach to education is witnessed also by the activities performed by UNESCO in this period. In fact, educational activities covered the entire spectrum of education. Early childhood care, universal primary education, general secondary education, technical and vocational training, higher education, adult education, retraining and second chance education, and non-formal education opportunities. A specific project launched is “Learning without frontiers”, after the suggestions made by the Executive Board ad hoc Forum of Reflections (UNESCO, 1993), which promoted "diversified and open-learning systems in the perspective of lifelong education” (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 44).

Of particular relevance in UNESCO’s reflection on lifelong learning is the attention and promotion of an international system of degree recognition (UNESCO, 1996a) and the challenge of the accreditation of experiential learning and learning acquired outside the

formal system in light of the Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future of Adult Learning (UNESCO, 1998).

EQUITY – reaching the unreached and inclusive education

One of the values promoted in UNESCO's programmatic documents of the second period is that of equity in education. The two strong concepts promoted in these years related to equity are: "reaching the unreached", and "inclusive education".

First of all, UNESCO strongly promotes education as a human right and that education should be made available to all, particularly basic education. This idea has significant impact on how strategies and activities are conceived. Hence, the concept of "reaching the unreached" is influenced by a human rights approach to education. Several times, UNESCO promotes the concept of "reaching the unreached" which means giving emphasis and trying to make efforts to provide educational opportunities to disadvantaged populations and marginalized people, to "those who have no access to education" (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 18). Among these, there are "women, children, the elderly or disabled, minorities and indigenous peoples, refugees, displaced persons and those living in extreme poverty" (*idem*, p. 39). The activities of UNESCO's programme have often a special emphasis reaching the learning needs of this target population. The concept of addressing the learning needs of these population groups led UNESCO to propose diversified delivery systems, and open learning systems. UNESCO also paid special attention to the promotion of second chance opportunities in this period (UNESCO, 1996b).

ICTs and distance education can be used as tools to overcome inequalities and reach the marginalized. The attention to ICTs in education lays on a broader reflection on the role and opportunities that ICTs open to the learning process. During the 29th Session of the General Conference UNESCO founded the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) based in Moscow following recommendations coming out of the International Congress on Education and Informatics (UNESCO, 1998). As the Medium Term Strategy put forward:

Attention should therefore be given to exploring the most appropriate technologies to reach the poor, remote and marginalized groups, and all those who need to update or upgrade knowledge and skills, without neglecting the relevance of the content of

education. It should be ensured that technologies do not represent a threat to the cultural specificity of the user community, but become useful supports for scientific and humanistic education (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 18).

Women received great attention in UNESCO's programming. The Organization strongly supported equality of opportunities in education especially for girls. These years saw the beginning of the implementation of the Plan of Action established by the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). Some of the strategic objectives of the Conference concentrated on education for women such as ensuring equal access to education at all levels (from primary to vocational education and training, to higher education) and developing non-discriminatory education and training.

The second important concept developed in these years related to equity is "inclusive education". This concept saw its birth at the "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality" (UNESCO, 1994b). During this Conference a definition of what an inclusive education implies was established: "Inclusive education implies starting with children and young people as they are in all their diversity and then designing a system which is flexible enough to be responsive to individual differences" (*idem*, p. 40). The concept of "inclusive education" is promoted throughout the programmatic documents when referring to a section of population "unreached" by educational systems: children with special needs. UNESCO promoted the concept itself, as well as policies aimed at building inclusive education. Related to this concept, UNESCO focused also on "inclusive schooling" and in general terms on the learning environment (UNESCO, 1998), which is one aspect of quality of education.

RELEVANCE – Education responsive to the social transformations, to the challenges of the twenty-first century and to the present and future needs of society. Education adaptable to learners' needs.

In preparation of the publication of the Report "Learning: The Treasure Within" (UNESCO, 1996c), the issue of education relevance was of paramount importance and requested due attention from UNESCO during the previous period (see § 5.1.4). The new needs of societies and the great changes which have taken place at the end of the twentieth century recalled for rethinking not only the aim and the purposes of education, but also the educational structures (UNESCO, 1996b).

UNESCO's approach to the issue of relevance of education is concentrated on the responsiveness of education, and on its adaptability. In fact, the texts promote the idea that education should be rendered more responsive to: i) "social transformations and to the challenges of the twenty-first century" (UNESCO, 1998, p. 12), and ii) to "the present and future needs of society" (UNESCO, 2000*a*, p. 33). This responsiveness is perceived as the principle through which it is possible to overcome the challenges of marginalization, unemployment and functional illiteracy among young people. In fact, the growth of these challenges is attributed to the "absence of adequate education and training opportunities responsive to the demands [of contemporary societies]" (UNESCO, 1996*a*, p. 17).

On the other hand, UNESCO promoted the concept of relevance as an education that can be adaptable to the local contexts and to the specific learning needs of individuals by supporting the learner-centred approach and learner-centred curricula (UNESCO, 1996*b*). In addition, adaptability is interpreted as "training materials to particular national and regional traditions" (*idem*, p. 39), "compatible with identities" (UNESCO, 1996*a*, p. 21) and with general secondary education strategies that should be "culturally adaptable" (UNESCO, 2000*a*, p. 28). Moreover, relevance is linked to equity through the promotion of the ideas of "flexible and diversified modes of learning adapted to the needs and language of the learner" (UNESCO, 1998, p. x) and the needs of marginalized sections of the population. In this respect, the concept of adaptability blends well with the concept of inclusive education.

Of particular importance is the idea of diversified delivery systems and the promotion of non-formal and community education which entail a valorisation of the specificity of contexts and cultures, promoting an integrated education system.

A relevant education is thus an education which can equip societies and individuals to face the future. In order to do this, UNESCO proposed several changes in the content of education in light of a humanistic vision of education, and changes in the structure of educational systems in light of the lifelong learning concept.

QUALITY – Multidimensionality of quality education. Enabling factors of learning (environment and teachers) and learning effectiveness (learning outcomes)

As already introduced, the concept of quality has been often linked to the concept of relevance. However, the programmatic documents of UNESCO show that the term quality begins to appear associated to education without other terms, which demonstrates that “quality education” started assuming a meaning of its own. This process received important contributions from the reflections done within the Education for All work. In fact, in some of the documents of EFA (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1993; 1994) the issue of defining quality education is addressed. The debate originates from the concerns on how to measure “quality”. Thus, the meaning of “quality education” for UNESCO was influenced by EFA agenda which proposed:

In the context of schooling, the concept of quality is linked to how efficiently learning occurs. This is believed to be strongly determined by the teacher’s subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, the availability of textbooks and other learning materials, and the time spent by pupils actually learning their lessons. Learning achievement against established norms is usually assessed by means of tests (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1993, p. 21)

However, it is recognized that such an approach is difficult to apply in non-schooling contexts:

It is also difficult to apply to basic education programmes outside the school. Furthermore, it does not take into account another important dimension of quality: *the relevance and effectiveness of learning*. The proof of quality in this regard becomes evident only after the learner leaves school or other basic education programme to seek employment, establish a family, and participate in community life (*Ibidem*. Emphasis added).

UNESCO’s vision of quality is close (but not equal) to the meaning of a successful process of education which results in effective learning. This has been inferred through an activity of UNESCO performed in the first biennium: “UNESCO will work to strengthen national capacities to monitor learning achievement, and investigate other key aspects of the quality of primary school systems” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 40). This means

that UNESCO fully acknowledged that effectiveness of learning and learning achievement are two important aspects of quality education but are not the only ones.

Other aspects of quality education are quality teaching and quality of the learning environment. The International Commission clearly stated that quality education is connected to quality of teaching (UNESCO, 1996c) since teachers are at the heart of the educational process (UNESCO, 1996b). The issue of educational quality is thus also intimately linked with the training and working conditions of primary school teachers and other basic education personnel, who have suffered and whose conditions have deteriorated in many Member States (*idem*). For these reasons, among the activities to foster quality education there is the empowerment and enhancement of the status of teachers.

Moreover, it is possible to infer that another aspect of the notion of quality education is related to the quality of the environment in which the learning process takes place. In the Medium Term Strategy, UNESCO, speaking about the goal of improving the quality of learning environment said that it “involves adequate sanitation and nutritional standards, appropriate textbooks and teaching/learning materials, learning spaces, school libraries and furniture, instructional supervision systems, community and family participation, etc.” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 21) which are enablers of the learning process.

The importance of the concept of quality education is witnessed by the fact that the Education For All agenda 2000 – 2015 included a specific goal. The sixth and last goal was thus to “improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (UNESCO, 2000b, p. 8).

In conclusion, the concept of quality education seems to be formed by two correlated aspects: the enabling factors of learning such as the environment and teachers, as well as the results of the learning process, which can be measurable by learning outcomes.

LEARNING TO DO – Enabling function of education and employability.

The last macro category of values is called “learning to do”, which is based on the definition of one of the pillars of education suggested by the International Commission of Education for the XXI Century:

In addition to learning to do a job or work, it should, more generally, entail the acquisition of a competence that enables people to deal with a variety of situations, often unforeseeable, and to work in teams, a feature to which educational methods do not at present pay enough attention. In many cases, such competence and skills are more readily acquired if pupils and students have the opportunity to try out and develop their abilities by becoming involved in work experience schemes or social work while they are still in education, whence the increased importance that should be attached to all methods of alternating study with work (UNESCO, 1996c, p. 21).

This macro category entails the values promoted by UNESCO, which have to do with the issue of employability and with the idea of the enabling function of education.

Education is thus conceived as an empowering means. Education, and in particular the acquisition of vocational skills, enables poverty alleviation, income generation, and empowers marginalized groups (UNESCO, 1998; 2000a). Basic education opportunities are not only provided for children, but also for those who are seeking a second-chance opportunity to learn or upgrade skills (UNESCO, 1996b). Another important value promoted is the role that education has, and specifically higher education, in societal development.

Without a relevant education, in the current context of changes, youth are in danger of marginalization and poverty (UNESCO, 1996a). They should thus be equipped with the necessary tools and to be prepared for the world of work. As a matter of fact, in this period the UNEVOC project continued to be active, strengthening its activities in the field of technical and vocational training. The link between TVET and industry is encouraged, and the UNESCO promoted the development of skills-based education programmes (UNESCO, 2000a) and skills relevant to the world of work (UNESCO, 1996b). One of the activities that UNESCO performed was to “assist Member States in formulating technical and vocational education and training policies and programmes to provide young and adult citizens with the opportunity for initial and continuing education and training for the world of work” (UNESCO, 2000a, p. 30).

5.2.5 Agenda-setting Mechanisms

The agenda-setting mechanisms used by UNESCO are value setting, capacity building, goal setting, standard setting, and financial leveraging. It is possible to see, even in this

period, that there are some mechanisms used more than others. Like the first period, value setting and capacity building are the mechanisms that UNESCO preferred by far. Contrarily, in this period goal setting acquired much more relevance and activities than the standard setting mechanism. Financial leveraging was not utilized at all, hence contrasting with the activities that it had in the previous period.

VALUE SETTING

Value setting was still the most used mechanism and in these years. UNESCO reaffirmed its role as a forum of reflection and laboratory of ideas, as well as its clearing house function in education “establishing a system of communication among the various networks already existing in the field of educational exchange” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 58). As the 30 C/5 stated: “UNESCO’s clearing-house function will be reinforced (database, exchange of information on curricula, teaching methodologies, best practices, teaching/learning materials, roster of experts and specialized institutions)” (UNESCO, 2000*a*, p. 31).

Values are set through the following six activities: i) participation and organization of international conferences; ii) world-wide consultations; iii) research activities; iv) goals, decades, action plans and declarations; v) celebration of international years, weeks, and days; vi) dissemination of technical documents.

i) Participation and organization of international conferences. In the referred period, UNESCO participated and organized several international conferences and/or congresses. The choice of the theme of the conference – when organized by UNESCO – as well as the choice of the conferences in which participate, is already an expression of preferences of values. From 1995 to 2001 UNESCO organized and participated in nine important conferences that set and disseminated values. In 1995¹² UNESCO participated in the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. In 1996 UNESCO organized the Second International Congress on 'Education and Informatics' in Moscow which led to the creation of the IITE, and the 45th session of the International Conference on Education. In 1997, UNESCO (UIE) organized the fifth International Conference on Adult Education. A year later, UNESCO convened

¹² Although 1995 was in the previous period, the ‘effect’ of the participation to them is possible to see in this period.

the World Conference on Higher Education. In 1999, in Seoul, UNESCO took part in the International Conference of Technical and Vocational Education. Finally, in 2000 UNESCO co-sponsored the World Education Forum in Dakar and prepared the 46th session of the International Conference on Education in 2001.

Table 40: International conferences to which UNESCO contributed 1996 - 2001

Year	Conferences	Main issues and topics
1995	World Summit for Social Development	Universal and equitable access to quality education
	Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women	Women rights
1996	Second International Congress on 'Education and Informatics'	ICT in education
	45 th session of the International Conference on Education	Role of teachers in a changing world
1997	Fifth International Conference on Adult Education	Adult education and lifelong learning
1998	World Conference on Higher Education	Equity, quality, relevance and merit in higher education
1999	International Conference of Technical and Vocational Education	Technical and vocational education
2000	World Education Forum	Education for All
2001	46 th session of the International Conference on Education	Education for All for learning to live together: contents and learning strategies – problems and solutions

ii) World-wide consultations. Regional or global consultations are other activities through which UNESCO tries to set values. These consultations can be done with different actors and for different purposes. For example, UNESCO continued its collaboration and partnership with the CCNGOs on higher education. Among the partners of consultations there are governments. A series of regional ministerial meetings are organized and UNESCO provided its technical work and expertise producing guidelines and ministerial briefs. Consultations with Member States took also the specific form of providing experts from the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century: “High-level specialists drawn from the Commission and other experts will be at the disposal of interested Member States in order to discuss with them policy issues identified by the Commission and their implications for national policies” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 43). Global consultations can be organized in preparation of a Conference or a Congress, for example for the preparation of the World Conference on Higher Education UNESCO

organized “a series of regional and subregional preparatory meetings in 1996-1997” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 26). These worldwide consultations covered and promoted a wide range of educational concepts and principles, such as adapting education systems toward learning systems, as well as merit in higher education.

iii) Research activities. The expansion of knowledge was another kind of activity performed in order to set values. UNESCO not only produced original materials, but also coordinated researches. Among the most important products in education were the flagship publications “Learning: The Treasure Within” (UNESCO, 1996*c*) and “World Education Report” (1998 and 2000), as well as the UNESCO-led journals: *Prospects*, *The International Review of Education* and *Study Abroad*. As to the coordination of research, in this period, UNESCO established new UNESCO chairs in its fields of competence; collaborated with different Universities for the production of particular publications, such as the work with the International Literacy Institute at the University of Pennsylvania (UNESCO, 1996*b*), and established partnerships with research and training centres such as with the International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (UNESCO, 1998). In this case, the notion of education UNESCO held was equated to the values that were promoted in the flagship publication “Learning: The Treasure Within”.

iv) Goals, decades, action plans and declarations. It is undoubted that the establishment of goals, decades, action plans and declarations carries with it a value setting significance. In this period, UNESCO participated and/or produced numerous goals, action plans, decades and declarations. Among the most important decades were EFA I, promoting basic learning needs for all, the Agenda for the Future of Adult Education, promoting lifelong learning and adult education opportunities, as well as the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. These goals, decades, action plans and declarations seem to confirm that UNESCO tried to promote the values that it held, such as human rights education, equity in education, education quality and relevance, and basic education for all.

v) Celebration of international years, weeks, and days. Among the global advocacy initiatives, UNESCO took part in the celebration of international years, days, and weeks. The celebration and/or the institution of international years aimed at capturing global attention to specific aspects of education. UNESCO celebrated the year of education in

Africa in 1996 and the international year of the culture of peace in 2000. Like the previous period, UNESCO celebrated World Teachers' Day (established in 1994), the Children's rights day, and the International Literacy Day. For the first time, UNESCO established also the International Adult Learners Week as a follow up of CONFINTEA V (UNESCO, 2000*a*). Among the global advocacy activities the celebration of literacy prizes and the nomination of goodwill ambassadors can be identified.

vi) Dissemination of technical documents. The promotion and setting of values happened through UNESCO's technical expertise too. The 28 C/5 expressed it clearly saying that "the values of tolerance and mutual respect will be promoted through leadership training, curriculum reform, and the development of learning materials for minority children, adult men and women, and youth having dropped out of school" (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 36).

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is the second most used mechanism and it is divided into two sub mechanisms: sharing and promoting best practices, and provision of technical guidance, assistance and judgement. In this period both sub mechanisms were used quite constantly.

As to the dissemination of best practices UNESCO carried out four kinds of activities: i) encouragement of networks, ii) creation of specific centres, iii) dissemination of technical materials, and iv) ministerial policy dialogues. During this period, UNESCO did not create new networks but strengthened the ones that already existed such as the UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN Networks and the UNEVOC Project (UNESCO, 1998). The other networks encouraged were regional networks of early childhood specialists (UNESCO, 2000*a*), as well as an international networks of national focal points on specific issues (UNESCO, 2000*a*).

The second kind of activities is the creation of specific centres. In these years UNESCO created the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA, Ethiopia); the International Institute for Girls' and Women's Education (Burkina Faso); the Youth Development Centre (Malawi); the IITE (Russian Federation); and changed the Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC) into the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC, Venezuela).

Thirdly, UNESCO shared best practices through the actual production and dissemination of publications. For example UNESCO disseminated “teacher resource materials and methodological guides in such areas as early childhood and family education” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 39) and produced “a set of methodological documents [...] distributed to some 100 documentation centres in universities and planning offices of ministries of education” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 30).

Finally, UNESCO organized ministerial policy dialogues encouraging the sharing of best practices and policy solutions. One example of it is the continuous effort in the E-9 Initiatives with the E-9 meetings in 1997, 2000, and 2001 (UNESCO, 1996*b*; 1998; 2000*a*).

As to the technical work provided by UNESCO in these years, three kinds of activities were undertaken: i) training programmes, ii) policy assistance and design, iii) provision of highly technical work on particular issues that UNESCO intended to install.

The training programmes of UNESCO targeted different audiences. Among them, there are teachers and educators. UNESCO provided training modules and activities to teachers in different aspects of education such as the use of ICTs, or inclusive education. Special projects were also the implementation of training workshops for leaders of community-based programmes (UNESCO, 1996*b*), or with “indigenous communities for elaborating learning materials relevant to their needs in their national languages” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 17), as well as with NGOs (UNESCO, 2000*a*) and “training workshops for street children educators” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 37). Other training and capacity-building activities targeted policy-makers and managers (UNESCO, 1996*b*) and IIEP organized “specialized seminars to develop research skills [among] educational planners of educational administration and universities” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 30).

The second kind of activities entailed education sector analyses (UNESCO, 1998), policy and strategy formulation (UNESCO, 1996*a*), as well as the design of alternative delivery systems (UNESCO, 1996*b*). The main partners of this work are governments and UNESCO provides assistance to them in order to renovate their education systems and/or to frame specific national policies (UNESCO, 1996*a*). Another activity under policy assistance is the production of a “series of educational strategy briefs [...] focusing on educational reforms and global policy issues of priority concern to certain main clusters

of countries” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 21). Finally, assistance is provided to Member States for the assessments of systems performance and learning outcomes (UNESCO, 1996b; 1998).

Lastly, UNESCO provided highly technical work and assistance in developing specific curricula, and for textbooks production. These contributions were concentrated on the integration of ICTs in curricula and with a skill based education approach (UNESCO, 2000a). Moreover, UNESCO set up temporary educational structures in emergency situations and contributed to the rebuilding of national capacities in countries in transitions (UNESCO, 1996b).

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting mechanisms and activities received an important thrust in this period. As already expressed this mechanism does not entail solely the actual elaboration of goals, but also all the activities that aimed at creating interdependence and shared pathways for education development. Thus, these activities can be of two kinds: i) the participation in the creation of international goals (or decades or plan of actions) with the related the creation of the mechanisms of follow up, and ii) the participation to international cooperation mechanisms and projects established for different purposes.

i) Participation in the creation of international goals and follow up mechanisms. In these years, there is a spectacular expansion of Decades and Plans of Action and UNESCO increased its attention to them, incardinating its activities within these programmes. It is important noting that not all of these Plans are followed, or simply appear in UNESCO’s documents, consistently. In fact, there are Plan of Action clearly more relevant than others since several activities rely on them and the commitments made are followed during the entire period.

Like in the previous period, the most important goal setting mechanism is, undoubtedly, the framework for Action that resulted from the WCEFA. As the Director-General stated in the Medium Term Strategy: “As in the past, UNESCO will continue to place ‘Education for All’ at the forefront of its contribution to development” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 17). It is also witnessed by the numerous references to the Conference and to the goals of the Framework for Action in general. UNESCO is one of the co-sponsors of this

initiative and continued to provide the secretariat for the International Consultative Forum on EFA organizing the Mid Term Assessment in 1996 and the EFA Assessment on 2000. The importance and relevance of EFA for the work of UNESCO is also testified by the organization and the following up of the World Education Forum in Dakar establishing the Dakar Framework for Action. The establishment (or renewed efforts) of EFA had repercussions also on other aspects of goal setting mechanisms, for example the continuation of the E-9 initiative (see § 5.1.4).

An element of discontinuity from the past is the complete disappearance of UNESCO's Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 from the programmatic documents. As explained in the first period (see § 5.1.5), the WCEFA was part of the broader framework of the aforementioned UNESCO Plan of Action. It thus seems that the importance and the scope of EFA I overshadowed the limited vision of the UNESCO's Plan of Action which was focus merely on literacy. It resulted in a prominence of EFA I over the Plan of Action whose structures remained active only at regional levels with the existing regional programmes Asia and Pacific Programme of Education for All, Regional Programme for the Universalization and Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy in the Arab States, Principal Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean.

A second relevant International Agenda, in whose creation UNESCO participated, resulted from the COFINTEA V with the Hamburg Declaration and Agenda for the Future of Adult Education. UNESCO increased its efforts to strengthen “national capacities for planning and implementing diverse forms of adult and continuing education in the light of the recommendations of the fifth International Conference on Adult Education” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 12).

UNESCO also contributed to different Decades which were not created by UNESCO itself. For example the UNLD (2003 – 2013). UNESCO prepared a “draft plan for a United Nations Literacy Decade [...] as part of the global efforts for Education for All and as a follow-up to the World Education Forum in Dakar” (UNESCO, 2000*a*, p. 18). Similarly, UNESCO took part in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by, for instance, assisting “National Commissions and non-governmental organizations in implementing the Conference recommendations and in

preparing pilot projects on girls' and women's education, in collaboration with UNICEF and other partners” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 35). Finally, another important Decade in which UNESCO participated was the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2005). Especially UNESCO participated and aligned its activities in this broader framework which entails:

World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy (Montreal, 1993); the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), which makes reference to the Montreal Plan of Action; the Declaration adopted by the International Conference on Education (Geneva, 1994) which the General Conference endorsed at its twenty-eighth session (1995), when it also approved the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy; and lastly the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2005), which the United Nations General Assembly adopted at its forty-ninth session. (UNESCO, 1996*a*, p. 38).

UNESCO worked also within the framework of other Decades which seemed to be less relevant than the previous ones. This is witnessed by the fact that some of these appear just once in UNESCO’s programmatic documents without continuity, or because they are rather specific and related to one particular education issue. These are: the Plan of Action for follow-up to the United Nations Year for Tolerance (1995); Programme of Action for the Culture of Peace; the follow up of Project 2000+ for the popularization of science; the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; the follow up of the Ouagadougou Pan-African Conference on Education for Girls (1993); the Decade for African Education (1995 - 2005); the African Paulo Freire Literacy Decade, the International Decade for World Indigenous Peoples (1994 -2004); and the Plan of Action for Science and Technology Education.

ii) Participation in international cooperation mechanisms and projects established for different purposes. The second kind of activities entails the participation in international cooperation mechanisms and projects established for different purposes but unrelated to a particular decade or international plan of action. Indeed, UNESCO participated in several initiatives and cooperation mechanisms although they are not created with an overall international agenda. Among these, there are some initiatives that were initiated by the UN. For example, UNESCO participated to the UN Wide Initiative for Girls

Education, the UN Special Initiative for Africa, and the UN System Wide Initiative. These initiatives are cooperation mechanisms in that they install coordination among partners with the specific purpose established as the goal of the initiative. Another kind of cooperation mechanism are the regional conferences. Indeed, UNESCO organized regional conferences of Ministers of Education and established regional advisory committees for education. Among the regional programmes, UNESCO reinforced its already existing regional programmes Asia and Pacific Programme of Education for All, Regional Programme for the Universalization and Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy in the Arab States, Principal Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO, 2000a). However, UNESCO did not only organized its own regional networks. In fact, UNESCO “contributed to subregional, regional and interregional ministerial-level conferences organized by other bodies including the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth Secretariat, ALECSO and CARICOM” (UNESCO, 1996b, p. 55).

These cooperative initiatives and decades had the purposes to “call upon political leaders, at the highest level, and induce them to determine objectives and plans of action and to undertake firm commitments regarding the measures to be taken to achieve those objectives” (UNESCO, 1996a, p. 11) and building a united thrust for multilateral cooperation (*idem*). In fact, the cooperation pursued by UNESCO extended the one with UN and entailed cooperation with IGOs, bilateral donors, regional development banks and NGOs (UNESCO, 1996b).

STANDARD SETTING

Standard setting mechanisms received less attention in this period compared to the first one. As explained above, this mechanism entails two sub mechanisms: normative actions, and benchmarks and data production.

As to the normative actions, UNESCO’s work can be divided in three segments: i) the follow up of existing conventions, ii) the revision of existing standards and iii) production of new treaties. As to the follow up of existing conventions UNESCO worked on the 1989 Convention on the Right of the Child cooperating with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNESCO, 1996b) and the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (UNESCO, 1996b); promoted the application of the joint

ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers (UNESCO, 2000*a*); follow up to the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1996*a*); as well as monitor “the implementation of the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (1974) and promote the ratification of the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 25). Moreover, the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995) had significant impact on UNESCO’s reflections and activities.

As to the revision of existing standard setting instruments there is the important revision of ISCED (UNESCO, 1996*b*).

In these years, UNESCO continued its efforts in promoting an international system of degree recognition. For this purpose, it produced the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (1997) and the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997). With the Convention for the European region UNESCO finally created a convention for each of the regions. Thus, through six intergovernmental committees, it followed the application of regional conventions on higher education.

As to the benchmarks production the two main lines of work were i) indicators development and ii) national monitoring reports. Particularly in the context of the renewed Education for All commitments, UNESCO pursued an improvement of data collection (*idem*) in order to better monitor national education through the World Education Report. In this regards, efforts were made for the development of World Education Indicators (UNESCO, 2000*a*). Indicator development was thus an important strand of work and special attention has been paid “to developing suitable indicators of the quality of teaching and learning and to the assessment of learning outcomes” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 20). Specific indicators were developed on Early Childhood Education (UNESCO, 2000*a*). Finally, a “fresh impetus to the ongoing international debate on lifelong learning [is provided] through the development of indicators for the transition towards lifelong learning” (UNESCO, 2000*a*).

As to the national reports, UNESCO encouraged Member States to produce and submit their reports to the International Conference on Education (UNESCO, 1996*b*) and asked, through the International Consultative Forum, the development of an EFA National

Assessment. In addition, UNESCO encouraged “the setting up, at the national level, of instruments for observing educational trends and [produced] comparative data on the development of education systems and the principal trends in that regard” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 28). These activities supported Member States by means of technical work to monitor the performance of their education systems (UNESCO, 1996*b*).

FINANCIAL LEVERAGING

This mechanism of agenda-setting is not of great relevance in UNESCO’s activities. Very few are the activities performed that can be classified under this mechanism. Among these, it is possible to find in the texts only 5 activities. As the previous period showed there are three kind of activities that UNESCO can execute in this field: i) seed money, ii) technical assistance to mobilize resources, and iii) subvention.

While on the seed money there seems to be no activity, on the technical assistance there are three activities. These activities seek to mobilize extra-budgetary funding for pilot projects (UNESCO, 1996*b*), mobilizing donor support for education in emergencies (*idem*), development of new strategies for resource mobilization for basic education (UNESCO, 2000*a*).

As to subventions, there are two activities. The first one aims at providing “technical and financial support will be provided for educational innovations in conflict zones and areas undergoing reconstruction” (UNESCO, 1998, p. 29). While the second aims at supporting, financially and technically, “national and regional initiatives to reorient curricula and teacher education” (UNESCO, 2000*a*, p. 37). It is important to notice that there are no longer direct subventions to CSOs in order to perform joint projects. In addition, it is worth noting that all the subventions entailed a component of technical assistance.

5.2.6 Budget

The analysis of the budget reveals that the Organization experienced, in these years, an important increase in its total budget particularly from the biennium 1994 – 1995 to the biennium 1996 – 1997. In fact, the total budget grew from 730,384,200 USD to 826,089,300 USD corresponding to an increase of 13%. This is due to a sensitive increase in both regular and extra budgets. From the first biennium to the second, the regular

budget increased while the extra budget fell. And, from the second biennium to the third, the regular budget remained constant at 544,367,250 but with a rise of the extra budget. Therefore, the last biennium of the second period saw an overall increase in the total budget of almost 18% in respect to the last biennium of the first period.

Table 41: Total budget second period biennia

	Regular Budget	Extra Budget	Total Budget	% increase
1996-1997	518,445,000	307,644,300	826,089,300	13.10
1998-1999	544,367,250	264,921,700	809,288,950	-2.03
2000-2001	544,367,250	316,333,700	860,700,950	6.35

With the increase in the total budget, the share of total budget allocated to Part II (see above) raised accordingly. The share of total budget allocated to Part II raised from 74% to 76%.

Table 42: Total budget programme second period biennia

	Regular Budget Programme	Extra Budget Programme	Total Budget Programme	% of Total Budget
1996-1997	320,190,800	291,058,300	611,249,100	74
1998-1999	354,353,550	250,318,700	604,672,250	75
2000-2001	350,130,300	300,240,700	650,371,000	76

As to the budget allocated to Major Programme Education, it is possible to see a general trend of growth in terms of absolute number with a fall from the first biennium to the second which is due to a general fall of extra budget received in that biennium. In fact, the regular budget allocated to education remained constant (slight increased from 108,306,000 to 108,515,850). In percentage of the total programme budget this period saw at the beginning a reduction from 39 % of biennium 1994 – 1995 to 34 % biennium 1996 – 1997 and to 33 % biennium 1998 - 1999. However, from the second to the third biennium the percentage of budget of programme allocated to education received an increase raising from 33 % to 37 %. In any case, education remained the first priority area of the Organization.

Table 43: Total budget education second period biennia

	Regular Budget Education	Extra budget Education	Total Budget Education	% of total programme
1996-1997	108,306,000	99,600,000	207,906,000	34
1998-1999	108,515,850	92,500,000	201,015,850	33

2000-2001	117,547,500	126,000,000	243,547,500	37
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Looking in depth at the Programme and Budget of the Education Sector (see tables 44; 45; 46) it is possible to infer that some areas of work deserved prioritization. The work on basic education still figures as the priority in terms of budget allocation. In fact, the programme Basic Education for All had the greatest share of budget compared to the other programme in every biennium. It received 36%, 46% and 51% of the entire budget of education, respectively. Thus, the budget allocated to activities of basic education increases steadily during the course of the period. Contrarily to the first period, literacy is not most important area of work.

The transdisciplinary projects “Environment and population education and information for development” and “Towards a culture of peace” should be regarded with caution since they entailed several activities not directly related to education.

Table 44: Education programme and budget 1996 - 1997

28 C/5 Towards lifelong education for all	Budget	Extra budget
1. Basic education for all	11,320,000	43,200,000
1.1 Expanding access to basic education	5,310,000	16,450,000
1.2 Improving the quality and relevance of basic education	6,010,000	26,750,000
2. Reform of education in the perspective of lifelong education	10,456,000	56,400,000
2.1 Education for the twenty-first century	1,482,000	4,250,000
2.2 Renovation of general and vocational education	3,175,000	21,725,000
2.3 Higher education and development	3,370,000	4,850,000
2.4 Reform and reconstruction of education systems	2,429,000	25,575,000
Environment and population education and information for development	3,920,700	18,300,000
Towards a culture of peace	16,672,000	14,622,000

Table 45: Education programme and budget 1998 - 1999

29 C/5 Education for all throughout life	Budget	Extra budget
1. Basic education for all	12,723,800	40,020,000
2. Reform of education in the perspective of education throughout life	10,436,200	38,980,000
2.1 Educational strategies for the twenty-first century	3,495,700	
2.2 Renovation of general secondary and vocational education	3,278,700	

2.3 Higher education and development	3,661,800	
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Table 46: Education programme and budget 2000 - 2001

30 C/5 Education for all throughout life		Budget	Extra budget
1. Basic education for all		14,010,800	58,650,000
1.1	Providing basic education for all children	3,358,000	37,000,000
1.2	Fostering literacy and non-formal education among youth and adults	4,754,300	13,000,000
1.3	Mobilizing commitments and partnerships for education for all	5,898,500	8,650,000
2. Reform of education in the perspective of education for all throughout life		10,538,000	41,000,000
2.1	Renewal of education systems for the information age	3,298,400	19,400,000
2.2	Renovation of general secondary and vocational education	3,360,000	16,000,000
2.3	Higher education and development	2,568,800	4,300,000
2.4	The status of teachers and teacher education in the information society	1,310,800	1,300,000
2.5	Educating for a sustainable future	1,610,000	9,920,000

The second priority area are the activities related to the issue of education throughout life (Reform of education in the perspective of education for all throughout life). These activities entailed the revision and reflection of educational systems particularly at secondary and higher education levels. One of the important areas of this priority is the consideration of policies and strategies toward learning throughout life. A novelty of this period is general secondary education, which received budget allocation in association with TVET.

An important figure is the one that is related to the coordination of activities for the global education agenda EFA I. In fact, the attention and budget allocation to it grew steadily over time. Each of these biennia has some activities on mobilization and partnerships for EFA I. The first biennium had one main line of action that was: "To mobilize and support partnerships for education for all and monitor progress towards the Jomtien goals". This line of action was one of the three of the first sub programme "Expanding access to basic education". Although there is no disaggregated data of budget, the entire sub programme received 5,310,000 USD, which means that the main line of action "To mobilize and support partnerships for education for all and monitor progress towards the Jomtien

goals” received less than 5,310,000 USD. The second biennium had two main lines of actions among seven of the programme Basic education for all: “International Consultative Forum on Education for All” and “Mobilizing political and public commitment to basic education”. Again, there is no disaggregated data of budget but it is known that the entire programme received 12,723,800 USD to be distributed among seven main lines of action.

The third biennium establishes a breakthrough. In fact, “Mobilizing commitments and partnerships for education for all” constitutes a sub programme receiving 5,898,500 USD which is the greatest share in the programme “basic education”. Thus, it is possible to infer that activities for mobilizing and coordinating EFA witnessed a process of prioritization. This is inferred by two facts: 1) it went from being a main line of action to being sub programme, and 2) the allocation of 5,898,500 USD specifically to it likely constitutes an increase in the budget support.

5.2.7 Synthesis and Changes

This period is characterized by great changes in both the notion of education and in the choice and use of agenda-setting mechanisms. In these years, UNESCO experienced a change in its leadership and a significant budget increase: from the biennium 1994-1995 to 2000-2001 it is recorded an increase of almost 18% due to a growth in both regular and extra budgetary funds. Although the membership grew by 7 Members, it does not exceed the number of new admissions of the first period analysed (26 new Member States). In this period, from its programmatic documents, UNESCO seems to perceive six major global challenges (development and peace, inequalities, relevance and quality, basic education, lifelong learning, and education systems), and to promote values, concepts and principles which belong to six macro categories (humanistic vision of education, equity, relevance, quality, learning to do and lifelong learning), and used the five agenda-setting mechanisms with slight different prioritization of themes and kind of activity.

Development and peace are the two central global challenges envisioned. In fact, the entire C/4 is divided in two strands: the strategies contributing to development and the strategies contributing to peace. UNESCO aligned its activities and thrusts with the ones of the entire UN System. Peace and development were already identified as global challenges in the first period, but the concerns for these challenges were refreshed by the

appeals made by the Secretary General of the UN with the two documents: “An agenda for peace” (UN, 1992) and “An agenda for development” (UN, 1995). These two challenges are seen as indissolubly linked and intertwined: development for peace and peace for development are the two main strands (UNESCO, 1996*a*). One of the most important concepts promoted in these years is building a “culture of peace”, which is reflected throughout UNESCO’s programmes of the period with a special transdisciplinary project entitled ‘Towards a culture of peace’. In 2000, the International Year for the Culture of Peace was celebrated and UNESCO managed to set the concept of “culture of peace” through this value setting activity.

Education for peace and education for peace building are concepts that are reiterated several times throughout the texts and in all three biennia the transdisciplinary project “Towards a culture of peace” entailed numerous activities of education. These, and many other concepts are related to a humanistic vision of education that UNESCO held. Although this humanistic vision is less directly declared in this period than in the previous one (which had specific sub-programmes on “Enhancing the humanistic, cultural and international dimensions of education” with activities of “Promotion of humanistic, ethical and cultural values in education” (UNESCO, 1990*b*)), this vision can be inferred from the promotion of concepts related to the ultimate purposes of education which has the aim of developing a personal system of values and it should encourage peace, human rights and democracy, tolerance and international understanding (UNESCO, 1996*a*; 1998). Education for tolerance and human rights education received more attention and seemed to be important components of the education programme with the creation of the Declaration on Principles of Tolerance and the subsequent Plan of Action, as well as with the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. Particularly relevant for the conceptualization of a humanistic vision of education is the work of the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century which proposed the four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together.

The four pillars underlined the multidimensionality of human existence and the multiple purposes education might serve. While the pillars learning to live together and learning to be have particular significance for the humanistic vision of education highlighting the social and cultural dimensions of education, learning to know and learning to do are

related to other important values, concepts and principles promoted in these years. These values, concepts and principles have to do with the consideration that education has an enabling function, enables poverty alleviation, income generation, and empowers marginalized groups (UNESCO, 1998; 2000*a*). The role of technical and vocational education for employability is reiterated, particularly in order to provide marginalized people with the skills to enjoy equal opportunities and thus be equipped with the necessary tools and to be prepared for the world of work.

Marginalized groups are an important target group for UNESCO's activities. In fact, one of the global challenges perceived is inequalities that occur between countries and within education. In order to face these inequalities, UNESCO strongly promoted equity in education paying special attention, in its programmes, to certain sections of population which are disadvantaged, and do not enjoy the same opportunities as the rest. While the "priority groups" of the first and second periods are similar (women, LDCs, people living in rural areas, people with special needs, refugees...) a little more attention is paid to youth. In fact, general secondary education started being an education theme which deserved specific attention. As the International Commission said "it would be to secondary education that we would turn our attention, given that the fate of millions of boys and girls is decided between the time they leave primary school and the time they either start work or go on to higher education" (UNESCO, 1996*c*, p. 30). Two key concepts were promoted: i) "reaching the unreached", and ii) "inclusive education". These concepts have an impact on the role of the States in the provision of education opportunities and the ways in which learning process should happen. In fact, the concepts shape the ideas of learning environment and call for diversified, flexible, and open delivery systems. In this process, the role of ICTs used for reaching the marginalized is strongly supported and UNESCO created the IITE, following recommendations coming out of the International Congress on Education and Informatics. Particularly important is the role of ICTs in expanding basic education opportunities for all.

Basic education is still certainly one of the priorities of UNESCO. In fact, the budget allocated for activities of basic education constitutes more than 50 % of the education budget. However, the notion of, and the challenges associated to, basic education changed from the first period to the second. The first period strongly linked basic education with literacy so much so that the Director-General stated that: "literacy' and 'basic education'

are different terms, but usually refer to essentially the same activities” (UNESCO, 1991*b*, p. 3). This reduced focus on literacy is also witnessed by the complete disappearance in programmatic documents of the UNESCO’s Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000, which should have guided UNESCO’s work from 1990 to 2000, and of the Mobilizing Project “Combating Illiteracy”. The activities related to basic education entail literacy but much more to ensuring universal primary education, providing basic education opportunities following the scheme of the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action. In addition, basic education is conceived as something that can be pursued throughout the span of life, constituting the basis of lifelong learning.

One of the central issues of this period is certainly the concept of lifelong learning. This concept received important contributions from the International Commission of Education for the XXI Century, the Executive Board's ad hoc Forum of Reflection, and the CONFINTEA V. The International Commission rediscovered and revisited the “learning society” idea. In a learning society every person is a learner and learning is at the basis and at the centre of any human interaction. As mentioned above, the International Commission proposed the four pillars of education which are all strongly related to “learning”, and UNESCO supported this view by developing learner centred curricula, focusing on learning achievements, and promoting the importance of recognition and validation of “experiential learning” and non-formal learning. The lifelong learning concept goes beyond distinction between basic education and continuing education. It has important life-wide aspects. A broad vision of lifelong learning which is perceived as a continuous process of forming whole human beings toward learning societies. This vision is reflected in UNESCO’s activities in education. For example, UNESCO’s programme covered all levels of education: from early childhood to higher education and to adult education. Innovatively and differently from the first period, UNESCO worked on second chance educational opportunities as well as on general secondary education. The importance of adult education is also witnessed by the organization of CONFINTEA V and the related Hamburg Declaration and Agenda for the Future of Adult Learning. Another important thrust was made by the Executive Board ad hoc Forum of Reflection which “recommended that open-learning systems should be fostered, enabling all people throughout the world to obtain access to all forms and levels

of education, within the context of lifelong education” (UNESCO, 1996*b*, p. 33). These ideas called for a revision of education systems.

In fact, education systems were perceived as in need of a review. This emphasis on renewing education is done in light of the concepts and challenges posed by lifelong learning. In fact, in all three biennia there is a dedicated programme which deals with the challenge of education systems and lifelong learning. The reform of education systems implied a rethinking of the content of learning and teaching methods, the educational strategies, educational policies and management, and education delivery systems. Differently from the first period, reforms of education systems are not based on the principle of relevance but on the principle of lifelong learning and there are less activities of curriculum review in favour of reviewing the entire structure of system. More attention is paid to performance, efficiency and management of education systems, witnessed by a focus on drop out rather than on out of school children.

Finally, there are two important concepts that are ‘inherited’ from the first period which are revisited and re-articulated in these years. These concepts are education relevance and education quality. The notion of relevant education was a key component of the first period and it is still central in this one. However, its meaning saw a slight shift. Relevant education is associated with an education which is useful and adequate to changing needs of society. It still constitutes a global challenge of the period. Education should be made responsive to the social transformations and to the challenges of the twenty-first century. It has an adaptive role rather than transforming role. Moreover, education should be adaptable to learners’ needs which are at the core of the process of education. With the growing importance of the concept of lifelong learning, in these years relevance was no longer the main focus and the criterion for education systems review. Quality education in the previous period was associated to relevance but their relations were not clear yet. In these years, even thanks to the development of EFA’s agenda, the notion of quality education began to be a focus of inquiry and to gain a more precise meaning. In fact, with the need to measure the goal of quality education, the international community and UNESCO discovered the multidimensionality of quality education. These dimensions can be grouped in two clusters: i) the quality of the enabling factors of learning such as system performance, education relevance, learning environment and quality of teaching; and ii) the effectiveness of the learning process whose results are learning achievements which

can be assessed by means of tests (International Consultative Forum on Education for All, 1993).

As to the agenda-setting mechanisms, value setting and capacity building are still the most used, while goal setting acquired more prominence over the standard setting one, especially in view of the EFA agenda and the Dakar FFA. Financial leveraging saw a loss of the already little attention that received in the first period.

In terms of value setting activities, these can be grouped in six categories: i) participation and organization of international conferences; ii) world-wide consultations; iii) research activities; iv) celebration of international years, weeks, and days; v) goals, decades, action plans and declarations; and vi) dissemination of technical documents. Particularly relevant for this period were the participation of UNESCO in the World Summit for Social Development, and the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, and the organization of the CONFINTEA V, the World Conference on Higher Education, as well as the World Education Forum. The kind of activities are similar to those of the first period, however, global advocacy measures were strengthened and the use of goals, decades and plan of actions for value setting purposes.

As to capacity building, it is divided in two sub mechanisms: 1) dissemination of best practices, and 2) technical advice. This period witnessed the dissemination of best practices by means of i) the creation of networks; ii) creation of specific centres; iii) dissemination of technical materials; and iv) organization of ministerial policy dialogues. Differently from the first period, the organization focused more on the follow up of activities of already existing networks and gave strong impulse to the creation of specific regional centres on capacity building such as the IICBA. As to technical advice, UNESCO carried out i) training programmes for teachers, community leaders and education, ministry officials; ii) policy assistance and design; and iii) provision of highly technical work such as the development and production of specific curricula and textbooks, or the provision of temporary educational structures in emergency situations for rebuilding national capacities in countries in transition. Particularly relevant were the activities of education sector analyses and policy and strategy formulation oriented toward the design of alternative delivery systems which contributed to the reform of the education systems in light of lifelong learning.

Goal setting acquired prominence in this period in terms both of number of activities and budget allocation. The kind of activities performed are two: i) participation in the creation of international goals and follow up mechanisms, and ii) participation to international cooperation mechanisms and projects established for different purposes. The period reports a multiplication of plans of actions and international goals associated to the abandonment of already existing plans. Particularly illustrative is the elimination of the UNESCO's Plan for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 whose relevance was replaced and overshadowed by the growing importance of EFA agenda both the 1990 - 2000 and the creation of the new EFA 2000 – 2015. Differently from the first period, among the goal setting activities the ones related to the coordination of EFA I received a significant budget increase. In this regard, the third biennium establishes a breakthrough. In fact, the sub-programme “Mobilizing commitments and partnerships for education for all” received 5,898,500 USD, which is the greatest share in the programme “basic education”. It was also possible to infer that activities for mobilizing and coordinating EFA I witnessed a process of prioritization. Other important international agendas followed by UNESCO were the Agenda for the Future of Adult Education, the UNLD, as well as the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. However, EFA I was at the forefront. It is interesting to note a novelty for this mechanism: the participation in joint initiatives at regional levels not organized by UNESCO, a collaborative way of steering the international agendas.

As to the standard setting mechanism the normative actions were concentrated on i) the follow-up of existing conventions (Convention on the Right of the Child, ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers, Convention Against Discrimination in Education, Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education, Convention on Technical and Vocational Education); ii) the revision of existing standards (ISCED); and the iii) production of new treaties (Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel). Like the previous period, the production of benchmarks and data did not receive great attention and activities are concentrated on i) indicator development such as the World Education Indicators for EFA, and on ii) national monitoring, requesting national reports such as the

EFA national assessment and encouraging the submission of reports to the International Conferences on Education.

There were only five activities that can be related to financial leveraging and these were of two kinds: i) provision of technical assistance to mobilize resources (mobilization of donors for pilot projects and for education in emergencies, funds strategies); and ii) subventions which are always associated with technical assistance. Differently from the first period, no longer are there subventions to CSOs in order for them to continue their activities.

Table 47: Global challenges, notion of education, agenda-setting mechanisms second period

Second Period 1995 – 2001		
GLOBAL CHALLENGES	NOTION OF EDUCATION	AGENDA-SETTING MECHANISMS
DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE The culture of peace. Peace for development and development for peace	HUMANISTIC EDUCATION Four pillars of education	VALUE SETTING i) Participation and organization of international conferences; ii) World-wide consultations; iii) Research activities; iv) goals, decades, action plans and declarations; v) celebration of international years, weeks, and days; vi) dissemination of technical documents.
INEQUALITIES Between countries and within education. Reaching the unreached and Inclusive schooling.	LIFELONG LEARNING A broad vision: a continuous process of forming whole human beings toward learning societies.	CAPACITY BUILDING Dissemination of best practices: i) encouragement of networks; ii) creation of specific centres; iii) dissemination of technical materials; iv) ministerial policy dialogues. Technical work: i) training programmes; ii) policy assistance and design; iii) provision of highly technical work.
RELEVANCE AND QUALITY Useful, responsive, adaptable and adequate education to changing needs of society.	EQUITY Reaching the unreached and inclusive education	GOAL SETTING i) Participation in the creation of international goals and follow up mechanisms; ii) Participation in international cooperation mechanisms and projects established for different purposes.
BASIC EDUCATION Expanding access to basic education opportunities	RELEVANCE Education responsive to social transformations, to challenges of the twenty-first century and to the present and future needs of society. Education adaptable to learners needs.	STANDARD SETTING Normative actions: i) the follow up of existing conventions; ii) the revision of existing standards; iii) production of new treaties. Benchmarks and data: i) indicators development; ii) national monitoring reports
LIFELONG LEARNING Access to lifelong learning	QUALITY	FINANCIAL LEVERAGING

opportunities and recognition of experiential learning.	Multidimensionality of quality education. Enabling factors of learning and learning effectiveness	i) Technical assistance to mobilize resources; ii) subventions associated to technical assistance.
EDUCATION SYSTEMS Renewing and diversifying in light of lifelong learning	LEARNING TO DO Enabling function of education and employability.	

5.3 Third Period (2002 – 2007)

5.3.1 Context

The years from 2002 to 2007 were characterized by great events in the economic, political, and social domains. In economics, this period was marked by the increased acceleration of the processes of globalization, and the move toward a knowledge based economy as a new economic model. In UNESCO's reading:

The knowledge economy is a particular knowledge-driven stage of capitalist development, based on knowledge, succeeding a phase marked by the accumulation of physical capital. Knowledge thus viewed is in the process of taking the place of the workforce, as Marx had foreseen in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the wealth created is being measured less on the output of work itself, measurable and quantifiable, and more and more on the general level of science and the progress of technology. The knowledge economy underlines organizational and technological complementarities between the expanded possibilities for information codification, storage and transmission offered by the new technologies, the "human capital" of the workers likely to use these technologies and a "responsive" organization of the enterprise (thanks to the progress of knowledge management) that makes possible the fullest utilization possible of the potential for productivity (UNESCO, 2005a, p 46).

Particularly significant was the growth of emerging economies of the South, such as China and India. These economies would soon form the group of BRICS in 2010 becoming two of the most relevant players in the international arena. Another important trend with international repercussions was the continuous process of integration of the European Union, in which some of the Member States adopted the Euro as a common currency. This monetary union contributed to, and is in line with, a broader process happening during these years of partial delegation of sovereignty to supranational authorities by numerous States. Other examples of this process can be found in the creation of regional organizations such as the African Union founded in 2002 or the Union of South American Nations founded in 2005.

In the international cooperation domain, one the greatest events is the work toward the MDGs, which framed countries' aspirations towards a shared prosperous future for all. Important conferences were also held on international development issues such as the

ones on aid effectiveness in Rome (2003) and in Paris (2005), and on financing for development in Mexico which developed the Monterrey Consensus (2002). Moreover, in Johannesburg, from 2 to 4 September 2002, was held the World Summit on Sustainable Development, known as the Earth Summit or the Rio+10, which produced the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, in which the “representatives of the peoples of the world” reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable development, based on the Rio principles. Other important conferences were the UN World Summit, the Special Session of the UNGA on Children; the Second World Assembly on Ageing; the World Summit on the Information Society; the UNESCO’s 47th International Conference on Education; the World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education; the Second World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction; and the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

In these years, a number of wars and conflicts began. Particularly important were the ones that happened in the Middle East and South Asia. After the terrorist attack at New York’s World Trade Centre in 9/11, the United States of America launched what was called the War on Terror in 2001 invading Afghanistan with its military allies. After two years, the same alliance invaded Iraq. Other cruel conflicts took place in Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, while several civil wars broke out in African countries.

In the scientific domain, these years were characterized by the major advance in the use of internet and in communication technologies which incredibly shaped everyday life of millions of people. In the social domain, one of the most significant events was the worldwide recognition and thrust toward “knowledge societies”. As brilliantly explained by UNESCO’s flagship publication “Towards Knowledge Societies” (UNESCO, 2005a), knowledge societies are a kind of society that give values to the “capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development [...]; a society that is nurtured by its diversity and its capacities” (*idem*, p. 17). Together with the notion of learning society, this notion had important repercussions in the ways in which education was to be thought and directed (*idem*).

UNESCO and UN

At the UN level, Secretary General Kofi Annan was re-elected in 2002 for a second mandate. Then, in 2006, the Organization experienced a change in leadership with the election of South Korean Ban Ki-moon.

As already mentioned, these are the “implementation” years of the MDGs and of EFA II. During the Millennium Summit in 2000 and the ratification of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, an international process was set up to create and establish the MDGs (see § 4.2.4).

A series of measures were held at the UN level to ensure coordination and monitoring of these goals. For example, the creation of the MDGs annual report “based on data provided by a large number of IOs within and outside the United Nations system” ([UN website: Millennium Development Goals Report](#)).

Besides these important events, numerous declarations were developed such as the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing; the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development; the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS; and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, it has been celebrated these international years: the United Nations Years for Cultural Heritage (2002); the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition (2004); and the International Year for Sport and Physical Education and the International Year of Physics (2005).

Finally, numerous plans of actions and decades were followed:

Table 48: International agendas and plan of actions with educational components 2002 - 2007

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
3 rd Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination														
			2 nd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism									3 rd Int. Decade		
			United Nations Literacy Decade											
EFA I			EFA II											
4 th UN decade for development			MDGs											
Plan of Action for Science and Technology Education.														
International Programme of Action on Population and Development														
Decade of the World's Indigenous People							2 nd Decade of the World's Indigenous People							
Decade for African Education										2 nd Decade for African education				
World Food Summit Plan of Action														
Decade for Human Rights Education								World Programme for Human Rights Education						
Plan of Action for follow-up to the United Nations Year for Tolerance														
Agenda for the future of Adult Education														
Decade for The Eradication for Poverty										2 nd decade for the eradication of poverty				
				Int. Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World										
			Programme of Action for the LDCs											
World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond														
			Programme of Action for the Culture of Peace											
								United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development						

At the UNESCO level, the Director-General of this period was Kōichirō Matsuura. His mandate started in 1999 for a six years period and he was re-elected in 2005 for other four years. In the introduction of the Medium Term Plan, the Director-General Kōichirō Matsuura stated that this period would set “a new vision and a new profile for the Organization” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. i). Indeed, UNESCO carried out a profound process of structural reforms. As outlined in the Report by the Director-General on the reform process (UNESCO, 2000*c*), the reform looked specifically at three main domains: i) the programme and priorities of UNESCO, ii) the Secretariat structure, staffing and management systems, and iii) decentralization.

One of the results of this reform process is the definition of the UNESCO’s five main functions, suggested and influenced by the Task Force on UNESCO in the Twenty-First Century. Indeed, as the Director-General reported to the Executive Board at its 160th Session on preliminary proposals concerning the medium-term strategy for 2002-2007, UNESCO should serve as:

a laboratory of ideas: UNESCO should play a key role in anticipating and defining, in the light of the ethical principles that it champions, the most important emerging problems in its spheres of competence, and in identifying appropriate strategies and policies to deal with them;

a standard-setter: UNESCO should be seen as a central forum for articulating the ethical, normative and intellectual issues of our time, fostering multidisciplinary exchange and mutual understanding, working – where possible and desirable – towards universal agreements on these issues, benchmarking targets and mobilizing international opinion;

a clearing house: UNESCO has a role of gathering, transferring and disseminating available information, knowledge and best practices in its fields of competence, identifying innovative solutions and testing them through pilot projects, and recommending policies accordingly;

a capacity-builder: UNESCO should organize international cooperation for servicing its stakeholders, especially its Member States, in building human and institutional capacities in all its fields of competence;

a catalyst: UNESCO should assume a catalytic role concerning international cooperation in its fields of competence. To that end it should ensure that the objectives, principles and priorities that it champions are incorporated in development cooperation programmes and projects implemented, in particular, at regional and national level. It should therefore

build stronger partnerships with development agencies and contribute actively to the design of comprehensive cooperation frameworks such as UNDAF or PRSP. (UNESCO, 2000*f*, p. 5).

Another result was the decentralization which led to focus more on activities at the country level, contributing to country-level programming of development cooperation, and working in a coordinated manner with other agencies of the UN systems.

Indeed, UNESCO joined in 2001 the UNDG and worked more closely in the context of the UNCCA and through the UNDAF instruments. With the World Bank/IMF UNESCO worked for the Comprehensive Development Framework and PRSP (UNESCO, 2002*a*). In relation to this, particularly important for UNESCO's programming and decentralization efforts was the creation of the EFA II movement and its follow up activities (see § 4.2.3; 5.3.5).

During this period, UNESCO produced a number of treaties mostly related to culture:

- Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace. 15 October 2003
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. 20 October 2005
- International Convention against Doping in Sport. 19 October 2005
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. 17 October 2003
- Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. 2 November 2001
- Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. 19 October 2005
- UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage. 17 October 2003
- International Declaration on Human Genetic Data. 16 October 2003
- Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage. 15 October 2003
- UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. 2 November 2001

Although not developed by UNESCO, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 constituted an important reference document for the standard setting work of the Organization in these years.

UNESCO experienced also a change in its membership with the United States of America re-joining the Organization in 2003 after nineteen years (from 1984). Other States joined the Organization:

Table 49: Member States joining UNESCO 2002 - 2007

Timor-Leste	5 June 2003
United States of America	1 November 2003
Brunei Darussalam	17 March 2005
Montenegro	1 March 2007
Singapore	8 November 2007

5.3.2 Educational Themes

Like the previous two periods, a focus on basic education marks these years. However, this focus on basic education is mediated and channelled through the broader attention for EFA II. EFA II, and specifically the content of the goals of EFA II, was the preeminent educational theme. In fact, as it will be explained below, EFA II was at the heart of UNESCO's programming for all the period's years. These themes spanned throughout the documents and gained intersectoral and cross-programmatic relevance. Among the EFA II goals, more attention is paid to education for girls and women and universal primary education.

A second preeminent educational theme is quality education. Not only did quality education constitute one of the goals of EFA II, but it also shaped UNESCO's programming. Indeed, several activities of the Organization in these years dealt with this theme such as the Ministerial Round Table on the Notion of Quality Education (UNESCO, 2004b) and the activities within the UNESCO's second programme in each of the biennia.

Related to this expanded vision of quality education, important education themes are the ones related to education for sustainable development and education for human rights. The Organization worked on these themes with two UN Decades: the UNDESD (2005 –

2014) and the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1996 – 2005) and the following World Programme on Human Rights Education (2006 – 2015).

Other important educational themes are related to the impact of globalization on education (which shaped also a specific sub-programme) and education for building knowledge societies. In fact, if in the second period education systems had to be rethought in light of lifelong learning, in this period UNESCO suggested that education systems should be rethought in light of knowledge societies. Indeed, compared to the previous period, less attention is given to lifelong learning theme and to non formal education, albeit mentioned.

Finally, there is one educational theme that is mentioned several times in UNESCO's programming, which is presented as an important theme although it seems that it did not really shape Organization's activities. This theme is "education as a public good".

5.3.3 Global Challenges

In this period, from the five documents analysed (UNESCO, 2002*a*; 2002*b*; 2004*a*; 2005*a*; 2006*a*) it can be inferred that UNESCO perceived seven global challenges, out of which three seem more important. The first three are globalization, knowledge societies, and development, while the other four are vulnerability and human security, inequalities, quality basic education for all, and education systems.

GLOBALIZATION – Threats for marginalization, opportunity for cultural pluralism

Globalization, together with the notions of the knowledge society and development, is one of the most important global challenges perceived in this period. Indeed, globalization is mentioned within the subtitle of the Medium Term Plan underlying the scope of the following six years: "contributing to peace and human development in an era of globalization through education, the sciences, culture and communication" (UNESCO, 2002*a*). Globalization shaped UNESCO's activities and priorities alike. In fact, many activities referred to globalization as the context and rationale for such activities.

In UNESCO's reflections, globalization is seen as both a concern, as well as an opportunity. Indeed, the intensifying processes of globalization affect all societal

activities, not only those of economic and financial nature, and it has been generally associated to an increment of poverty and inequalities:

The persistence of poverty is especially disturbing as it occurs during a phase of intensifying globalization encompassing and affecting all societal activities, not only the economic and financial fields. It has created unprecedented wealth and well-being, but predominantly for rich countries and wealthier segments of populations, while bypassing or even disempowering the poor, countries and individuals alike. For many, globalization means marginalization. Many developing societies are experiencing enormous pressures as they struggle to cope and shape their destiny and to attain growth with equity. (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 3)

Globalization brought forth some challenges such as the one of dealing with cultural pluralism. Promoting cultural pluralism is at the heart of UNESCO's mission and the numerous legal instruments (declarations, recommendations, and conventions) that are related to safeguarding and promoting cultural diversity and pluralism vouch for it (*idem*). For example, in 2001, UNESCO proclaimed the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. In 2003, the Organization proclaimed a Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, while in 2005 the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Pluralism in education is another focus of these years (UNESCO, 2006a). Not only did UNESCO promote mother tongue teaching but also multilingual education (UNESCO, 2002b). This promotion can be related to the consideration that one of the purposes of education is mutual understanding and learning to live together. Hence, globalization has opened serious ethical challenges and dilemmas (UNESCO, 2002a) but it also meant the opportunity to create open and plural societies.

UNESCO perceived to have a fundamental role in favouring and promoting this process: "with its competences in education, the sciences, culture and communication, UNESCO can render effective contributions to assist in these efforts and in the quest to bring about globalization with a human face" (*idem*, p. 3).

Moreover, UNESCO is aware of the possible challenges and impact that globalization can have on education and on education systems in particular. Globalization shaped democratic and multilevel governance, but it also had to do with the creation of new learning opportunities through distance education. As the second biennium programme (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 64) clearly expressed:

The impact of globalization on education is hotly debated, particularly at tertiary level. The ICT revolution, the rise of for-profit providers, the spread of transborder education through distance learning and the liberalization of educational trade through the World Trade Organization are key issues. Member States no longer have sole control of education and institutions have lost their monopoly on decision-making. This poses challenges related to access, equity, intellectual property, brain drain/gain and quality, which evoke broader issues of national education standards and objectives, cultural diversity, poverty and sustainable development. UNESCO, with its constitutional commitment to universal intellectual and ethical values, has a duty to facilitate efforts of the international educational community to address these issues.

UNESCO shared the fear that globalization may convey homogenization in education and culture (UNESCO, 2002*b*) and that there can be a tendency toward uniformity (UNESCO, 2002*a*) and commercialization (UNESCO, 2004*a*). Indeed, globalization was said to have impact on determining standards of quality and identifying what quality means regardless of the local and traditional cultures.

Finally, as it has been explained by the second biennium's programme (UNESCO, 2004*a*), globalization has particular impact at tertiary levels and higher education. With borderless education and academic mobility, which UNESCO promoted and supported in its programmes by encouraging the creation of "networks and voluntary exchanges of academics, professors and researchers" (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 55), there is a possible threat of brain drain. The brain drain concern has been approached by UNESCO with brain gain initiatives, aimed at establishing professional and academic networks between universities of destination and former universities in developing countries (UNESCO, 2004*a*).

Therefore, the entire programme of UNESCO in these years dealt with the issue of globalization and its effects, challenges and opportunities for societies and education. UNESCO was committed to bring about globalization with a human face, and the

construction of knowledge societies which “opens the way to humanization of the process of globalization” (UNESCO, 2005a, p. 27).

KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES – Building a society that is nurtured by its diversity and its capacities

The second most important global challenge perceived by UNESCO is related to the process of building knowledge societies. In fact, according to the Organization, the main goal of countries for these years is to transform themselves into learning economies and knowledge societies (UNESCO, 2002a) while UNESCO’s goal is to contribute to the building of such knowledge societies (UNESCO, 2002b). The creation of these societies presents a number of challenges and concerns, but also it poses ethical and intellectual dilemmas (*idem*).

According to the Organization, knowledge societies constitute an opportunity to meet the aspirations of poverty reduction and globalization processes may also help this process:

Today, the process of globalization coincides with a fundamental transformation to knowledge-based societies – largely driven by information and communications technologies (ICTs) – where knowledge and information increasingly determine new patterns of growth and wealth creation and open up possibilities for more effective poverty reduction. Indeed, knowledge has become a principal force of social transformation. The leaders of virtually all countries have professed their desire to transform their countries into learning economies and knowledge societies. Knowledge-based and -led development holds the promise that many of the problems confronting human societies could be significantly alleviated if only the requisite information and expertise were systematically and equitably employed and shared. (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 3)

In this period, UNESCO strongly advocated for the creation of knowledge societies, and it also produced a flagship publication (UNESCO, 2005a) titled “Towards Knowledge Societies”, a UNESCO World Report, which saw the participation of all sectors of UNESCO. This publication provided clear reflections on the challenges associated to knowledge societies and on what are the major opportunities related to them. It gave the Organization a solid knowledge base to develop its reflections and activities on knowledge societies. The publication defines knowledge society as “a society that is

nurtured by its diversity and its capacities” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 17), that is “capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development” (*idem*, p. 27). These considerations followed the ones of the programmatic document (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 13) in which UNESCO stated that “knowledge societies are grounded upon considerations of equity, respect for cultural diversity and the protection of the common good”.

For UNESCO, it is important to recognize a strong link between knowledge society and the new “knowledge based economy”. In the knowledge based economy, knowledge is valued in the measure that it serves the knowledge economy model, and knowledge becomes the key aspect of economic development (UNESCO, 2005*a*). Since knowledge societies and knowledge economy model are changing the landscape of the world of work, education should adapt to this changing landscape (UNESCO, 2004*a*). In this spirit, the revision, in 2001, of the Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education can be interpreted. Indeed, in UNESCO’s reflections, knowledge societies and this “new” economic model present new challenges, and people should be equipped, through education, to seize the opportunities of a globalized economy (UNESCO, 2002*b*).

Hence, knowledge societies required a re-contextualization of the ultimate purpose of education. Education content should therefore be rethought in light of the challenges of knowledge societies (UNESCO, 2002*b*) and education should have the goal to contribute to building them (UNESCO, 2004*a*). Indeed, this approach is visible in UNESCO’s activities and programmes: “Major Programme I will devise an approach to quality education that offers a new strategic thrust towards the building of knowledge societies” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 15). In fact, the first two biennia specifically include activities with the goal of rethinking education systems in light of knowledge societies (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*b*). Building knowledge societies meant for education the thrust of building human capacities (UNESCO, 2002*a*) in a lifelong learning process. Knowledge and learning societies are based on the concept of lifelong learning: for UNESCO, it is significant that the terms knowledge society, learning society and lifelong learning are born in the same period, in the 1960s and 1970s (UNESCO, 2005*a*).

DEVELOPMENT – The right to human, social and sustainable development.

These years are characterized by the implementation of the UN international development agenda based on the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. UNESCO committed itself to contribute to the realization and implementation of these goals. As the Medium Term Plan outlined: “the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000, which will serve as an overarching guide for UNESCO’s Strategy, consolidated the broad consensus reached and agreed on specific time-bound targets” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, pp. 2-3). The work toward MDGs is grounded on the assumption that development constitutes and should be aimed to the eradication of poverty and exclusion (UNESCO, 2002*b*) which is a broader goal of the Organization and a perceived global challenge of the period.

Despite the alignment with the broad UN development agenda, UNESCO maintained a particular vision on development. In fact, for UNESCO, development is perceived not only as a goal to be achieved, or a means to eradicate poverty, but as a right: a “right to development” (*idem*, p. 23). There are many challenges that prevent the enjoyment of this right by all countries. One of these is the presence of mounting external debts and economic inequalities (*idem*). Another challenge is the need to improve research capacity of developing countries and the brain drain (UNESCO, 2004*a*). Finally, development is halted by non democratic processes of decision-making which do not enable the full participation of citizens in the formulation of adequate policies (UNESCO, 2006*a*).

For UNESCO, development should be human, social and sustainable. Sustainability related to development is a particularly urgent issue for the Organization. In fact, UNESCO acknowledged and advocated for the recognition of challenges such as environmental degradation, wasteful consumption, and increasing population growth (UNESCO, 2002*b*), and the need to halt natural disasters (UNESCO, 2006*a*). In order to raise awareness on sustainable development and to find ways to cope with these challenges, UNESCO led the UNDESD (2005 – 2014) declared in December 2002 by the UNGA, through its Resolution 57/254. The concept of sustainable development is complex and requires an innovative approach that takes into consideration wider aspects and multiple voices. Indeed, UNESCO recognized that to achieve sustainable development “every problem should be envisaged from a wide diversity of legitimate

perspectives, beginning with those of the nations and individuals concerned, whether belonging to present or future generations” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 142).

VULNERABILITY AND HUMAN SECURITY– Peace, poverty, and health

In UNESCO’s programmatic documents many challenges are expressed that can be related to the idea of “vulnerability”, that there are challenges that affect human security. In the rapidly changing world shaped by globalization processes, UNESCO perceived three interrelated macro categories of challenges affecting human life: peace, poverty and health.

In many regions, peace is fragile (UNESCO, 2002*a*) and it is built upon mutual threats. Conflicts and violence not only decimate the lives of people but also constitute brakes for development. In continuity with the previous period, UNESCO strongly advocated for building a culture of peace, interpreting its mandate “to contribute to the unity of humankind by upholding human dignity, equality, solidarity, the culture of peace, tolerance, respect for human rights and democratic principles” (*idem*, p. 1). Grounded in this consideration, UNESCO led the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) based on the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace established by the UNGA with its Resolution 55/47 in 1999.

“Poverty and conflict are prime causes that put human security at risk and endanger human dignity and social justice” (*idem*, p. 2). Poverty is a widespread challenge that the world is facing. The fact that this is one of the most urgent challenges is witnessed by the importance that it had within the formulation and in the spirit of the UN international development agenda, fully endorsed by UNESCO. In the Organization’s view, poverty and hunger should be eradicated through multiple processes of (sustainable) development (see § 5.3.4). The poverty eradication is in fact one of the overarching goals that should guide development and educational interventions, and as the Director-General pointed out: “the reduction of poverty is a moral, ethical, political, organizational and, for me, a personal challenge” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. xi). Indeed, UNESCO encouraged the production of poverty eradication strategies for countries. These strategies are the basis of a harmonized and coordinated educational intervention. In the EFA II process, for example, it is established that by 2002 every country should develop National EFA Plans

which should be strongly connected with poverty reduction strategies to have access to financial aid.

Finally, UNESCO perceived health as a major global challenge affecting humanity. In particular, UNESCO recognized the devastating effects of the spread of HIV and AIDS, particularly in Africa. HIV also decimates teachers and education personnel damaging educational opportunities for children. In this view, UNESCO mobilized itself through the promotion of preventive education programmes, leading the “Global Initiative on HIV/AIDS and Education (EDUCAIDS) and worked closely with its partners to assure a coherent and consolidated international response” to this challenge (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 46). UNESCO has thus committed itself to making HIV/AIDS one of its highest priorities in its Dakar follow-up strategies and actions (UNESCO, 2002*b*) and it supported flagships initiatives related to health education. In fact, one of the strategic objectives selected to refocus its role in EFA II in 2005 was to strengthen its work on health education and HIV/AIDS prevention (UNESCO, 2005*c*).

INEQUALITIES - Between countries and within education. Gender discrimination.

Like in the previous periods, UNESCO conceived two kinds of inequalities: those between countries and inequalities that can be seen in the access and enjoyment of education opportunities. Inequalities between countries are of different nature. Economic inequalities are the most evident and according to the Organization these inequalities are “an effect of rising knowledge based economies” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 49). However, these are not the only kind of inequalities. There are in fact “global inequalities in the distribution of cognitive potential” (*idem*, p. 22) that result from processes of brain drain (*idem*), digital divide and technological disparities (UNESCO, 2002*b*). These challenges as perceived, led the Organization to concentrate its efforts on specific countries, in particular targeting LDCs, Sub-Saharan African Countries (UNESCO, 2004*a*; 2006*a*), South Asia, and E-9 countries (UNESCO, 2002*b*). In fact, E-9 countries although the “have recorded regular progress towards EFA [...] there are major challenges” in achieving the education for all goals (*idem*, p. 21). For this reason, UNESCO continued its partnership with them within the broader framework for coordinating actions toward EFA II. In addition, countries in transition or experiencing conflicts are other focuses of

UNESCO's attention. As seen before, conflicts and human security are perceived by the Organization as another global challenge of the period.

UNESCO perceived several forms of inequalities in education. The Organization, promoting inclusive policies, focused its attention to particular areas of concern and to particular sections of the population whose right to education is not fully respected. These sections of population are similar to the ones indicated in previous period: children and adults living in poverty, people with special needs, people living in disadvantaged economic situations, ethnic minorities, and people whose right to education is prevented by geographic, cultural and linguistic barriers (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*a*; 2006*a*). In addition, special attention is paid to street and working children and children living in areas of conflicts (UNESCO, 2004*a*). Several activities are directly focused in favour of them.

However, the greatest share of challenges that belong to the category of inequalities is related to gender inequalities and discrimination. UNESCO recognized that the challenges related to gender inequalities "are complex, because there are gender biases in the attitudes and behaviour of teachers, parents and society at large as well as stereotyping in textbooks and curricula" (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 45). The Organization perceived them as one of the most urgent areas of action and one of the deepest inequalities within education and within countries. The Medium Term Plan clearly stated that for the following years "strengthening girls' right to education [would be] a high priority for UNESCO" (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 19). In fact, this challenge is incorporated within the MDGs and it is also a goal of EFA II. Gender parity in education was an EFA II goal to be achieved in 2005, and much of the discussions of the High Level Group and Working Group on EFA's meetings were concentrated on it. Moreover, the GMR of 2003 was specifically focused on gender inequalities in education. Activities in favour of gender equity and equality are mainstreamed in UNESCO's programmatic documents. Specific attention to gender issues is witnessed in incorporating the aim of ensuring gender equality in EFA II as a main line of action (UNESCO, 2004*a*) and in focusing the first two years of the UNLD on gender and literacy (*idem*).

QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL –Broadening the vision of quality basic education. Sixth EFA II goals

Basic education for all was identified as a global challenge even for this period. In fact, several times in the programmatic documents basic education is directly appointed as one of the major global challenges of these years. In addition, UNESCO incorporated this challenge within its own activities. “Basic education for all” was one (the first) of the programmes in education for the three biennia (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*a*; 2006*a*). Particularly significant is noting that basic education activities of UNESCO are framed within the broader context of the EFA II agenda with a rights-based perspective. Indeed, even if not formulated in these terms, the overarching goal of EFA II can be summarized in “ensuring quality basic education for all”. Thus, EFA II constituted the overarching structure of UNESCO’s activities in basic education for all. As the Medium Term Strategy clarified: “The World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000) constituted a watershed for UNESCO [...] Thus, UNESCO is placing the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work during 2002-2007.” (UNESCO 2002*a*, p. 15).

During the World Education Forum in 2000, the international community developed the Dakar Framework for Action, which constituted the basis for some of the activities of UNESCO, while reaffirming the Jomtien Declaration. This meant that the vision and aspirations related to basic education of Jomtien were directly transmitted to the new phase of EFA. Therefore, the “expanded vision” of basic education is still the same of 1990 and it does not only entail basic levels of education and schooling, but comprehends levels beyond primary schooling. The vision of basic education of EFA II was an expanded vision, that took into consideration UNESCO’s reflections, such as the one of the International Commission chaired by Delors. Indeed, the Dakar Framework for Action explicitly integrated the four pillars of learning into the vision of basic education (UNESCO, 2000*b*).

In this sense, UNESCO perceived early childhood and adult education as challenges related to basic education (UNESCO, 2004*a*). This distinction is one of the greatest differences between the EFA II approach and the MDGs approach. In fact, while EFA II focused on the expanded concept of basic education, the MDGs focused on primary schooling and universal primary education. Literacy, for example, is an important focus

of UNESCO in these years. This is witnessed by the renewed attention to it with the creation and leadership in the UNLD.

As it has been explained above, the Dakar Framework for Action mandated UNESCO to refocus education programme on EFA II related issues. Thus, the Director-General prepared the Programme and Budget of the biennium 2002 – 2003 on the basis of the goals of EFA II. In its report to the Executive Board, the Director-General stated:

Following the Dakar Forum, the Organization adjusted and streamlined Major Programme I (30 C/5) in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action. In the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4) and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31 C/5), the centrality of the follow-up to the Forum has been further strengthened. Hence, basic education for all has been designated as principal priority for 2002-2003 and its allocations benefit from an increase of 41.7% (UNESCO, 2001c, p. 1)

Associated to basic education for all, UNESCO perceived the challenge of quality. Recalling a suggestion of the GMR of 2005, “the focus on access [to basic education] often overshadows attention to quality” (UNESCO, 2005b, p. 22). Therefore, UNESCO integrated activities focusing on enhancing quality education, to the point that this goal reshaped UNESCO’s programming. In fact, in the third biennium, one of the programmes of education was specifically oriented toward enhancing quality education (UNESCO, 2006a). Indeed, the fourth strategic objective in support of EFA II outlined in the UNESCO’s strategy of 2005 was to “assist countries in the development of quality education” (UNESCO, 2005c, p. 6).

The importance of quality, and a renovated approach to it has been reaffirmed several times and particularly when referring to the basic education challenge. For example, in the first biennium UNESCO recognized that

...in light of the international community’s renewed commitment to the importance of Education for All, with its components of access, equity and quality, and the emphasis given by the 31 C/4 Approved to quality education, it has become imperative to adopt a new approach to quality education which is both dynamic and holistic but flexible enough to incorporate new components in accordance with fresh challenges. (UNESCO, 2002b, p. 29).

Related to this challenge, UNESCO felt the need to reaffirm and discover new approaches to the concept of quality. In this spirit, UNESCO organized a Ministerial Round Table on the Quality of Education during the General Conference of 2003 (UNESCO, 2004*b*) (see § 5.3.4). Quality was also a central issue of several High Level Group and Working Group on EFA's meetings.

Achieving quality education for all carries other related global challenges. Some of them are reflected in UNESCO's work and reflections. Based on the assumption that there are multiple factors that enable quality education, some factors are more urgent than others in ensuring quality. One of it is the lack of learning materials and learning facilities, such as books and classrooms (UNESCO, 2004*a*; 2006*a*). Another obstacle to quality is teacher shortages, since they are considered the most important factors of quality (UNESCO, 2006*a*). Indeed, one of the indicators to measure goal 6 of EFA II related to quality has to do with teachers and it is the "pupil-teacher ratio", which counts the number of students for one teacher (the lesser they are, the higher can be the opportunities to teach better). Finally, another challenge related to quality basic education for all is the funding aspect. In order to meet the growing demand for education, States are called to enhance their public expenditure and the international community is called to contribute to it through international aid. In these years, "the Development Committee of the World Bank in April 2002 [launched] the Fast-Track Initiative for funding EFA" (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 37). This initiative has been strongly supported and endorsed by UNESCO (see § 4.2.3).

EDUCATION SYSTEMS – Rising demand for education: management and planning. Building knowledge societies.

In UNESCO's reflections, there are many challenges that the education systems worldwide should face in these years. The principal cause of these challenges is population growth with the associated demand for education, especially at primary levels (UNESCO, 2002*a*). Some of these challenges are related to the educational facilities and basic learning materials: "most of the people in the world need books, school textbooks and teachers before computers and internet access" (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 18). In addition to books, there is the need for more teachers. According to a UNESCO estimate, "the number of additional teachers required by 2015 is estimated to range from 15 to 35

million” (*idem*, p. 186). Teachers’ status, preparation, and (evolving) role in educational processes (UNESCO, 2002*a*) are central to ensure quality education and to achieve the global goals established with the EFA II and MDGs agendas. These considerations led UNESCO to “focus on issues of teacher training and retraining and renew its efforts to ensure the improvement of the status of teachers” (*idem*, p. 21). Associated to teachers’ challenges is the concern for emerging forms of para-teachers and contract teachers (UNESCO, 2006*a*), which are asked to fill the gap and shortages of trained teachers without the necessary preparation.

However, the pressing demand for education is not confined at primary level. In fact, thanks to the advancement of EFA I (UNESCO, 2002*b*), there is a great mass of people demanding secondary education and even higher level of education (UNESCO, 2006*a*) with the associated challenge called “massification of higher education” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 87). This growing demand carried important implications in terms of ensuring a strong and strategic management (UNESCO, 2004*a*). One of the challenges that has been identified was also weak governance (UNESCO, 2002*a*) of education systems and a need for more participatory and inclusive processes in decision-making.

In addition to these challenges, there are others that are related to the purposes toward which education systems should be directed. In fact, as ‘predicted’ by UNESCO, “sooner or later those changes [the liberalization of trade and economic competition] will affect all education systems and the very definition of the goals of education at all levels” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 21). Education systems are facing the challenges of building knowledge societies. They should be rethought in line with the needs and demands of these growing societies (UNESCO, 2002*a*). In this sense, curricula should be reformed (UNESCO, 2002*b*) and education systems should be diversified to meet pressing demands and changing needs. Particularly relevant is the importance of integrating ICTs in educational systems, and understanding how they can be used to improve teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 2004*a*). Finally, higher education will be asked to play an important role. In particular, UNESCO saw the challenge and the need for “reform, expansion, diversification and quality improvement” (*idem*, p. 39) in higher education institutions in order to produce and disseminate high quality knowledge, the basis of knowledge economy and knowledge societies.

5.3.4 Notion of Education

Throughout the five documents analysed it was possible to infer the promotion of values, concepts and principles related to education which belong to five macro categories: a humanistic vision of education; equity and human rights; quality education; enabling function of education; and lifelong learning.

HUMANISTIC VISION – Learning to be and learning to live together

During this period, the reflections brought forth by the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century are strongly integrated within the programme documents. Particularly relevant for the notion of education that UNESCO encouraged are the two pillars “learning to be” and “learning to live together”. In fact, these two pillars, often recalled in the documents, have fundamental importance in shaping the purposes of education promoted.

In these years, UNESCO led the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). With the principles established in this Decade, UNESCO felt that its mandate should have been aimed “to contribute to the unity of humankind by upholding human dignity, equality, solidarity, the culture of peace, tolerance, respect for human rights and democratic principles” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 1). In particular, education should lead to learning outcomes and promote universal values (UNESCO, 2006*a*). The universal values promoted in education constitute the building blocks of social cohesion and peaceful, democratic, multicultural and pluralistic societies (UNESCO, 2002*a*; 2004*a*).

In addition, this thrust toward “learning to live together” had concrete effects in promoting particular contents within curricula, such as human rights education (and education for respect of human rights) (UNESCO, 2002*b*), civic and citizenship education (UNESCO, 2004*a*), education for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2002*b*), and history teaching (UNESCO, 2006*a*). As the flagship publication explained, UNESCO perceived that education should enable learners “to cope with the challenges of the twenty-first century by encouraging, in particular, the development of creativity, the values of good citizenship and democracy, and the skills necessary for everyday life” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 192). At the basis of these reflections there is the idea that education

“constitutes a vital tool for addressing global problems” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 31) and it should be at the centre of any efforts to achieve sustainable human and social development (UNESCO, 2004*a*).

The second pillar “learning to be” shows the holistic view that UNESCO had of education (UNESCO, 2006*a*). The ultimate aim and purpose of education is declared several times as to contribute to the full development of the human personality (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*a*; 2006*a*). In order to achieve this goal, education should be concentrated on all aspects of the human being. It should foster creativity (UNESCO, 2004*a*), critical thinking and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and well-being (UNESCO, 2002*a*). The consequences of this approach to education can be seen in the kinds of contents that have been promoted in curricula. For example, UNESCO strongly advocated for comprehending sports education and programmes of preventive and health education (UNESCO, 2004*a*) also through the celebration of the international year of sport and physical education in 2005. Another important aspect is the fact that education “must reflect the diversity of education needs, expectations, interests and cultural contexts” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 21). It should pay appropriate attention to the cultural aspects and foster local identities through teaching in local languages (UNESCO, 2004*a*; 2006*a*).

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS – Education as a human right and a public good

In UNESCO’s programme there are many references to the concept and idea that education is, and should be regarded as a human right and a public good. These concepts are strongly promoted in all documents. These concepts are grounded in the activities of the Organization as the Medium Term Plan explained: UNESCO “must focus on the need to reinforce the right to education” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 3). The means through which UNESCO promoted these concepts are many, but in particular UNESCO recognized that EFA II has a fundamental role in ensuring the right to education for all: “UNESCO’s overriding priority is ensuring the right to education for all through the realization of the six objectives of Education for All in the Dakar Framework for Action” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 18). As already explained, the EFA II agenda and the Dakar Framework for Action carried a human right based approach to education. The importance of the right to

education is also reaffirmed through the assumption that the right to education constitutes the basis for the enjoyment of other rights, including the right to development (*idem*). In addition, UNESCO seems to be aware of the fact that the landscape of education provision is changing, involving many different actors (UNESCO, 2004*a*; 2006*a*), and with these changing landscape there is a risk of commercialization in education (UNESCO, 2002*a*). For this and other reasons, UNESCO promoted the concept of education as a public good encouraging research on this notion.

Similarly, literacy has been referred to as a public good and a human right (UNESCO, 2004*a*). In fact, in these years UNESCO led the UNLD, which aimed at promoting universal literacy especially for the disadvantaged and taking into considerations the situations in which this right is in danger. As previously mentioned, the first two years of the UNLD have gender issues as a focus of activities.

Women's and girls' education are indeed a declared UNESCO priority of the period (UNESCO, 2002*a*; 2002*b*). UNESCO strongly advocated for a special focus on gender in the UNLD, in the MDGs and within the implementation of EFA II, in particular toward the achievement of gender parity by 2005. In these years, UNESCO also tried to "mainstream gender issues" in its work programme (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 72). Special attention is paid to literacy and training activities for girls and women. Particularly relevant in this sense is the creation of the International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Burkina Faso and "UNESCO has been actively participating in the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), launched in conjunction with the Dakar World Education Forum" (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 25). This attention to gender issues has been also translated in the promotion of "girl-friendly learning environments" (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 45) and activities in reviewing "country policies on gender mainstreaming" (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 34)

Finally, UNESCO promoted inclusive policies for marginalized sections of population. It declared that "inclusion is the overarching principle of EFA" (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 32). Indeed, a stronger focus on inclusion and equity was suggested as a strategic advocacy direction in fulfilling its mandate within EFA II (UNESCO, 2005*c*). Recalling the Salamanca Conference, the Organization promoted the principle of inclusive schooling for children with disabilities (UNESCO, 2004*a*) and it also promoted the concept of

“reaching the unreached” (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 36). In this spirit, UNESCO focused its attention on the role that can be played by ICTs and distance education (UNESCO, 2004a), as well as the non formal education in order to provide learning opportunities for the most disadvantaged (UNESCO, 2006a). In addition, UNESCO mobilized its centres in favour of specific flagship programmes related to equity issues in education such as the participation of IIEP “Education for Rural People, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, and the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education” (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 60).

QUALITY – Broader notion of quality: purposes of education and its relevance.

The notion of quality education assumed great relevance and attention in UNESCO’s work in this period. This is witnessed not only by the numerous concepts, values and ideas related to the notion of quality education within the programmatic documents, but also by the growing attention to it in international education discourses. Significant is the fact that the EFA II agenda has a separate goal on quality: goal 6 “improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (UNESCO, 2000b, p. 8). In addition, the GMR dedicated an entire volume to the notion of quality education (UNESCO, 2005b), that UNESCO organized a “Ministerial Round Table on the Quality of Education” during the 32nd session of the General Conference (UNESCO, 2004b), and that the Organization defined quality as one of the strategic objective in supporting EFA II for the period 2005-2015. Promoting quality education became a specific main line of action within the programmes of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2002b; 2004a; 2006a). Quality, according to UNESCO, “is an imperative of EFA and is instrumental to reach MDGs” (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 42), although quality education was a goal only for the EFA II agenda.

Through the analysis of the programmatic documents and flagship publication of the period, it is possible to encounter multiple approaches and definitions of quality education. In the context of a rapid changing world and the emergence of knowledge societies, UNESCO perceived the need for a “new approach to quality education which is both dynamic and holistic but flexible enough to incorporate new components in

accordance with fresh challenges” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 29) that takes into account all the dimensions and factors enabling quality education.

The Organization strongly supported the idea that quality education is the education that enables lifelong learning, an inclusive and equitable education, from early childhood to higher levels of education (UNESCO, 2004*b*; 2006*a*). The enabling factors of such education are many, such as teachers, learning environments, content, structures, methods, education planning, curricula, governance aspects in general, and learning materials (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*a*). Quality education not only needs to conduce to learning outcomes but it must be responsive to the changes of present times. It comprises the notion of relevance and has to do with “fundamental goals and purposes of education, for the relevance of learning contents and processes, and for modes of learning that reinforce human values” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 30). As the Ministerial Round Table on Quality Education elucidated:

Consequently, education is expected to make a contribution to addressing a range of concerns relevant to current conditions and problems in society, notably sustainable human development, peace and security, human rights, gender equality, and the overall quality of life at individual, family, societal and global levels. These changing demands and expectations have implications for how the quality of education is to be understood. (UNESCO, 2004*b*, p. 8).

The Ministerial Round Table was thus called to reflect upon “the most elusive of the goals” of EFA II (*idem*, p. 3). It reaffirmed the need for an expanded definition of quality education which takes into account the knowledge, values, competencies and behaviours that are needed in today’s world affected by globalization processes and an education that respects and reflects the richness of human diversity (UNESCO, 2004*b*). UNESCO strongly promoted the vision of a quality education that is rights-based (UNESCO, 2006*a*; 2004*b*), that is linked to and fosters broader quality of life (UNESCO, 2002*b*), and that is the foundation for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2006*a*), for human security (UNESCO, 2004*a*) and for knowledge societies (UNESCO, 2005*a*).

ENABLING FUNCTION – education as a foundation for personal and social human and sustainable development.

UNESCO attributed to education an enabling function for wellbeing. Several are the concepts promoted that deal with this issue. Education is perceived as having a fundamental role to play in personal and social development. In fact, it is acknowledged directly that “education [is] central to the international fight against poverty and exclusion” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 16), the links between education and poverty eradication are clearly stated within the programmatic documents, and this is related to the idea that education has the potential to address global problems (UNESCO, 2002*b*). UNESCO promoted the concept that education “is a critical factor in overcoming poverty and ensuring sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 37). The link between education and international development is explicit when UNESCO argued that education for all, and particularly literacy, is a key development issue and constitutes the “building block for reaching the Millennium Development Goals” (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 19).

Besides the international development discourse, education is perceived to be as a “vehicle for empowering individuals” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 31), and as indispensable for capacity development. In this sense, the work done by UNESCO in ensuring education opportunities at secondary level and in technical and vocational education opportunities is particularly relevant.

UNESCO acknowledged multiple purposes of education, such as “to promote economic growth, create employment opportunities, foster civic participation and personal development” (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 19). Particular importance is thus attributed to life skills education and technical and vocational education and training (UNESCO, 2002*a*). Indeed education should prepare people for contemporary forms of work, the ones that have been opened by the emergence of the knowledge society and new knowledge based economy: “the emerging knowledge society and the “new” economy are presenting people with new opportunities and challenges. Both young people and adults need to acquire a new range of cross-cutting skills” for this new economy (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 37).

The close relations between education and knowledge society and knowledge economy (UNESCO, 2006*a*) have led UNESCO to rethink the relevance of higher education

institutions. In fact, higher education “has a pivotal role to play in the renewal of education systems and development in general, because of its role and the influence of its institutions and programmes on all societal activities” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 25). Higher education is asked to respond to the needs and challenges of the emergence of knowledge societies as the main producer of higher level of knowledge (UNESCO, 2005*a*).

However, the enabling function of education has been recognized and acknowledged not only for economic rationales. Education has a role in social and human development. It is seen as “the foundation of personal fulfilment and of social cohesion” (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 37). In particular, basic education and literacy are promoted as the enablers of social development (UNESCO, 2002*a*). In this spirit, ECCE gained a fundamental role as the enabler of future learning and social development (UNESCO, 2004*a*), as it is also reaffirmed in the GMR publication of 2007. Finally, education is recognized as having another important enabling function: education, and particularly non-formal education helps in the improvement of the quality of life. Indeed, UNESCO aimed “to expand non-formal basic education that provides equitable, well-tailored access to information for people on their right to participate in policy dialogue, to legal recourse, to work, to basic social services and to civic amenities, as well as on measures and practices to improve quality of life in general” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 19).

LIFELONG LEARNING – education continuum. LLL as a foundation for knowledge societies.

Like the previous period, the concept of lifelong learning is strongly promoted by UNESCO and it is a basis of the Organization’s view of education. The lifelong learning concept developed by UNESCO in the period under analysis takes shape in two forms. On the one hand there is a recognition that “education and learning can no longer be confined to a set and settled space-time, but may develop over a lifetime” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 60), while on the other hand UNESCO, in order to programme its activities in favour of lifelong learning, translated this concept as an “educational continuum”.

UNESCO will take into account the entire educational continuum, going from pre-school to higher education, including formal and non-formal approaches, technical and vocational education, the fight against illiteracy in all its dimensions, including basic skills and functional literacy, adult and lifelong learning and the utilization of local

languages – all are necessary to ensure the success of EFA. In this context, adequate follow-up to relevant international conferences and commitments will be ensured. (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 16)

UNESCO activities focus on all dimensions of the education continuum including activities from ECCE to adult education. Early childhood gained renovated importance in this period as can be confirmed in the multiple references to it in the texts analysed. The rationales behind the growing importance of ECCE in UNESCO's reflection is to be seen in the fact that UNESCO believed that "learning begins at birth" (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 32), and that ECCE is the first of the EFA II goals: goal 1 "expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" (UNESCO, 2000b, p. 8). For these reasons, families are considered as of crucial relevance for the learning trajectory of their children. Therefore, UNESCO's work "will support Member States in developing and reformulating comprehensive early childhood policies, including family support policies, and will reinforce early childhood information management and networking" (UNESCO, 2002b, p. 24).

The adult education concept that is promoted in this period is the result of the CONFINTEA V (1997) which is recalled several times within the texts. In particular, adult education activities are concentrated in favour of literacy opportunities for adults, and especially women. Literacy is conceived as a "basic foundation of learning" (UNESCO, 2004a, p. 46) and an enabler of lifelong learning. Another enabling factor of lifelong learning which is promoted in these years is learning environments. These environments should be regarded as facilitating the learning/teaching process which conduce to effective learning (*idem*) and they constituted also one of the twelve strategies to achieve EFA II: strategy 8 "create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all" (UNESCO, 2000b, p. 12).

For UNESCO, "lifelong education [is] a base for a knowledge society" (UNESCO, 2005a, p. 20). The concepts of learning society and of lifelong learning apparently emerged during the same period (*idem*). In this spirit, UNESCO promoted the ideas of the learning society and of lifelong learning as enabling factors for knowledge societies.

The Organization promoted the diffusion of learning opportunities and alternative delivery systems (UNESCO, 2002*b*). It encouraged CSOs involvement in education provision (UNESCO, 2004*a*) and community learning centres within the framework of UNLD (UNESCO, 2006*a*). Particularly relevant for knowledge societies is the role and “contribution of institutions of higher education to lifelong education for all [that] should be encouraged by adopting diversified class schedules and designing relevant formulae” (UNESCO, 2005*a*, p. 191).

5.3.5 Agenda-setting Mechanisms

In the Medium Term Strategy (2002 – 2007), there is an indication of five principal functions of UNESCO. These functions are: laboratory of ideas, standard-setter, clearing house, capacity builder and catalyst for international cooperation (UNESCO, 2002*a*). These main functions indicated can be perfectly associated with the agenda-setting mechanisms proposed in this research.

Although the first two mechanisms remained the most used in terms of number of activities, the goal setting mechanism acquired high relevance in this period. The activities related to the international education agenda EFA II, established with the major contributions of UNESCO, constituted the overarching strategy. All the other mechanisms benefitted from the activities performed under goal setting. For example, value setting activities were performed during the High Level Group on EFA; capacity building activities were performed in order to help Member States to design and implement EFA II strategies; standards were set to monitor EFA II achievements and trends; while the EFA-FTI was the specific mechanism for financial leveraging which UNESCO helped create. Hence, this period is characterized by the growing relevance of goal setting, although value setting and capacity building remained important.

VALUE SETTING

This mechanism remains one of the most used. It is related to at least three of the five functions illustrated by the Medium Term Plan (2002 – 2007), being a laboratory of ideas, clearing house, and, in some ways, catalyst for international cooperation. Values are diffused through the following five modalities: i) advocacy measures; ii) world-wide

policy dialogue; iii) research activities; iv) initiatives, decades and partnerships; and v) dissemination of technical documents.

i) Advocacy measures. In these years in which the EFA II and MDGs agendas are at their central lifespan and reached paramount recognition and importance, UNESCO played a significant role in each of these agendas in a variety of ways. One of them was through advocacy, as recognized in one of the biennium work programme: in relation to the EFA II commitments “UNESCO has an advocacy role to maintain political momentum and commitment across the international community” (UNESCO, 2004a, p. 38). Advocacy for EFA II was also one of the areas selected as the strategic objective to support EFA II for the period 2005-2015 (UNESCO, 2005c). Among the advocacy measures related to EFA II, the most significant is through the convening of the High Level Group on EFA. In each of the biennia UNESCO Organized such *fora* (UNESCO, 2002b; 2004a; 2006a). Within these *fora* UNESCO promoted its own understanding and interpretation of the international education agenda, promoting equity and quality basic education for all. Advocacy was also carried out at the international level within financial institutions, informing for example the EFA-FTI of the results of High Level Group and the Working Group (UNESCO, 2006a). Moreover, UNESCO was deeply committed to advocate for EFA II within numerous other *fora* such as during the G8 Summits (see § 4.2.3).

UNESCO also performed activities to mobilize global public opinion and to encourage Member States to implement the recommendations of existing normative instruments (UNESCO, 2002b). In addition to these measures, UNESCO, like the previous periods, celebrated international weeks, years and days. The celebration and/or the institution of international years aimed at capturing global attention to specific aspects of education. Particularly important and significant for these years were the world teachers day, the Adult Learning Week, the first edition of the EFA action week and the international year of sport and physical education in 2005 (UNESCO, 2002b; 2004a; 2006a), promoting themes and concepts related to the importance of teachers in education, lifelong learning opportunity, and basic education for all.

ii) World wide policy dialogue. UNESCO aimed at being an international reliable platform for discussion (UNESCO, 2002b). It promoted various activities, such as seminars, workshops, consultative groups, round tables and *fora* with the intention of

stimulating intellectual debates (UNESCO, 2004*b*; 2006*a*). Policy dialogues were organized at different levels with different partners. Particularly interesting are the Parliamentary Forums (UNESCO, 2004*a*), the CCNGO/EFA (UNESCO, 2002*b*) and specific thematic-related consultations such as the consultative groups on ECCE (UNESCO, 2006*a*) or the broad-based policy dialogue on education and ICTs (UNESCO, 2004*a*). Policy dialogues were also organized at regional level, with the ministerial round table related to EFA II and the regional networks activities. These policy dialogues included all the EFA II related *fora*: the High Level Groups, the Working Groups, the International Advisory Group and so on. Another important forum for policy dialogue was the International Conference on Education organized by the IBE in 2001 on learning to live together and in 2004 on quality education for all young people. As it can be inferred, these values promoted confirmed the notion of education held by UNESCO in these years.

iii) Research activities: knowledge production and dissemination. Exactly like the other periods, knowledge production and dissemination is a powerful modality to set values. In fact, it does not only give a “comparative advantage” to UNESCO, but it helps identifying what is the most urgent and research-worthy issue in education. Building on the functions of laboratory of ideas and clearing house, UNESCO aimed at being “a key source of knowledge” (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 45) and a “global knowledge broker in all its areas of competence” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 5). To this end, UNESCO organized a wide range of research activities on different issue such as education as a public good (UNESCO, 2002*b*), the role of ICT in education (UNESCO, 2004*a*), and “a six-year global study of academic freedom” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 40). Particularly significant was the organization of a Ministerial Round Table on the Quality of Education (UNESCO, 2004*b*) which helped defining and creating consensus on a complex notion, such as the one on quality education (see § 5.3.4). These research activities were held jointly with dissemination measures. UNESCO created a dedicated EFA II website, produced numerous periodicals, the famous publications Education Today and Study Abroad. Great importance was given to a new product that is the independent UNESCO based GMR, which annually produced a thematic-focused publication on status and trends toward the achievement of EFA II goals and which was conceived as “advocacy tool for EFA” (UNESCO, 2002*c*, p. 4). While in 2002 the GMR was concerned with understanding if

the world is on track, in 2004 the focus was on gender and education for all, the 2005 GMR was related to quality, and in 2006 literacy for life was the main theme of the publication.

iv) Initiatives, decades and partnerships. UNESCO built up in these years various initiatives that contributed to value setting and promoting particular principles and ideas in education. EFA II and EFA II related activities were the most significant ones. In fact, UNESCO built coalitions with different partners in favour of EFA II. Some of these were performed with other UN Agencies such as the flagship initiatives (or programmes) on EFA II (UNESCO, 2002*b*) or the Interagency Technical Advisory Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (*idem*), or Interagency Consultative Groups (UNESCO, 2006*a*). In addition, in these years UNESCO led several decades and initiatives such as the UNLD, the UNDES, the EDUCAIDS, the LIFE, the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and took part at UNGEI launched in 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar. It seems though that with these initiatives UNESCO contributed setting values of sustainable development, preventive education, gender equality and human rights education. These values are incorporated in the UNESCO's notion of education of these years.

v) Technical documents and pilot projects. The technical expertise of UNESCO was also used for value setting purposes. As a laboratory of ideas, "UNESCO will play a key role in anticipating and defining, in the light of the ethical principles that it champions, the most important emerging problems in its spheres of competence, and in identifying appropriate strategies and policies to deal with them" (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 6). These policies and strategies are often informed by technical guidelines based on research activities. An example of this can be found in the activity of the first biennium: "a series of short policy-oriented background papers on key issues related to EFA will be produced by UNESCO through its different institutes in relation to their particular fields of competence, linking research to current priority education needs" (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 18). These briefs and policy papers are disseminated and debated within the *fora* organized at national, regional and international levels.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Like the previous periods, capacity building is the second most used mechanism and it is divided into two sub mechanisms: sharing and promoting best practices, and provision of technical guidance, assistance and judgement. Both sub mechanisms were used quite constantly.

It is perceived that UNESCO is much more aware of the importance and the use of this mechanism. In fact, not only is this mechanism identified within the main functions of UNESCO, but also virtually all new projects and activities have a component of sharing best practices. In addition, dissemination of information and sharing of best practices is a precise focus of work for IBE in the three biennia (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*a*; 2006*a*). As anticipated, the promotion of best practices is related to one of the main functions outlined in the Medium Term Plan: the clearing house function.

As clearing house UNESCO has a role in gathering, transferring, disseminating and sharing available information, knowledge and best practices in its fields of competence, identifying innovative solutions and testing them through pilot projects (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 6).

This sub mechanism is implemented through diverse activities. Particularly important are the activities of sharing practices through its existing networks. In fact, UNESCO developed in the last two periods various education related networks. Among the ones most cited within the programmatic documents there are the UNITWIN network, the Associated School Project Network (ASPnet), and the UNEVOC: “all three serve to support UNESCO’s functions as a laboratory of ideas, as a standard setter, as a clearing house, as a builder of capacity in Member States and as a catalyst for international cooperation” (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 40). In addition, promotion of best practices has been done within existing centres and institutes such as the UNESCO IICBA, the UNESCO IITE, and mostly within IBE. Particularly interesting is the IBE work of establishing the UNESCO Global Network of Curriculum Developers as “a main channel of exchange of information, sharing of experiences and collaborative work” (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 58). Networks are also built with Member States Officials such as the International Network of Government Officers in Science & Technology Education (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 59).

It is interesting to note that EFA II structures provided a basis for this sharing of information. New and existing structures such as the regional *fora*, High Level Group,

Working Group, and the E-9 Initiative were used as platforms for sharing good practices among practitioners and politicians alike. These were occasions in which high level policy dialogue is promoted and through policy brief UNESCO could circulate information and good practices. Within and besides these structures there were other initiatives that were used as platforms for information sharing, such as the interagency projects, flagship initiatives, and various consultative groups. Among these, EDUCAIDS and UNGEI, which UNESCO contributed to, included activities of best practice sharing in their programmes.

It is important to recall also another function of this sub mechanism. Indeed, sharing best practices entails a judgement of what is good, leading to a value setting aim. However, only by analysing specific best practices promoted can we assess what are the values set within best practices sharing sub mechanism.

The second sub mechanism entails activities of technical nature. It is focused mainly on two strands. On the one hand, UNESCO tried to build Member States' institutional capacities (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 24), while on the other hand the Organization tried to help Member States on specific issues.

This sub mechanism is related to one of the main functions identified in the Medium Term Plan:

As a capacity-builder in Member States, UNESCO will organize international cooperation for servicing its stakeholders, especially its Member States, in building human and institutional capacities in all its fields of competence. [...] Its roles as a laboratory of educational ideas and as a setter of educational standards are vital expressions of its upstream work entailing advisory services to Member States, policy analysis, policy formulation, monitoring, reporting and research (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 6 and 16).

In order to build Member States' institutional capacities UNESCO performed activities to strengthen national strategic planning capacities (UNESCO, 2002b) in several areas such as leadership, management and finance, teacher training and system performance indicators and monitoring. Technical advice and support is given to strengthen national planning since it is perceived as an important component in order to achieve EFA II.

The capacity building aimed also at providing Member States with the necessary expertise to collect and analyse data for measuring EFA II. The UIS, hosting the EFA Observatory, aimed at improving “the quality of data collected in each country and reinforce national capacities of data collection and analysis in the educational arena” (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 54). For example, UNESCO developed technical guidelines to help countries in preparing the National EFA Plans. Among these activities, IIEP particularly concentrated on strengthening national capacities in educational planning and administration through training, research, and technical advice for education minister’s officials. The IIEP organized “intensive courses, workshops and specialized seminars at regional and subregional levels in order to reinforce national capacities for the preparation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of educational policies, programmes and plans” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 47). Capacity building was also one of the strategic objectives of UNESCO in support of EFA II for the period 2005-2015 (UNESCO, 2005*c*).

The second strand of activities is related to the purpose of helping Member States to deal with specific issues. Particularly important are the activities of policy review, especially in design and implementation of EFA II plans and programmes (UNESCO, 2002*a*; 2002*b*; 2006*a*). Specific recommendations were developed in selected countries on literacy and non-formal education policy and programmes for marginalized population (UNESCO, 2006*a*). Other issues which deserved a specific attention in UNESCO’s programming were ICTs and innovation within education (UNESCO, 2002*b*); the development of gender responsive instructional materials and curricula and “research-based recommendations and guidelines on gender responsive learning environments” (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 45); and teachers guide and manuals. Teachers, as previous periods, are an important focus of UNESCO’s activities. In fact, in all biennia UNESCO performed activities on pre service and in service teacher training and retraining (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*a*; 2006*a*).

GOAL SETTING

Although the activities specifically related to this mechanism are not numerous, the cross programmatic relevance of this mechanism is high. In fact, all the other mechanisms enjoyed and used the structures and the content produced by the results of the goal setting mechanism. For example, the goals set were used to vehicle specific values, ideas and

concepts (such as human rights, sustainable development, quality education); best practices sharing activities are performed within the High Level Group and Working Group of EFA; benchmarks and indicators are developed to monitor EFA II achievement; and the EFA-FTI was especially developed in favour of EFA II.

The goal setting mechanism felt within one of the five main functions of UNESCO presented in the Medium Term Plan:

As a catalyst for international cooperation, UNESCO as a technical multidisciplinary agency will assume a catalytic role for development cooperation in its fields of competence. To that end it will seek to ensure that the objectives, principles and priorities it promotes are followed suit by other multi- and bilateral programmes and that projects are implemented, in particular at regional and national levels, through innovation, effective interventions and wise practices. (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 6)

The importance of this agenda-setting mechanism can be witnessed in three aspects: i) the relevance of EFA II in UNESCO's programming; ii) the alignment with the broader UN goals; and iii) the leading of different Decades and Plan of Actions.

As the Strategic Review of UNESCO's post-Dakar Role in EFA (UNESCO, 2004*c*, p. 11) explained, "UNESCO extensively reviewed and adjusted its strategic orientations and programme priorities to place EFA at the heart of its work". In fact, EFA II goals and coordination of EFA II were integrated in Medium-Term Strategy and in all three biennia. The Dakar Framework for Action and the six goals shaped UNESCO's programming in education and intersectorially (UNESCO, 2006*a*). As already noted, UNESCO's mandate in EFA II was twofold: coordinate EFA II partners and maintaining collaborative momentum, and "refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work" (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 8).

Indeed, if the first biennium programme (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 18) affirmed that "UNESCO's overriding priority is ensuring the right to education for all through the realization of the six objectives of Education for All in the Dakar Framework for Action", the second biennium programme (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 37) reinforced the idea stating that "the core purpose of UNESCO's education programme is to achieve Education for All (EFA) seen in its broadest sense: education for all, at all levels, throughout life". The integration of EFA II priorities in UNESCO's work has requested and caused adjustments

also at the structural level, with the creation of specific posts and unit within the Secretariat (UNESCO, 2004c). After the Dakar Forum, UNESCO established an internal coordination structure to harmonize its approach to EFA II.

The World Education Forum established the UNESCO's role in EFA II. However, after few years from the beginning of the EFA II experience, UNESCO reflected over its limits in coordination:

This gap between the Organization's capacity to undertake significant action at the international level in setting the global EFA agenda, on the one hand, and its capacity to contribute directly towards the achievement of the EFA goals at the national level, on the other, brings into focus the limits of UNESCO's coordination role and the ambitious nature of certain of the goals that were adopted at Dakar (*idem*, p. 3).

It resulted in an increased attention and the recognition that "UNESCO's lead coordination role needs to be enhanced" (UNESCO, 2004c, p. 25). Indeed, during the first phase of EFA II coordination a process of review started in 2004. As to the activities of coordination, in these years UNESCO built the international architecture for the coordination of EFA II: it created the High Level Group, the Working Group, hosted the EFA GMR Team, and built the EFA II related Flagship Initiatives and the EFA Global Action Week (UNESCO, 2004c). The Organization has also supported initiatives launched by EFA II partners, such as UNGEI and the EFA-FTI. This attempt to lead and coordinate is also reflected in budget allocation (see § 5.3.6). Moreover, the coordination activities entailed the production of specific papers such as the "An international strategy to put the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All into operation" in 2002 and the "Global Action Plan" in 2007.

In this period, UNESCO undertook significant internal restructuring and reforms. One of the directions of this reform is related to working closer to the broader UN system. In fact, UNESCO joined in 2001 the undg and, at least in the intentions of its Director-General aimed at collaborating closely with the other agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system, in the context of the Chief Executives' Board, and in the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations of UNAIDS (UNESCO, 2006a). It also tried to contribute to more substantially to the coordination mechanisms built at the UN level, such as the UNCCA, the UNDAF, and the PRSP (*idem*). This direction was facilitated by the EFA II

coordination activities. Indeed, one of the message of the Working Group on EFA was to better integrate and harmonize approaches and activities on education and development at all levels.

This alignment with the UN system is also reflected in its programme and in the activities of this mechanism. In fact, UNESCO's Medium Term Plan clearly stated that "United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000 will serve as an overarching guide for UNESCO's Strategy, consolidated the broad consensus reached and agreed on specific time-bound targets. A set of international development goals (IDGs) defines select major components of a global agenda for the twenty-first century" (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 2). UNESCO made efforts to create linkages with the MDGs process, and tried to portray itself as a leading agency and the major source of knowledge in its fields of competences within the MDGs framework.

The alignment with the UN system was also evident by the greater partnership and attention to the UN dynamics. In fact, UNESCO tried and managed to receive a specific mandate and endorsement by the UNGA on its work for EFA II. During the World Summit at the UNGA in 2005, the resolution 60/1 was issued, which expressed that:

In this context, we reaffirm the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000 and recognize the importance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization strategy for the eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty, in supporting the Education for All programmes as a tool to achieve the millennium development goal of universal primary education by 2015 (UN, 2005, p. 10).

UNESCO's activities in the goal setting mechanism entailed also the contribution to other UN initiatives and decades. These initiatives and decades are setting priorities for UNESCO and its partners. UNESCO followed its commitments for the decades already started and created new ones. Particularly important for UNESCO, as expressed by the Medium Term Plan (UNESCO, 2002a), was the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), whose programmatic base had been laid in the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace with the UNGA Resolution 53/243.

UNESCO closely followed three other new Decades. The Organization performed various activities in preparation and in follow up of the UNLD which was encapsulated into the framework of the EFA II follow up, and it performed the UNESCO's LIFE (UNESCO, 2006*a*). UNESCO also led the UNDESD (2005 – 2014) and developed the implementation scheme. Finally, building on the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and the related Plan of Action (1995-2004), UNESCO contributed to the creation of the World Programme on Human Rights Education (2005 – 2020). Other three plans of action and decades were followed by UNESCO but without the same programmatic relevance: the plan of action for science and technology education (UNESCO, 2002*b*), the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005 – 2014) and the first and second Decades of Education for Africa (1997-2006 and 2006 - 2015).

STANDARD SETTING

Standard setting comprises two sub mechanisms: normative actions, and benchmarks and data production. In respect to the previous period, this mechanism had a stable attention in education focusing mainly on activities of standard setting in relation to EFA II. Particularly relevant is noting that at the Organization level, this mechanism has been recognized by the Medium Term Strategy as one of the key functions of UNESCO.

As a standard-setter, UNESCO will serve as a central forum for articulating the ethical, normative and intellectual issues of our time, fostering multidisciplinary exchange and mutual understanding, working – where possible and desirable – towards universal agreements on these issues, benchmarking targets and mobilizing international opinion (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 6).

This attention to the standard setting function is witnessed by the numerous normative actions performed in all of the Organization's fields of competence but mostly related to the cultural field. As explained before (see § 5.3.1), UNESCO proclaimed in these years ten normative treaties: the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace; the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; the International Convention against Doping in Sport; the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage; the

Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights; the UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage; the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data; the Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage; and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

Exactly as the previous period, UNESCO's work in normative actions can be divided in three segments: i) the follow up of existing conventions; ii) the revision of existing standards; and iii) production of new treaties.

Among the different conventions that were followed up in this period there are some that were mentioned in all biennia. Particularly important in this sense are the conventions on the status of teachers, such as the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and the 1997 Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel; and the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960). UNESCO also “enhance[d] its cooperation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, the United Nations treaty-monitoring bodies (in particular the CRC and the CESCR) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)” (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 43). It is important to notice that these activities had the aim of contributing to the functioning of other mechanisms, such as the one of goal setting. It demonstrates the interdependence and concomitant characters of activities within mechanisms (see § 1.3.3). UNESCO showed it in the last biennium recognizing that “these activities will also contribute to the educational component of the United Nations International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), for which UNESCO equally performs the United Nations system's lead role” (*ibidem*).

As to the revision of existing standards, it is important to note that UNESCO recognized that the fast changing world required a revision of normative instruments. Therefore, some instruments are still valid in principles but they should be updated and re-contextualized to this world. In this spirit, UNESCO revisited in 2001 the Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and used it in its activities of this period (UNESCO, 2004a), and promoted the revision of the six regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications in higher education (UNESCO, 2006a).

Related to higher education, UNESCO produced another important document. In 2005, UNESCO, in partnership with the OECD, produced the “guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education” (UNESCO, 2004*b*; 2006*a*) establishing an international standard for this new phenomenon.

As to the benchmarks production, UNESCO worked in two directions: i) the production of indicators, and ii) the support for monitoring and evaluation systems. Indicators production was by far the most relevant initiative in these years as the standard setting activity in this mechanism. In fact, in all three biennia UNESCO increased its support to the EFA Observatory, hosted within UIS, with the purpose of global monitoring (UNESCO, 2002*b*; 2004*a*; 2006*a*). The Global Observatory had the aim at collecting data on the national achievement of EFA II goals. As the Medium Term Strategy explained (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 18):

To encourage the development of evidence-based policies, UNESCO, including through its institutes, will help build the capacity of Member States to map their situations, design better education systems, deliver services and monitor results and developments towards reaching the EFA goals. The EFA Observatory, hosted by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, will monitor and report progress towards EFA goals, in close cooperation with national bodies, donor agencies and nongovernmental organizations engaged in EFA activities. The Observatory will help build capacities and facilitate the free flow and sharing of all pertinent information and data.

UNESCO also continued its work in the World Education Indicators project in partnership with the World Bank and the OECD (UNESCO, 2002*b*), and made data available for the production of the annual GMR and to inform policy makers.

Another strand of the work of UNESCO within this mechanism is performing activities on developing methods and framework for educational assessment. For example the 2006 activity of developing “methods to assess quality, including through indicator development” (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 45) or the development of “assessment frameworks with a view to scaling up ESD practices in Member States” (*idem*, p. 44). In addition, related to the capacity building mechanism, UNESCO performed activities on building capacity in Member States to use the framework for data collection and on developing practical guidance tools on indicators of quality (UNESCO, 2004*a*).

FINANCIAL LEVERAGING

Exactly as the previous two periods, this mechanism of agenda-setting is not of great relevance for UNESCO's programming and very few are the activities performed that can be classified under this mechanism. Contrarily to the other periods UNESCO developed its activities in financial leveraging on different strands. In particular, through three modalities: i) contribution to multilateral organizations; ii) high level advocacy for funds mobilization; and iii) technical assistance to mobilize resources.

The most significant shift in UNESCO's prioritization within this mechanism is the contribution to multilateral organizations. Specifically, UNESCO participated actively within the EFA-FTI, an initiative launched at the meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank in 2002 which had the aim to fund Education For All (UNESCO, 2004*b*). Within this multilateral organization, in order to mobilize funds "UNESCO will liaise with the Fast-Track Initiative secretariat, donors and selected countries. It will provide advice on the selection of countries, assist countries to prepare proposals for assistance and advocate for support to countries outside the Initiative including the adoption of flexible criteria" (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 38). Over the course of the period, UNESCO increased its support to the EFA-FTI (UNESCO, 2006*a*).

Associated to the participation at the EFA-FTI, UNESCO's activities were focused on high level advocacy for the mobilization of funds both at the national level and among donors. UNESCO tried to facilitate dialogue and partnerships with donors, the G8 and the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) in order to ensure an increase in the ODA for education and, specifically, basic education (UNESCO, 2002*b*). Important was the advocacy work carried out during G8 Summits which integrated EFA II issues within their agenda and created a specific Task Force on EFA II (see § 4.2.3). UNESCO felt particularly important the mobilization of "donor agencies and the private sector to provide support for the preparation of national action plans" (*idem*, p. 20). Another important advocacy measure was carried out during the High-Level Group and the Working Group of EFA: UNESCO tried to induce within these *fora* financial commitments by donors and national governments (UNESCO, 2006*a*).

Finally, as the previous two periods, financial leveraging was pursued through its technical expertise. In fact, UNESCO performed activities to help States to mobilize extra

budgetary funding and to optimize results from greater investments in basic education (UNESCO, 2004a). In addition, UNESCO used its technical expertise to “provide institutional capacity building to countries that are already participating in FTI as well as to others so that they may become eligible for FTI” (UNESCO, 2006a, p. 31).

5.3.6 Budget

The analysis of the budget reveals that the Organization experienced an important real-growth¹³ budget (UNESCO, 2004a) in its regular budget particularly from the biennium 2002 – 2003 to the biennium 2004 – 2005. In fact, the regular budget grew from 544,367,250 USD to 610,000,000 USD and it was maintained in the third biennium. However, total budget did not increase consequently from the first to the second biennium, since the extrabudget support declined. Yet, the total budget increased in the last biennium due to an increase in the extra budget support that reached and overcame the amount of the first biennium.

These trends show how relevant and significant is the contribution of extrabudget support for the work of UNESCO. Particularly interesting is noting that UNESCO was aware of the weight and importance of the extrabudget and took necessary measures to harmonize regular programme and extra budgetary donors’ objectives. As the Medium Term Plan stated:

Given the financial limitations, one option will be to bring about an increase in extra budgetary contributions channelled through UNESCO, which at present exceeds available programme funds already to the tune of 5:1. Extra budgetary funds – from bilateral government donors, the funding organizations of the United Nations system, including the World Bank, the European Union, the regional development banks and the private sector – have thus become part and parcel of UNESCO’s resource base. Henceforth, they will become an integral part of UNESCO’s programming and they must be firmly targeted on the strategic objectives of this strategy. In that regard, UNESCO will actively work towards a consistency between the regular programme and the objectives and expectations of extra budgetary donors (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 12).

¹³ A growth adjusted for inflation. It means that Member States decided to increase the budget of UNESCO.

Table 50: Total budget third period biennia

	Regular Budget	Extra Budget	Total Budget	% increase
2002 – 2003	544,367,250	334,194,100	878,561,350	2.08
2004 – 2005	610,000,000	243,497,800	853,497,800	-2.85
2006 – 2007	610,000,000	408,794,700	1,018,794,700	19.37

Despite the decline-increase trends of total budget, the *share* of total budget allocated to Part II (see table 51) raised constantly. The share of total budget allocated to Part II raised from 70.5 % to 74.8 % in the period, but still it is a reduction compared to the 76 % of biennium 2000 – 2001.

Table 51: Total budget programme third period biennia

	Regular Budget Programme	Extra Budget Programme	Total Budget Programme	% of Total Budget
2002 – 2003	305,740,500	314,015,800	619,756,300	70.54
2004 – 2005	386,020,400	225,422,100	611,442,500	72
2006 – 2007	378,392,300	384,187,300	762,579,600	74.85

As to the budget allocated to Major Programme Education, it is possible to see the same trends of total budget and total budget programme (a decrease from first to second biennium and an increase from second to third). Although education remained the top priority of the Organization, the percentage of programme budget allocated to education decreased from 36 % to 30 %. In absolute terms, the total budget for education of the third biennium (the highest in the period) of 230,755,800 USD did not reached the 243,547,500 USD of biennium 2000 – 2001, which was the highest in the 27 years analysed in this research.

In a manner contrary, the regular budget to education raised from the first period to the second (from 94,091,700 USD to 109,869,000 USD) but felt from the second to the third (from 109,869,000 USD to 107,802,100 USD), while the extrabudget followed an opposite path: it declined from first biennium to the second (from 130,000,000 USD to 105,958,200 USD) and grew from the second to the third (from 105,958,200 USD to 122,953,700 USD).

Table 52: Total budget education third period biennia

	Regular Budget Education	Extra budget Education	Total Budget Education	% of total programme
2002 – 2003	94,091,700	130,000,000	224,091,700	36

2004 – 2005	109,869,000	105,985,200	215,854,200	35
2006 – 2007	107,802,100	122,953,700	230,755,800	30

Looking in depth at the Programme and Budget of the Education Sector (see tables 53; 54; 55) it is possible to infer that some areas of work deserved prioritization and that there is continuity from the previous period until the third biennium, which reshaped the programme and budget allocation.

Projects of cross cutting themes such as “Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty” and “The contribution of ICT to the development of education and building knowledge societies” have components on education albeit not completely dedicated to it.

Table 53: Education programme and budget 2002 - 2003

31 C/5 Education		Budget	Extrabudget
1. Basic education for all: meeting the commitments of the Dakar World Education Forum		19,849,000	57,000,000
1.1	Coordinating the follow-up of the Dakar Framework for Action	9,588,000	26,000,000
1.2	Strengthening inclusive approaches to education and diversifying delivery systems	10,261,000	31,000,000
2. Building knowledge societies through quality education and a renewal of education systems		8,941,100	55,800,000
2.1	Towards a new approach to quality education	4,800,000	28,900,000
2.2	Renewal of education systems	4,141,100	26,900,000
Institutes		16,091,000	17,200,000
Projects of cross cutting themes		1,865,000	
	Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty	595,000	
	The contribution of ICT to the development of education and building knowledge societies	1,270,000	

Table 54: Education programme and budget 2004 - 2005

32 C/5 Education		Budget	Extrabudget
1. Basic education for all		35,319,300	42,611,700
1.1	Basic education for all: targeting key goals	21,413,000	23,735,700
1.2	Supporting EFA strategies	13,906,300	18,876,000
2. Building learning societies		6,846,500	58,968,500
2.1	Beyond universal primary education	4,737,800	57,687,500
2.2	Education and globalization	2,108,700	1,281,000
Institutes		16,891,000	1,765,000
Projects of cross cutting themes		1,960,000	

	Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty	820,000	
	The contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society	1,140,000	

Table 55: Education programme and budget 2006 - 2007

33 C/5 Education		Budget	Extrabudget
1. Strengthening EFA coordination and planning		8,914,700	10,570,000
	1.1 Enhancing international coordination and monitoring for EFA	3,848,300	8,315,000
	1.2 Policy, planning and evaluation for achieving EFA	5,066,400	2,255,000
2. Attaining basic education for all		17,259,300	20,234,000
	2.1 Universal basic education	7,733,100	3,768,000
	2.2 Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) and United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD)	6,166,900	6,298,000
	2.3 Teacher education	3,359,300	10,168,000
3. Enhancing quality education		6,465,100	46,923,700
	3.1 Quality education for learning to live together	5,214,400	38,620,700
	3.2 HIV/AIDS and education	1,250,700	8,303,000
4. Supporting post-primary education systems		4,408,600	41,409,000
	4.1 Secondary and technical/vocational education	2,639,500	37,891,000
	4.2 Higher education for the knowledge society	1,769,100	3,518,000
Institutes		16,891,000	
Projects of cross cutting themes		1,050,000	
	Eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty	350,000	
	The contribution of information and communication technologies to the development of education, science and culture and the construction of a knowledge society	700,000	

Like the two previous periods and biennia, the work on basic education still figured as the top priority in terms of budget allocation. In fact, the programmes “Basic education for all: meeting the commitments of the Dakar World Education Forum” (UNESCO, 2002*b*), “Basic education for all” (UNESCO, 2004*a*), and the two programmes related to basic education “Strengthening EFA coordination and planning” and “Attaining basic education for all” (UNESCO, 2006*a*) were provided with the greatest share of budget compared to the other programme in every biennium, albeit a relative decline from the second to the third biennium. In fact, they received respectively the 43%, 47% and 32% of the entire budget of education.

As to the basic education budget, there are two interesting trends to be noticed. Firstly, it can be seen that the Dakar framework for Action and the six goals shaped UNESCO's programming and budget allocation. In fact, if in the previous period the basic education programme had a sub programme on EFA, in the first two biennia of this period the EFA II goals constituted the overarching programme of basic education. Secondly, basic education programme is divided in the first two biennia in two sub programmes: one related to the EFA II goals, and the other related to the activities for the coordination of EFA II. Moreover, coordination activities for EFA II in the third biennium moved from being a sub programme to being a specific programme, receiving (albeit declining) high budget allocation in all three biennia (35.588.000 USD; 32.782.300 USD; 19.484.700 USD). These two trends reflect and continue exactly the process of prioritization of EFA II in UNESCO's programme that started during the second period. More specifically, the coordination role in EFA II assumed a clearer recognition and prioritization in the third biennium of this period.

Interesting is also noting that literacy work was not prioritized in terms of budget allocation. Although present in all three biennia, it appeared in the first two biennia at the Main Line of Action level within the sub programme related to the implementation of EFA II goals. Indeed, adult literacy was one of the goals of EFA II: Goal 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" (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 7).

A second priority area that can be inferred from the budget are the activities related to the issue of quality education and knowledge societies. As seen, reflections on an expanded notion of quality and activities in improving quality were the focus of UNESCO in this period. Indeed, improving quality is one of the goals of EFA II: goal 6 "improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills" (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 7). In these years UNESCO organized the Ministerial Round Table on the notion of quality (UNESCO, 2004*b*) and quality education is perceived as a building block for knowledge societies as the second programme of the first biennium expressed: "Building knowledge societies through quality education and a renewal of education systems" (UNESCO, 2002*b*).

Contrarily to the previous period, lifelong learning does not received budget prioritization. Rather than specific work on lifelong learning, in this period the Organization focused in a more general area of post basic or post primary levels of education.

5.3.7 Synthesis and Changes

With the change in leadership and the beginning of the process of reform, the Organization experienced a period of deep changes in terms of prioritization in its global governance role. These years are marked by the increased pace of globalization due to the spread of internet and communication technologies, the establishment of the knowledge based economy, and the thrust toward knowledge based societies. “In many regions of the world, peace remains fragile and tenuous” (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 1) as witnessed by the numerous international and civil wars that broke out in the world. However, a spirit of global solidarity and hope came from the creation and implementation of the MDGs.

UNESCO’s programming and global governance role are reshaped. Great changes can be found in the identification of the global challenges, the prioritization of some values related to education rather than others, as well as the increase of the importance and relevance of one agenda-setting mechanism as shown also by the budget analysis. Indeed, in this period UNESCO perceived seven major global challenges (globalization, knowledge societies, development, vulnerability and human security, inequalities, quality basic education for all, and education systems) and promoted ideas, values, concepts and principles on education that can be related to five macro categories (humanistic vision, equity and human rights, quality, enabling function, and lifelong learning). As to the agenda-setting mechanisms, albeit value setting and capacity building are still the most used, goal setting mechanism acquired cross-programmatic and intersectoral relevance.

Globalization, knowledge societies and development are by far the most important global challenges perceived in this period. Globalization shaped UNESCO’s activities and priorities and it is mentioned in the subtitle of the Medium Term Plan specifying the goals of the following years: “contributing to peace and human development in an era of globalization”. Globalization is perceived as both a concern and an opportunity. On the one hand it is associated to intensification of poverty and marginalization, while on the

other hand it is associated to the opportunity of fostering cultural pluralism. Indeed, several normative instruments of UNESCO in these years dealt with the issue of cultural pluralism. Globalization had its effects on education and UNESCO recognized the fear of homogenization in education, the tendency toward uniformity and commercialization. It posed also the challenges of the relocation of authorities in education governance and the threats of brain drain. Hence, UNESCO tackled the globalization issue knowing its role “to bring about globalization with a human face” (UNESCO, 2002a, p. 3), to make the most of brain drain with brain gain initiatives, and through the promotion of knowledge societies which “open the way to humanization of the process of globalization” (UNESCO, 2005a, p. 27).

Knowledge societies are the second most important global challenge. Indeed, since the main goal of all countries was perceived to be the building of knowledge societies, UNESCO has a role to play in the process of assisting countries in their efforts. Knowledge societies are defined by a UNESCO’s flagship publication as “a society that is nurtured by its diversity and its capacities” (*idem*, p. 17), that is “about capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development” (*idem*, p. 27). It is linked to a precise economic model which has deep impact on the world of work and therefore required changes and re-contextualization of the content, processes and purposes of education. These knowledge societies are based on a lifelong learning perspective. Indeed, lifelong learning is one of the categories of principles that are promoted by UNESCO. In particular, in these years, lifelong learning took shape in two forms: as the broad principle of lifelong and lifewide (inheriting all the reflections of the previous period), as well as in the form of “education continuum”. Therefore, UNESCO developed activities from ECCE to adult education. The activities on adult education are based on the reflections, conclusions and recommendations of CONFINTEA V in 1997, while activities of ECCE are grounded on the goal 1 of EFA II of “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education”. Early childhood, basic education, and continuing education are the pillars of lifelong learning, which is at the basis of a learning society, fundamental for building knowledge based societies. Education should prepare people to continue their learning, should teach how to learn (one of the Delors’ pillars), build human capacities, and seize

the opportunity of a globalized economy. Education systems, a major global challenge of this period, had to be rethought in line of these new needs posed by knowledge societies.

In fact, numerous are the challenges related to the education systems. If in the previous period (1996-2001) the tension towards renewing education was done in light of the concepts and challenges posed by lifelong learning, now education systems should be rethought in line with the challenges posed by knowledge societies and globalization. The population growth increased the demand for basic education, posing important challenges for States to provide the necessary learning facilities, such as schools, books, and well-trained and motivated teachers. In addition, the advance in enrolment in basic education of the previous decade produced a “mass” of people demanding higher level of education. Further, the challenges related to knowledge societies and the global aspirations encapsulated in the EFA II agenda urged for quality education at all levels. All these challenges resulted in the need for an improve in the management and strategic planning for education systems. The first period (1990 – 1995) required education systems to be rethought in light of relevance, the second period (1996 – 2001) required education systems to be rethought in light of lifelong learning, while the third period (2002 – 2007) required education systems to be rethought in light of building knowledge societies.

Like the previous two periods, development resulted as one of the major global challenges for UNESCO. The Organization committed itself in contributing to the realization and implementation of the UN international development agenda. As the Medium Term Plan outlined: “the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000 [...] will serve as an overarching guide for UNESCO’s Strategy” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 2). Although an alignment with the UN discourse, UNESCO maintained its personal vision and approach to development. In UNESCO’s reflection, development is a right, and it should be conceived as human, social, and sustainable development. Education has an important role in fostering sustainable development. Indeed, UNESCO led the UNDESD (2005 – 2014). Moreover, development is stopped by the challenges associated to human security and inequalities.

According to UNESCO, humanity is facing three important challenges that affect human security: namely peace, poverty and health. In too many countries peace is fragile and UNESCO is committed, in continuity with the previous period, to the creation of a culture

of peace. Its efforts are witnessed by leading the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001 – 2010). Conflicts exacerbated poverty and exclusion: “poverty and conflict are prime causes that put human security at risk and endanger human dignity and social justice” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 2). Indeed the eradication of poverty is one of the major challenges that the MDGs aimed to face. In addition, health problems are affecting humanities. The widespread of HIV and AIDS is devastating societies and damaging educational opportunities. Therefore, UNESCO led the EDUCAIDS. As to the inequalities, like the previous two periods, UNESCO perceived two kinds of inequalities: the ones between countries and the ones in education. Economic inequalities between countries are still present and the international development landscape moved in the direction of coping with these inequalities. These inequalities are exacerbated by the knowledge based economy. Countries with low education performances have less access and power within this globalized economic model. Educational inequalities are still high. UNESCO in this period gave less attention to concept of “reaching the unreached”, albeit still important. However, the greatest inequality perceived is related to gender inequalities. Coping with gender inequalities is a declared priority for UNESCO as said by the Medium Term Plan, stating that for the following years “strengthening girls’ right to education [will be] a high priority for UNESCO” (UNESCO, 2002*a*, p. 19). Women and girls education are also enshrined in EFA II goals (goal 5) and in MDGs (goal 3). In addition, UNESCO took part at the UNGEI and focused the first two years of the UNLD on women literacy.

This attention to gender inequalities is associated to a broader effort of UNESCO. Indeed, like previous periods, the Organization promoted numerous ideas and values related to the notion of equity in education. Promoting gender equity was the focus of numerous activities of UNESCO, such as the already mentioned UNGEI, the focus on it in EFA II and MDGs, and through the first two years of UNLD. Moreover, UNESCO promoted the concept of girls’ friendly learning environment and performed reviewing activities of country policies on gender mainstreaming. Equity, for UNESCO, meant also inclusion, and inclusion is “the overarching principle of EFA” (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 32). Associated with the inclusion concept, UNESCO and its Institutes performed and participated in numerous flagship initiatives and programme focused on the provision of learning opportunities for the most disadvantaged, such as the Education for Rural People, the

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency, and the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task team on Education. This principle of equity is based on the idea that education is a human right and a public good. It is not only a human right in itself, but it is also the foundation for the enjoyment of other rights (including the right to development). UNESCO strongly advocated for and worked with right based approach to education as witnessed by UNESCO's programming: "UNESCO's overriding priority is ensuring the right to education for all through the realization of the six objectives of Education for All in the Dakar Framework for Action" (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 18).

The Dakar Framework for Action and the Jomtien declaration are at the hearth of UNESCO's programme for all biennia. They framed the values, the challenges, as well as the activities related to quality basic education for all. Any activities of basic education, contrarily in respect to the previous periods, had to be framed within the overarching framework of EFA II and the goal setting mechanism. Indeed, "the core purpose of UNESCO's education programme is to achieve Education for All (EFA) seen in its broadest sense: education for all, at all levels, throughout life" (UNESCO, 2004*a*, p. 37). EFA II, and MDGs to a lesser extent, constituted the main thrust of the goal setting mechanism. Although the activities specifically related to it are not numerous, the cross-programmatic relevance of this mechanism is high. In fact, all the other mechanisms enjoyed and used the structures and the content produced by the results of the goal setting mechanism. For example, the goals set were used to vehicle specific values, ideas and concepts (such as human rights, sustainable development, quality education); best practices sharing activities are performed within the High Level Group and Working Group of EFA; benchmarks and indicators are developed to monitor EFA II achievement; and the EFA-FTI was especially developed in favour of EFA II. This trend in prioritization of goals setting, and specifically EFA II, is witnessed by the budget prioritization: if in the previous period the basic education programme had a sub programme on EFA I and II, in the first two biennia of this period the EFA II goals constituted the overarching programme of basic education. Moreover, a separate sub programme (and during the third biennium a programme) is dedicated to coordination activities for EFA II. These two trends reflect and continue the process of prioritization of EFA II in UNESCO's programme of second period, and the prioritization of the coordination role in EFA II. Goal setting is related to one of the main functions of

UNESCO: being a catalyst of international cooperation, and its activities does not entail only the work toward EFA II. In fact, another trend that can be seen is the alignment with the overall UN development processes, in continuity with the previous period. Finally, several activities were done to lead and coordinate numerous UN Initiatives, decades, and special programmes.

Quality basic education remained a global challenge, and quality received greater attention. With the creation of the Dakar Framework for Action, the educational community reaffirmed the aspirations of the Jomtien Declaration. Therefore, it has been reaffirmed the expanded vision on basic education of Jomtien. This vision comprehends early childhood education, literacy, and adult education. This expanded vision is what marks the difference from the MDGs. Some of the challenges related to basic education are associated to the provision of education facilities and the enabling factors of learning, such as books and schools, as well as well-trained and motivated teachers. An important challenge of basic education is the one of quality. As the GMR 2005 said, “the focus on access [to basic education] often overshadows attention to quality” (UNESCO, 2005*b*, p. 22). UNESCO strongly advocated for the notion of quality education. A notion that is multifaceted and multidimensional. The attention of UNESCO for quality is witnessed by many activities, such as the organization of a Ministerial Round Table on Quality of Education, the dedication of a GMR on quality, the presence of a specific goal of EFA II on quality, as well as the fact that quality education received a special attention in terms of budget and programming, with a dedicated programme on quality education. The notion of quality education comprehends the one of relevance. UNESCO advocated for a new, dynamic, holistic and flexible notion of quality. It reaffirmed the need for an expanded definition of quality education which takes into account the knowledge, values, competencies and behaviours that are needed in today’s world affected by globalization processes and an education that respects and reflects the richness of human diversity. UNESCO strongly promoted the vision of a quality education that is right based, that is linked to and foster broader quality of life, and that is the foundation for sustainable development, for human security, and for knowledge societies.

In this period, the reflections and conclusions of the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century are strongly integrated in UNESCO’s programme. Indeed, all four pillars of education are taken into consideration and are at the basis of UNESCO’s

reflections on and promotion of a humanistic vision of education. As to the pillar of “learning to be”, UNESCO promoted the idea that the ultimate aim and purpose of education is to contribute to the full development of human personality, and that education should be concentrated on all aspects of human being, fostering creativity, critical thinking and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and well-being. This approach has an impact on the kind of education content promoted in curricula: sports education, health education, and education content that reflect cultural diversities and local contexts. As to the “learning to live together” pillar, UNESCO perceived that education plays an important role in addressing global challenges. Not only education should teach universal values, such as respect for diversity, human dignity, tolerance, equality, solidarity, and democratic principles; but it also teaches issues of global relevance such as human rights and sustainable development. Indeed, UNESCO led the UN Decade on Human Rights Education and the UNDESD. As to the “learning to know” and “learning to do”, UNESCO promoted ideas, concepts and principles related to the enabling functions of education. Education is the foundation for personal, social, human and sustainable development. It enables people to enjoy their lives and their rights. It also empowers societies and equips youth with the relevant skills for the world of work and for building knowledge societies.

Like the previous periods, value setting is the most used mechanism in terms of activities. Values setting is related to three of the main functions of UNESCO: a laboratory of ideas, a clearing house, and a catalyst for international cooperation. Values are set through the following five modalities: i) advocacy measures; ii) world-wide policy dialogue; iii) research activities; iv) initiatives, decades and partnerships; and v) dissemination of technical documents. The advocacy measures, such as the creation of international days, weeks, and years, were developed at all levels, from the national to the international level in different *fora*. Policy dialogues were organized through seminars, workshops, and through specific consultative groups. The CCNGOs, which previously was related to literacy, now expanded its focus to comprehend the entire EFA II *spectrum*. Particularly important was the research activities performed which allowed UNESCO to be “a global knowledge broker” and a key source of knowledge in all its field of competence. Moreover, UNESCO led many international initiatives and decades in education, such as the UNGEI, UNLD, UNDESD, and the World Programme on Human Right Education.

Particularly important is to notice that, from an overview of these activities performed, the values that are set by UNESCO correspond and confirm mostly to the notion of education held by the Organization.

As to the capacity building mechanism is still the second most used mechanism in terms of activities performed, in continuity with the two previous periods. Importantly, the two sub mechanisms entailed in this mechanism correspond to two of the main functions of UNESCO identified in the Medium Term Plan (capacity building and clearing house). UNESCO seems to be more aware of the importance of this mechanism, in fact virtually all programmes and projects have a component of sharing best practices or implied a technical support. Best practices sharing, like the previous period, is done through its existing networks, such as the UNITWIN, UNEVOC, and ASPnet, and through the recently created specific centres. In an innovative way, sharing of information and best practices has been done through the structures created for EFA II, such as the High Level Group, Working Group and E-9. In addition, this sub mechanism is performed within the numerous inter-agency programmes, flagship initiatives, and consultative groups. As to the technical advice sub mechanism, it is performed in two directions: i) building Member States institutional capacities, for example through training of ministerial officials for the strategic planning, data analysis and management of education systems; and ii) assisting Member States on specific issues, such as with the policy reviews in light of the design and implementation of EFA II plans and programmes.

The standard setting mechanism is recognized in this period as one of the five main functions of the Organization as stated by the Medium Term Plan (UNESCO, 2002*a*). As it is known, this mechanism has two sub mechanisms: normative actions, and benchmarks and data production. These sub mechanisms received almost the same attention in terms of number of activities as the previous period. However, the standard setting mechanism through normative action gained importance at the Organization level but not at the education programme level. In fact, in these years were developed ten normative treaties, mostly related to the cultural sector. As to the normative actions in education, UNESCO performed three kind of activities: i) monitoring and follow up existing treaties, such as the ones on the status of teachers; ii) revision of existing treaties, such as the regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications in higher education; and iii) production of new treaties. The second sub mechanism entailed two kinds of activities: i) indicators

production for monitoring EFA II, like the World Education Indicators; and ii) support for monitoring and evaluation education achievements. It is important to recognize that this second sub mechanism is strongly oriented in support for EFA II implementation and coordination.

As to the financial leveraging mechanism, like the previous two periods, it is not of great relevance for UNESCO's programming. Among the different activities performed, there is one significant innovation. UNESCO contributed to the EFA-FTI, providing advice to the organization and to countries in order to become eligible. Another kind of activities performed under this mechanism is global advocacy measures, such as the ones done with donors, the G8, and the OECD/DAC, to increase ODA and target is toward basic education. Finally, like the other periods, UNESCO used its technical expertise to help countries in the mobilization of domestic resources and external funds. Contrarily to the previous periods, there are no longer seeds money, nor subventions.

Table 56: Global challenges, notion of education, agenda-setting mechanisms third period

Third period 2002 – 2007		
GLOBAL CHALLENGES	NOTION OF EDUCATION	AGENDA-SETTING MECHANISMS
KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY Building a society that is nurtured by its diversity and its capacities	HUMANISTIC VISION Learning to be and learning to live together	VALUE SETTING i) advocacy measures; ii) world-wide policy dialogue; iii) research activities; iv) initiatives, decades and partnerships; and v) dissemination of technical documents
GLOBALIZATION Threats for marginalization, opportunity for cultural pluralism	EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHT Education as a human right and a public good	CAPACITY BUILDING Sharing best practices through: i) existing networks; ii) recently created specific centres; iii) the structures created for EFA; and iv) inter-agency programmes, flagship initiatives, and consultative groups. Technical advice: i) building Member States institutional capacities; and ii) assisting Member States on specific issues.
DEVELOPMENT The right to human, social and sustainable development.	QUALITY Broader notion of quality: purposes of education and its relevance.	GOAL SETTING i) EFA and MDGs in UNESCO's programming; ii) alignment with the broader UN development process; and iii) leading of different Decades and Plan of Actions.
VULNERABILITY AND HUMAN SECURITY Peace, poverty, and health	ENABLING FUNCTION Education as a foundation for personal and social human and sustainable development.	STANDARD SETTING Normative actions: i) the follow up of existing conventions; ii) the revision of existing standards; and iii) production of new treaties. Benchmarks and data: i) the production of indicators, and ii) the support for monitoring and evaluation systems
INEQUALITIES Between countries and within education. Gender discrimination.	LIFELONG LEARNING Education continuum. LLL as foundation for knowledge societies.	FINANCIAL LEVERAGING i) contribution to multilateral organizations; ii) high level advocacy for funds mobilization; and iii) technical assistance to mobilize resources.
QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL		

Broadening the vision of quality basic education. Sixth EFA goal.		
EDUCATION SYSTEMS Rising demand for education: management and planning. Building knowledge societies.		

5.4 Fourth Period (2008 – 2013)

5.4.1 Context

This period, from 2008 to 2013, began with a tremendous economic crisis that affected all countries in the world. This global crisis started as a financial crisis in the U.S.A. that created a cascade effect to the bank system. The shortage of cash and the lack of confidence in the bank system constituted a brake for the investments and loans slowing down the market of money. Banks were thus unable or unwilling to invest and to buy sovereign debts. Therefore, it resulted in the sovereign debt crisis, in which States had to sell their debts at higher rates or were unable to pay previous debts.

It resulted in a need for political decisions and interventions in the field of international economy. The political economic solutions adopted by countries or regions (European Union has an integrated economic area which means that political economic decisions should be taken collectively) were very different and complex. For example, in the U.S.A. public resources were injected in the bank systems, while European countries adopted austerity measures in order to reach budget balance.

Related to this devastating economic crisis, the prices of crude oil and other energy related materials raised and so it raised price of other basic elements for the functioning of modern societies. These economic constraints foraged the social tensions existing in countries with fragile democracies. In particular, these years saw the beginning of the Arab Uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Morocco and Jordan. The protests created different consequences in each of these countries: from civil war (Egypt) to regional and international conflicts (Libya and Syria), from the exile of the president (Tunisia), to Constitutional reforms (Morocco and Lebanon).

In the Middle East, peace was still a dream. Several conflicts were present such as the numerous tensions in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Palestine, and the Iraqi war. In Africa civil wars continued to afflict central African countries and several coalitions were formed between countries to fight against internal groups of terrorists. In particular, the Tuareg rebels in northern Mali, the Boko Haram group in Nigeria and the Al Shabaab in Somalia, which also faced problems with piracy in these years.

Noteworthy is the creation and the independence of South Sudan in 2011, becoming the youngest nation in the world today. However, after independence, several conflicts and civil unrests damaged the process of the construction of the country. These conflicts, social and political changes in the Arab world and in Africa are some of the causes of a phenomenon of increased migration flows into the European continent. Countries in Europe started their process of dealing with mass migration.

In the social domain, science and technology saw a greater impulse. The spread of internet and cell phones augmented the connection and connectivity of people. In these years, personal computers, social networks and smartphone devices drastically changed the ways of working and social relationship. Connectivity also spread by an increase in the mass of people travelling for leisure, work or for educational motives. Finally, some of the challenges affecting the world started being heard by the global public. A global awareness of climate change and sustainability became mainstreamed.

UNESCO and UN

At the UN level, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon took on its position at the helm of the Organization in 2006 up until December 2016. The “season” of the MDGs was running toward its end. During these years, the UN organized a series of events and developed several activities in order to accelerate progresses toward the achievement of internationally established goals. In particular, the UN followed the United Nations World Summit Outcome Document in 2005 and the United Nations’ Summit outcome document ‘Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals’ of 2010. In the field of education the UN promoted the Ministerial Declaration of the 2011 high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council “Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education” and in 2012 the Secretary General launched GEFI with the goals of universal primary education, quality education, and education for global citizenship. Moreover, in 2012 it appointed Gordon Brown former United Kingdom Prime Minister to the position of United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education.

Starting from 2011, the UN Secretary General began the global consultations for the creation of the post 2015 development agenda. Within these consultations UNESCO assumed an important role in coordinating the debates around education.

During these years, important conferences on education and on development were held. In particular, the Second Global Conference on Financing for Development; the 48th International Conference on Education; the International Conference on Prison Education; the International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI); the World Conference on Higher Education; the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development; the World Conference on Early Childhood education; the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; and the Third International Congress on TVET.

Associated to these conferences, a number of declarations were developed such as the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development; the Political declaration on Africa's development needs; the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training; the UN Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS; "The future we want" the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; and the Shanghai Consensus on TVET.

Besides it, the international community celebrated the International Year of Languages (2008); the International Year of Human Rights Learning (2009); the International Year of Youth and the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010); the International Year for People of African Descent (2011); and the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All (2012). Moreover, the following decades and action plans were implemented in the period:

Table 57: International agendas and plan of actions with educational components 2008 - 2013

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
2 nd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism							3 rd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism							
United Nations Literacy Decade														
EFA II												SDGs		
MDGs														
International Programme of Action on Population and Development														
2 nd Decade of the World's Indigenous People														
Decade for African Education					2 nd Decade for African Education									
World Food Summit Plan of Action														
		World Programme for Human Rights Education												
Decade for The Eradication for Poverty				2 nd UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty										
Int. Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World														
Programme of Action for the LDCs							2 nd The Programme of Action for the LDCs							
Johannesburg Programme of Implementation														
		United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development												
		Seoul Agenda and Development Goals for Arts Education												
											International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures			

The 34th General Conference elected the new Director-General Irina Bokova, from Bulgaria, as successor of Kōichirō Matsuura. Her statement and vision was focused on building and creating “a new humanism”. This idea was fully integrated in programming as the 36th C/5 demonstrated: “quality education should empower learners to become responsible and active citizens who can contribute to a culture of peace and non-violence in the spirit of a ‘new humanism’” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 22).

In these years, UNESCO brought forth and accomplished several internal changes: not only did it orient itself toward a results-based programming, management, monitoring and reporting (UNESCO, 2008*b*), but it also tried to concentrate its budget and programming toward less and more precise areas. In addition, an internal restructuring and a decentralization policy were implemented with field offices staff reaching 35% of the total of the Organization’s staff.

The way of programming and communicating programmes also differed from previous years. In the Medium Term Strategy UNESCO proposed an overarching objective and two strategic programme objectives. These strategic programme objectives constituted the bases for the production of (two) biennial sectoral priorities in each of the biennia. However, this process of restructuring was still in the making. Particularly interesting are the huge diversities in reporting from one biennium to another: the first biennium had four Main Lines of Action and thirty-three expected results, the second had four Main Lines of Action and fourteen expected results, while the third had four Main Lines of Action and twelve expected results.

Other important consequences of the internal restructuring were the change of the focus of the UIE that became UIL; the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education was closed; and the regional centres were more closely involved in coordinating the different regional initiatives. Even the EFA II coordination structures and processes witnessed an important process of restructuring in its governance structures after the reform process began in 2010 with the document “Enhancing the effectiveness of EFA Coordination” (see § 4.2.3). Finally, during the last biennium, a global process of policy dialogue toward the design of the post 2015 agenda began.

Moreover, reforms were also carried out at different levels of the international order. UNESCO provided a “response and contribution to the dynamic reform processes

permeating the United Nations system at global, regional and country levels, with its special emphasis on enhancing coherence and delivering as one” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. i). UNESCO continued its efforts in aligning its work with the broader UN agenda and development processes particularly through the participation and contribution to the UNCCA and UNDAF.

The mission statement of this period was “as a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 8). This mission statement was followed by these objectives and strategies:

Table 58: Overarching objective, strategic programme objective and biennial sectoral priorities 2008 - 2013

Medium Term Strategy		
Overarching objective 1: Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning		
Strategic programme objective 1: Strengthening UNESCO’s global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support to national leadership in favour of EFA		
Strategic programme objective 2: Developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development.		
34 C/5	35 C/5	36 C/5
BSP 1: Leading education for all (EFA) by ensuring global coordination and providing assistance to Member States to achieve the EFA goals and education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) based on the Global Action Plan (GAP) BSP 2: Fostering literacy and quality education for all at all levels and through both formal and non-formal lifelong learning, with particular emphasis on Africa, gender equality, youth,	BSP 1: Supporting the achievement of Education for All (EFA). BSP2: Providing global and regional leadership in education, including through the implementation of recommendations of major international education conferences	BSP 1: Scaling up equity, inclusion and quality in education and lifelong learning for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence. BSP 2: Strengthening global leadership in education

LDCs, SIDS as well as the most vulnerable segments of society, including indigenous peoples, and education for sustainable development		
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UNESCO seemed much more aware of its global leadership in particular areas of development. Indeed, it clearly stated that

UNESCO has been entrusted by the international community with a number of global lead responsibilities, which will be carried out through all or part of the medium-term period. Success in these lead assignments will attract international recognition and visibility. They fall into three categories: where UNESCO acts as a United Nations lead agency; where UNESCO plays a lead policy role; and where UNESCO acts as a keeper of universal lists (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 12).

In terms of normative instruments, UNESCO was not particularly prolific in these years. In fact, the Organization developed only two instruments:

- Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education. 26 November 2011
- Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, including a glossary of definitions. 10 November 2011

UNESCO experienced also a change in its membership with the admission of new Member States and Associate Members. Particularly important and significant for the future work of the Organization was the 36th session of the General Conference when Member States of UNESCO recognized Palestine as a Member State.

Table 59: Member States joining UNESCO 2008 - 2013

Singapore	08/10/2007
Faroës (associate)	12/10/2009
Curaçao (associate)	25/10/2011
Saint Maarten (associate)	25/10/2011
Palestine	23/11/2011
South Sudan	27/10/2011
Anguilla (associate)	05/11/2013

5.4.2 Educational Themes

In the five documents analysed (UNESCO, 2008*a*; 2008*b*; 2010*a*; 2010*b*; 2012*b*), there are some preeminent education themes which have great cross programmatic relevance and are spanned throughout the texts. The first preeminent theme, like the previous period, is quality basic education for all. EFA II, as will be presented below, is by far the most relevant issue and area of activity. EFA II is at the heart of UNESCO's action and it constitutes the main priority. Actions performed, and values promoted throughout the years have quality education for all as the central objective.

Together with EFA II, the issue of education for sustainable development gained prominence in these years. Not only did UNESCO lead the UNDESD and promoting actions and activities in favour of it, but also the linkages between education, peace, eradication of poverty and sustainable development are constantly reaffirmed. This attention to education for sustainable development is closely related to other themes such as human rights education and education for peace, which all contributed in reaffirming a humanistic vision of education centred in the learning to live together pillar.

A third preeminent theme is lifelong learning. Indeed, the reflections on lifelong learning spanned within the documents and UNESCO performed numerous activities in favour of this concept. Lifelong learning is not only conceived as the education continuum but it has also a life-wide component, integrating non-formal education and flexible learning pathways: a holistic vision of education systems.

As to important themes, the right to education and inclusive education can be signalled. These concepts and themes constituted the basis for many activities and programmes of the Organization. They are conceived as important reflections contributing to eradicating inequalities between countries and within education. Inclusive education was thus a concept that enable to face the complex phenomenon of marginalization, to which a flagship publication is dedicated. Particularly interesting in this sense is also the promotion of second chance education opportunities, such as education in prisons. Gender equality was also an important issue related to the right to education and inclusive education.

Another important theme is education for skills development. Skills and competencies for the world of work are increasingly demanded to be inserted within curricula. Skills development for the world of work become one of the four top priority areas in UNESCO's work (UNESCO, 2010a). Indeed, youth and youth unemployment were perceived as a global priority and a challenge, and this attention to employability was thought to be one of the possible solutions to face this challenge.

The last important theme is related the development of Africa. Africa was a global priority for UNESCO and the development of African education received great attention in UNESCO's programming. The priority accorded to the development of Africa is translated into action in all of UNESCO's programmatic documents.

Other educational themes mentioned in the programmatic documents were education for a culture of peace, the importance of teachers in ensuring quality education, as well as the governance of education systems.

5.4.3 Global Challenges

During these years, UNESCO seemed to concentrate its efforts in targeting its actions toward fewer global challenges. Its global role is reaffirmed: "UNESCO provides a platform where global challenges for humanity can be addressed on the basis of equality among Member States" (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 7). Indeed, UNESCO perceived five global challenges: sustainable development, peace, inequalities, quality basic education for all, and education systems.

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT – people centred development, a
humanist agenda

The mission statement explains that "as a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information" (*ibidem*). Hence, it appears clear that sustainable development is one of the key main goals and challenges for the Organization. For UNESCO, the envisioned development should be grounded on principles of sustainability and in harmony with the environment. Although these ideas were already present in the previous periods, in these years UNESCO intensified its focus on activities in order to

address climate change (UNESCO, 2008*b*; 2010*a*; 2012*b*). Several are the activities and programmes related to climate change. In particular, UNESCO continued its leadership role in the International Implementation Scheme for the UNDESD (2005-2014), promoting an holistic view of the concept of education for sustainable development: “the concept of ESD is therefore linked to key issues such as poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, climate change, human rights, gender equality, corporate social responsibility and the protection of indigenous cultures” (UNESCO, 2010*a*, p. 31). This relevance of education for sustainable development is also witnessed by the fact that it is incorporated in a Main Line of Action of the third biennium: “Supporting education system responses to contemporary challenges for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 14).

However, the development promoted in these years is strongly people centred: a sustainable social and human development. This kind of development is based on a long lasting “humanist agenda” as the new Director-General Irina Bokova promoted:

UNESCO has always had a profoundly humanist agenda. It has taken “development” to mean the holistic development of the intellectual, social and cultural fabric of societies, in addition to material well-being. Today, with the financial and economic crises, with global challenges such as climate change, it has become more evident that only this holistic approach can bring truly sustainable development – and hence my call for a “new humanism”, a genuinely people-centered development paradigm. (*idem*, p. ii)

People centred development paradigm will not only conduce to sustainability, but also to justice (*idem*). In a strong passage, UNESCO stated that “its ultimate goal will be to ensure a sustainable and *just* future, through education for sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 30).

Noteworthy is the fact that this development is conceived to serve as a means to eradicate poverty, to reduce inequalities, and to be conducive to peace. Indeed, at the beginning of the Medium Term Strategy (*idem*, p. 7), the Organization affirmed that sustainable development and human rights constitute the “mutually supporting pillars of peace”. Thus, UNESCO focused in these years on areas most in need of development, particularly in Africa, in LDCs, and in SIDS. Another target of this people centred development is the eradication of HIV and AIDS, which still ravaged countries in all regions of the world

(UNESCO, 2008*b*). Particularly important is thus the participation of programmes such as UNAIDS and EDUCAIDS, as well as the activities in favour of the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (UNESCO, 2008*b*; 2010*a*; 2012*b*).

Afresh from previous periods, UNESCO strongly perceived the need to rethink the international cooperation structures in order to achieve sustainable development. Reaching the targets of MDGs and EFA II is the overall strategy for sustainable development. Indeed, UNESCO put emphasis to the United Nations' Summit outcome document "Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals" of 2010, as well as the Ministerial Declaration of the 2011 high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education". In order to reinforce cooperation for development, UNESCO sought to strengthen its linkages and partnerships with the UN systems like in the previous periods, and it also promoted harmonization of efforts: "UNESCO will do its utmost to harmonize and coordinate action at country level within the framework of the UNESS, GAP and through the common country programming processes" (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 35). The Organization also supported and contributed to the overall process of reform of the UN to enhance relevance and impact of all United Nations system organizations, and improve accountability through a results oriented assessment and capacity to deliver (UNESCO, 2008*a*). UNESCO also suggested to revisit the structures of aid that should be more focused on the present challenges (*idem*). Moreover, the Organization tried to build new partnerships for development cooperation such as South-South, triangular cooperation, and the G-77 plus China (UNESCO, 2010*a*; 2012*b*). Finally, it is noteworthy that these years are important for the reforms of several EFA II related structures, such as the EFA-FTI, and the EFA II global coordination architecture (see § 4.2.3).

PEACE – Learning to live together

Peace is at the heart of UNESCO's mandate and it is recalled at the beginning of the Medium Term Strategy: "the vision articulated in the preamble of the Constitution to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men [and women] remains a paramount endeavour of the Organization" (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 7). This will to maintain the focus on peace building is translated in the mission statement for the following six years: "as a

specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information” (*ibidem*). As already expressed, this function of UNESCO is at the centre of its humanist agenda.

The challenges that the world was facing at that time posed great reflections on how to build the culture of peace. Conflicts and social unrest persisted in many areas (UNESCO, 2010a) that lead to poverty, inequalities and marginalization (UNESCO, 2010b). Exactly as previous periods, UNESCO’s vision is to promote a culture of peace (UNESCO, 2008a; 2008b) toward peaceful, plural, democratic and sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2012b). Indeed, UNESCO maintained its activities on the Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace related to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). Moreover, the Biennial Sectoral Priority of the third biennium of the period explicitly mentioned the mission of building peace through education: “scaling up equity, inclusion and quality in education and lifelong learning for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence” (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 43).

However, many of the challenges related to peace lay on the capacity to live together. Indeed, among the challenges outlined in the texts, several challenges refer to ensuring mutual understanding, intercultural understanding, intercultural dialogue (UNESCO, 2008b; 2010a; 2012b). Thus, UNESCO performed activities for the promotion of concepts such as citizenship education (see § 5.4.4), and to integrate in curricula principles related to the pillar of “learning to live together”. These principles are not only promoted in its activities, but also constitute the basis of Organization’s action:

Founded on the principles of universality, diversity and dignity, UNESCO’s actions continue to be guided and shaped by a set of commonly shared values that include justice, solidarity, tolerance, sharing, equity, respect for human rights, including women’s rights, and cultural diversity, pluralism and democratic principle (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 7).

As already mentioned, human rights are seen as one of the two mutually supporting pillars of peace, together with sustainable development. In UNESCO’s vision, there is a strong link between these three elements: peace, sustainable development and human rights. The respect for human rights is thus the key element for ensuring long lasting peace and

sustainable development. Human rights acquired in these years important relevance. Indeed, UNESCO continued its activities as lead agency in the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-2014). Several are the activities in favour of promoting human rights and in particular the right to education. For example, UNESCO created the “Joint Expert Group UNESCO (CR)/ ECOSOC on the Monitoring of the Right to Education and the United Nations human rights treaty bodies” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 34). As part of its normative action, UNESCO performed also activities of revision of legislations and constitutions in order to ensure that the Convention Against Discrimination in Education is respected and reflected at country level (*idem*).

INEQUALITIES – Attention to Africa, youth and women.

Like the three previous periods, UNESCO’s approach to inequalities is always twofold. On the one hand, UNESCO observed the inequalities existing between countries, and on the other hand, it perceived the inequalities that exist in education.

There are different kinds of inequalities between countries. In this period, UNESCO seems really concentrated on countries of Africa. Indeed, Africa, together with gender equality is the declared global priority of these years: “UNESCO shall accord priority to Africa and to gender equality in all its fields of competence throughout the duration of the Medium-Term Strategy” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 8). The priority accorded to the development of Africa is translated into action in all of UNESCO’s programmatic documents. There is a sort of “Africa mainstreaming” in programming. Although Africa was always a global priority for UNESCO, in these years, it received more importance in terms of activities that explicitly contribute to it. In particular, the IICBA saw an increase in its operational budget and the CapEFA programme targeted countries in Africa. The development of Africa is challenged by several factors. On the one hand, there is the continuous drain of “brains” from this continent, particularly of scientists and engineers (UNESCO, 2012*b*). This brain drain phenomenon has clearly important implications in terms of the challenges of education systems that, while facing pressing demands, should also ensure a smooth transition to the world of work. On the other hand, the financial constraints which several African countries are experiencing do not let them develop the full potential of their education systems.

However, Africa is not the only place in which inequalities between countries are seen. Indeed, the Organization targeted other countries that, for different reasons, seem to experience several challenges. In fact, UNESCO maintained its collaboration with the E-9 countries in order to achieve EFA II goals. In addition, UNESCO focused its activities on SIDS and LDCs. In particular the latter are addressed within the scheme of the 2009 Brussel Plan of Action. These countries are often affected by external debts and the financial crisis of 2009 exacerbated their difficulties (UNESCO, 2010*b*).

As to the inequalities perceived in education, the gender element is by far the most present and mentioned. As already explained, gender equality is the second global priority of UNESCO. In these years, like in the previous period, UNESCO promoted gender mainstreaming in programming. A global convergence toward recognizing gender equality as the main global challenge can be witnessed: “Gender equality has been identified as a global priority at various United Nations conferences and summits, most recently in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 31). Indeed, in these years there was the creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in 2010. The “gender” challenge is widely recognized not only because it is enshrined within the MDGs and in EFA II, but also because UNESCO openly declared that the world missed the target of gender parity in 2005. Indeed, the scale and the nature of the gender challenge is by far more articulated than “gender equality”. UNESCO thus perceived as challenges inequity, inequality, disparity, discrimination, gender based violence, and more broadly women empowerment (UNESCO, 2008*a*; 2008*b*; 2010*a*; 2010*b*; 2012*b*).

However, the inequalities in education are not only related to women. The 2010 GMR report is completely focused on the marginalized. One of the main concern of this flagship publication is trying to answer the questions of “who are the marginalized? What are the factors contributing to their exclusion and lack of educational opportunity?” (UNESCO, 2010*b*, p. 134). In UNESCO’s vision, the marginalization challenge has to do with a multiplicity of interrelated factors such as poverty, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, disability, race, language and others, creating vicious cycles of disadvantage in education. Marginalization in education is an indicator of inequalities in education but also mirrors inequalities in societies. For these reasons UNESCO increased its action in favour of the respect of the right to education. Further, the Organization continued its efforts in

monitoring the Convention Against Discrimination in Education. Among the targeted sections of population, there are youth, out of school children, Roma people, people living in rural areas and minorities.

QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL – EFA II goals to be met.

Like the previous period, UNESCO concentrated its efforts in promoting and helping Member States in achieving EFA II. In its mandate and in its activities UNESCO tried to address the challenges for which EFA II was created which is essentially quality basic education for all. The Overarching Objective of this Medium Term Plan is clearly related to the challenges of EFA II: “Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning”. For UNESCO, a vast number of countries are still far from achieving the goals of EFA II (UNESCO, 2010*b*) due to several challenges such as financial constraints (UNESCO, 2010*a*), or lack of institutional capacities (see § 5.4.5). Indeed, “although significant progress has been made, many children, often girls, still do not have access to good quality basic education” (*idem*, p. 42). The fact that EFA II and quality basic education for all constitute a global challenge is witnessed in two strategic programme objectives: “strengthening UNESCO’s global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support to national leadership in favour of EFA” and “developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 8).

Basically, the challenges related to quality basic education for all are related to universal access to education, which after 20 years of EFA programme still constitutes a challenge for countries. For UNESCO, there are still some important obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of the right to education. Numerous are the out of school children and high drop out rates. Associated to it, there are challenges related to education systems, as the Organization stated: “the lack of effective mechanisms for reintegrating drop-outs and out-of-school adolescents means that millions remain outside of the education system with no or little opportunity for further learning” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 24). A major challenge related to basic education is the one of illiteracy. “About one fifth of the world’s adult population, an estimated 774 million, of which the majority are women, remains illiterate” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 26). There is a renewed focus on literacy toward the end of the Plan of Action for the UNLD (2003-2012) and the LIFE. Literacy challenge is often

linked to the challenge of functional literacy, as well as adult education. In these years, UNESCO organized the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education - CONFINTEA VI- in 2009 and adopted the Bélem Framework for Action. Moreover, UNESCO promoted the Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation during the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in 2010.

It is important to highlight that the challenges related to quality basic education for all are approached with a human right perspective. Indeed, as already mentioned, the right to education is strongly promoted and safeguarded through its normative actions. As the previous periods, UNESCO organized consultations regarding the Convention Against Discrimination in Education of 1960.

Quality is defined as a major concern worldwide (UNESCO, 2008*a*). Although the previous period focused much of its attention in order to define quality (see § 5.3.4), this period seems to take for granted much of the discussions on the notion of quality of the previous one and address the challenges related to it at country level. Rather than the challenge of defining quality, UNESCO perceived a need to improve it. And the areas of quality that have to be addressed are many: “the quality of education is key to ensuring the success of learners. UNESCO will provide support to Member States to improve educational quality through its work in areas such as content, curriculum, learning assessments and school management” (*idem*, p. 17).

Moreover, related to the challenge of quality there is the one of learning effectiveness. In fact, the Organization repeated several times that there are often low learning outcomes at the end of the educational processes (UNESCO, 2010*a*; 2012*b*) It is the beginning of what will later be called “the learning crisis”. Relevance and responsivity of education are also associated to the challenge of quality, as the Organization warned “much of the learning that takes place in schools around the world does not prepare students to build better societies for our common future” (UNESCO, 2010*a*, p. 25). Particularly interesting is the challenge of the equity of education quality as presented in UNESCO’s programme: “improving equity of education quality and of learning outcomes should be addressed from the earliest stages of education as the effect of poor quality education at lower levels” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 37).

EDUCATION SYSTEMS – Governance of education systems, and teachers.

Like the previous periods, education systems are facing numerous challenges. In these years, UNESCO explicitly mentioned the challenges related to the governance of education systems (UNESCO, 2010*a*). In the current situation of crisis, great pressure is on education systems. Particularly relevant are the challenges of education management. Indeed, UNESCO developed numerous sub-programmes and activities related to reinforcing institutional capacities in education planning, in the efficient use of resources (in situations of financial constraints), and in policy formulation and reform. What has been promoted is a harmonized and holistic system that can take into account all the challenges brought forth by innovations in education and the different educational needs of population. Capacity development is thus one of the major concerns for UNESCO's action. Indeed, "UNESCO will propose a framework of common principles in and approaches to capacity development in the field of educational policy formulation and the planning, monitoring and evaluation of education systems, in order to support Member States in achieving the EFA goals" (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 30).

Moreover, educational systems are challenged by the growing demand for education, particularly for post basic levels of education. Higher education and research are two areas of great concern of these years. UNESCO organized in 2009 the World Conference on Higher Education trying, among other things, to deal with the issue of brain drain (particularly in Africa). In addition, education systems were requested to integrate common values teaching and faced the challenges of multilingualism. Another challenge related to it is the growing demand for quality, relevance and effectiveness of education systems. These challenges increase the complexity of problems that the education systems should already face such as the one of attaining quality basic education for all.

Finally, for UNESCO many challenges of education systems are related to the education personnel. Teachers are perceived as the key element for quality and UNESCO performed several activities related to teachers' development. In particular, UNESCO warned about the teacher shortage, especially in Africa. The Organization seems concerned about the teacher status and the overall teacher welfare. In 2008, UNESCO hosted the International Teachers Task Force on Education for All. Moreover, UNESCO promoted activities for

the training and retraining of teachers particularly in view of the major changes brought forth by ICTs and ICTs use in education (UNESCO, 2008*b*; 2010*a*; 2012*b*).

5.4.4 Notion of Education

The macro categories and the main elements of the notion of education of UNESCO in this period are almost the same of the previous one. However, slight changes within these macro categories can be seen and nuance the notion of education of the Organization. Hence, throughout the documents analysed, the Organization promoted values, concepts and principles related to education which belong to five macro categories: a humanistic vision of education; equity and human rights; quality education; enabling function of education; and literacy and lifelong learning.

HUMANISTIC VISION – a humanist agenda, education for sustainable development and education for global citizenship

As already mentioned, UNESCO in these years revisited and strongly promoted a “humanist agenda”. With the election as Director-General of Irina Bokova, the concept of “new humanism” is articulated in its programmes. Indeed, it is assessed that:

Quality education should empower learners to become responsible and active citizens who can contribute to a culture of peace and non-violence in the spirit of a ‘new humanism’. Major Programme I will therefore give increased emphasis to promoting education for values, democratic citizenship, human rights, tolerance and dialogue for reconciliation and peace. (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 22)

This new humanism seems to have its central focus on sustainable development (in which all human, social, and environmental dimensions are taken into consideration). For UNESCO the promotion of these elements has important impact on the content and purposes of education.

UNESCO will ensure that subjects and interdisciplinary issues such as the culture of peace, citizenship, intercultural dialogue and democratic values, sustainable development, science and technology and arts are integrated in the process of providing technical support and policy advice for the development of education systems, curricula, materials, and initial and in-service teacher education programmes, with emphasis on the global priority of gender equality as well as on youth (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 20)

Central pillar of this humanistic vision is “learning to live together”. Through its activities, UNESCO vehicles numerous concepts that have to do with the promotion of intercultural understanding and human rights education, as witnessed by the continuous efforts towards the Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace -related to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World- as well as the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Moreover, the Organization developed in these years the concept of “education for global citizenship” (UNESCO, 2012*b*). Democratic and citizenship education were already principles promoted in previous years. However, in this period the component of “responsibility” and a global approach became preeminent. Indeed, in UNESCO’s reflections “education should encompass universal values such as peace, human rights, tolerance and democratic citizenship, empowering learners with the necessary knowledge and skills to face local and global challenges, and to become responsible citizens participating in the building of a just, peaceful and sustainable future” (*idem*, p. 43).

Global citizenship education is strongly related to another principle that UNESCO promoted in these years: education for peace. As the Medium Term Strategy outlined:

...education for peace is a primordial task for UNESCO related to its mission. UNESCO will therefore contribute through education to bring about a culture of peace and promote sustainable development. It will further promote intercultural dialogue with a view to integrating the teaching of global citizenship and democratic values into all levels of formal schooling and non-formal systems (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 18).

Therefore, there are strong ties between global citizenship education, peace education and education for sustainable development. Indeed, education for sustainable development is another fundamental element of the humanistic vision of education of UNESCO for these years. Education for sustainable development is particularly promoted because it is recognized that education has the important enabling function to address common global challenges, such as the one of “peace” and of “sustainable development” and climate change (see § 5.4.3).

The attention to education for sustainable development is not only reflected in the work on the International Implementation Scheme for the UNDESD. In fact, UNESCO integrated education for sustainable development within its programme with the strategic

programme objective of “developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development”. Moreover, the Organization tried to “increasingly integrate” education for sustainable development into EFA II plans. Moreover, UNESCO advocated in order to integrate education for sustainable development into national curricula.

Therefore, in UNESCO’s vision, there are strong links between education and sustainable development. Indeed, it is said that better education creates the condition for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2008*b*). The importance of peace education and education for sustainable development is also witnessed by the establishment in New Delhi, India, of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) as a Category 1 institute (UNESCO, 2010*b*).

It is important to notice another aspect of the humanistic vision that UNESCO promoted. Indeed, UNESCO aimed at “strengthening the ties between education and culture” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 8). In this view, the Organization promoted the integration in curricula of heritage education (UNESCO, 2008*b*), arts education (*idem*), and “promoted the acquisition of generic competencies such as problem-solving skills, creativity and interpersonal aptitudes as well as values such as peace, tolerance and responsibility” (UNESCO, 2010*b*, p. 42). In addition, it promoted activities such as preventive education and sexuality education (UNESCO, 2012*b*) in order to face the challenges of HIV and AIDS pandemics.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that a holistic and humanistic approach to education is directly stated and promoted. This holistic approach takes into account all aspects of human and personal development, as well as suggests a holistic vision in planning and managing LLL systems, considering both formal and non-formal education.

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS – right to inclusive, gender responsive education.

The reflections on equity of UNESCO in this period are very much in line with the ones of the previous period. Several are the areas of equity that are promoted in UNESCO’s work. Among these, the Organization strongly promoted the idea of a human right to education, at all levels, the concept of inclusive education, and the need for the promotion

of gender equality, especially in education. As already mentioned, inequalities are perceived as one of the global challenges of these years. Hence, for UNESCO, “promoting equity in education is therefore essential” (UNESCO, 2010*b*, pp. 25-26).

Exactly like the previous period, UNESCO promoted a human right based approach to education. The idea that education is a human right is well established and promoted in the Organization’s programmes and activities. The right to education dimension is recalled in a number of ways. UNESCO continued its monitoring exercise to the Convention Against Discrimination in Education, as well as it performed activities in collaboration with the Joint Expert Group UNESCO (CR)/ ECOSOC on the Monitoring of the Right to Education and the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. The idea of the right to education lays at the heart of the EFA II agenda. Indeed, the “for all” suffix, implicitly suggest a right based approach. Particularly innovative is a passage in which it seems that UNESCO advanced a position of the right to lifelong learning: “when designing their national education system, governments must therefore adopt a holistic vision that provides for learning throughout life, by taking into account each of the different stages of education and supporting a human rights-based approach” (*idem*, p. 41). Differently from the previous period, there no longer are mentions to the notion of education as a public good.

The right based approach, EFA II, as well as the concept of equity strongly promote the idea of inclusive education, an education that can reach the marginalized. Indeed, this period recalled what has been said in the previous period: “inclusion is the overarching principle of EFA” (UNESCO, 2006*a*, p. 32). Thus, inclusive education is another important concept that has been addressed and promoted in these years. Indeed, UNESCO IBE organized the 48th session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva in 2008 on the theme “Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future”. Further, the Organization developed a “UNESCO policy guidelines on inclusion” as a technical document for the implementation of EFA II plans in 2009. Moreover, The EFA GMR was completely dedicated to the marginalized trying to measure the scale of marginalization and discrimination in, and deprivation of educational opportunities. According to the GMR, “marginalization in education is a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities” (UNESCO, 2010*b*, p. 135). It constitutes a complex concept involving different phenomena that cannot be simply

reduced to wealth or geographic areas. Indeed, it is interesting noting what the areas of inequalities are, and the areas for which inclusive policies should be promoted. For example, children with disabilities, poorest areas, second chance opportunities, and education in prison (UNESCO, 2008*b*). Hence, UNESCO promoted the idea of an inclusive education approach to education planning (UNESCO, 2010*a*).

Gender equality is “at the centre of [UNESCO’s] actions in education” (UNESCO, 2010*b*, p. 33). Indeed, gender equality has been established as a global priority. Like the previous periods, UNESCO disseminated and promoted a vast variety of concepts and activities related to gender equality, gender equity and gender parity. In particular, UNESCO performed activities in favour of gender sensitive policies, plans and strategies (UNESCO, 2008*b*), gender responsive solutions (UNESCO, 2010*a*) and non-sexist teacher training (UNESCO, 2012*b*). It also promoted gender mainstreaming in programming. It is interesting to note that UNESCO reformed itself in order to better align with gender mainstreaming. Indeed, the Organization developed its Gender Equality Action Plan that covered the years from 2008 to 2013, reinforcing its actions “to achieve the six stated outcomes relating to literacy, teachers, secondary education, technical and vocational education and training, inclusive rights-based education sector plans and policies and education responses to HIV and AIDS” (*idem*, p. 47). Finally, UNESCO launched in 2011 the Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education, “Better Life, Better Future”, focusing on adolescent girls and non-literate women (*idem*). As already mentioned, the Organization supported the UN system thrust toward gender equality supporting the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

QUALITY – The right to quality education

UNESCO perceived quality education as an overall objective. Indeed, the Medium Term Strategy stated that the overarching objective is “attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning”. Quality education is also explicitly mentioned in the strategic programmes and in each of the biennial sectoral priorities: Strategic Programme 2: Developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development”. According to the

Organization, attaining quality education is the ultimate aim of EFA II (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 17), and as already mentioned, it constitutes a global challenge (UNESCO, 2010a).

The promotion of quality can be found throughout all documents, programmes, and activities of UNESCO. There is a sort of “quality” mainstreaming in UNESCO’s work around education. Indeed, the term “quality” has been used attached to all education levels, promoting “quality education”, “quality basic education”, “quality early childhood education”, “quality higher education”, “quality lifelong learning”. It has also been promoted the idea of “the quality imperative” recalling the title of the GMR of 2004 (UNESCO, 2012b). Interesting are the formulations of a “right to quality education” (*idem*, p. 31), the “equity of education quality” (*idem*, p. 37), as well as “quality of non-formal education” in performing an expected result in the first biennium: “National policies, plans and practices reviewed, revised and developed to improve the quality and sustainability of both formal and non-formal education at all levels to provide lifelong learning at the request of Member States” (UNESCO, 2008b, p. 39). Indeed, when referring to EFA II and the right to education, UNESCO argued that much of the focus has been put on access to education, while completion and effective learning are two essential elements of quality education that have to be addressed. Hence, UNESCO implicitly and explicitly proposed the right to quality education: “quality [is] an essential dimension of the right to education” (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 24).

Quality education is thus an important area of work for UNESCO. Indeed, the Organization performed several activities in order to improve the quality of education. Moreover, it encouraged the development of national studies on quality education and best practice sharing, also in collaboration and through the established networks of associated schools (ASPnet) (UNESCO, 2010a). The Organization has also produced, in collaboration with OECD, guidelines on quality assurance in higher education: “Quality assurance in the cross-border provision of higher education as well as dialogue between exporting and importing countries will continue to be promoted with the help of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education” (UNESCO, 2010b, p. 43).

While in the previous period the notion of quality was debated in order to explore the different dimensions of it, in this period the notion of quality education appears fixed. In

fact, the use of it seems unproblematic. There are different concepts, ideas and issues that are related to the notion of quality education. The Medium Term Plan said: “quality of education is key to ensure the success of learners. UNESCO will provide support to Member States to improve educational quality through its work in areas such as content, curriculum, learning assessments and school management” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 18). In order to improve quality, UNESCO suggested improving four dimensions: teaching, relevance, learning and efficiency (UNESCO, 2012*b*). Indeed, many discourses around quality education in UNESCO’s reflections are related to the kind of education that is considered of good quality: an education that is relevant and responsive to the need of people, that is adequate, that is inclusive, and that leads to effective learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2008*b*, 2010*a*; 2010*b*; 2012*b*). Finally, an important area of work on quality is related to the enabling factors of quality education: teachers and their training.

ENABLING FUNCTION – skills and competences development for the world of work.

There are not many differences between this period and the previous one, but these differences are significant. In fact, although education is perceived as having an enabling function in the meaning that it can enable people and societies to achieve the goals they pursue, the means through which this function is exercised are different. The enabling function of education is clearly promoted in the GMR (UNESCO, 2010*b*, p. 135): “education has the power to transform lives. It broadens people’s freedom of choice and action, empowering them to participate in the social and political lives of their societies and equipping them with the skills they need to develop their livelihoods”.

As already expressed (see § 1.3.5), the programmatic documents reflect several times the position of UNESCO that sees education as closely linked to (sustainable) development. Exactly as the previous period, the link between education and international development is explicit. In particular, the importance that education has for the promotion of Africa is stressed.

Education for all (EFA) is at the heart of sustainable human development and is a key means to achieve the MDGs, in particular the overarching goal of halving poverty by 2015 and the objectives of the two education-related MDGs, including the elimination of gender disparity at all levels of education no later than 2015 [...] Development and

economic prosperity depend on the ability of countries to educate all members of their societies and offer them lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 16).

Hence, education has important functions in poverty eradication, leading to peace and to sustainable development. Worth of mentioning is that the Organization promoted also a vision of education not only that enables people and societies to adapt to change, but also an education that enables them to manage and influence changes (*idem*), a transformative role of education.

However, in these years UNESCO strongly promoted concepts related to the idea that education has to do with the development of skills and competencies that are relevant for the world of work. These links between education and employability, which was always present in UNESCO's programmatic documents, mainly through performing activities on TVET, see in this period a renovated attention. Skills and competencies development for employability are one of the priorities of UNESCO's work. Indeed,

Skills are increasingly seen as critical to labour market productivity and economic growth across the world. Skills development for the world of work has therefore become one of the four top priority areas in UNESCO's education programme (UNESCO, 2010a, p. 43).

Together with literacy and teachers, skills development for the world of work has been "identified as the building blocks for achieving EFA and the education-related MDGs" (*idem*, p. 26). It deserved a specific expected result within a main line of action in two biennia (UNESCO, 2010a; 2012b). This attention to employability can be related to the fact that youth and youth unemployment are considered two of the main concerns and priorities for the Organization. With the growing access to primary education and the "mass" of educated youth entering secondary education, education systems should face the challenges of keeping the promise of education. In this view, UNESCO also promoted the idea to integrate in curricula entrepreneurship education (UNESCO, 2012b). Moreover, youth and skills development were the main theme of the GMR of 2012.

Finally, in UNESCO's reflections great attention is paid to higher education. Indeed, higher education is conceived by UNESCO as having an important role in achieving the MDGs and in eradicating poverty (UNESCO, 2008b). "Higher education institutions [are important] in the revitalization of education systems as well as in Africa's overall development" (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 8). A global higher education that on the one hand

has important contributions to the economy, because “the role of higher education is even more accentuated in the 21st century where knowledgeable and technology-savvy expertise is a critical driver of growth” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 38); while on the other hand it contributes to comprehensive development of a society “by providing the high-level expertise required to lead economic, social, political, cultural, ethical/value, and human development among others” (*ibidem*).

LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING – a holistic vision of education systems

Like the two previous periods, the concept of lifelong learning is strongly promoted by UNESCO and it is a basis of the Organization’s view of education. In addition, this concept greatly shaped UNESCO’s work and even its structure. Indeed, in 2006, the UNESCO Institute of Education experienced a reform in its structure and role, changing even its name and becoming the UIL. Evidently, the focus of its activities lays on lifelong learning.

The UNESCO’s vision of lifelong learning is more consolidated than the previous years. In fact, after at least 25 years of work in this area, the elements and ideas that constitute UNESCO’s vision of lifelong learning seem to be the same as previous periods. Indeed, the lifelong learning promoted by UNESCO has both the elements outlined before: on the one hand it stressed the idea of learning that happens beyond formal education, and on the other hand it is translated in programming with the concept of the educational continuum. Lifelong learning thus takes into account all levels of education and goes beyond. Indeed, UNESCO “envisions education and learning as a single system consisting of interlinked components” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 36). This approach to learning and lifelong learning promotes a holistic vision of education. UNESCO also promoted a holistic vision in planning.

Learning is a continuous process that begins at birth and continues until old age. Each step has important repercussions on the lives of individuals and societies. Not only does each stage lead learners to acquire new skills and knowledge, but the availability of education at a more advanced level is a significant factor motivating students to complete the level of education in which they are enrolled (UNESCO, 2010*a*, p. 41).

The Organization promoted lifelong learning systems, that should take into account both formal and non-formal education. It is particularly interesting to note a renewed attention to non-formal education. Indeed, UNESCO promoted “flexible learning pathways and innovative means of education provision” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 36), as well as the development of national non-formal education policies, and it has also developed the UNESCO’s Non-formal Education Management Information System (UNESCO, 2010*a*). Non-formal education is also integrated in a biennial sectoral priority “fostering literacy and quality education for all at all levels and through both formal and non-formal lifelong learning” (UNESCO, 2008*b*). In addition, the Organization supported the idea that lifelong learning systems should be “inclusive”: UNESCO “will continue to address education in a holistic manner, by promoting a vision of inclusive lifelong learning that spans each of the different levels of education and considers both formal and non-formal approaches” (UNESCO, 2010*a*, p. 26).

As mentioned before (see § 5.3.4), the activities related to lifelong learning translate this concept into an “educational continuum”. UNESCO has progressively integrated this vision within EFA II. Indeed, the Medium Term Strategy declared that “education for all refers to all levels of education, i.e. from early childhood to higher education” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 16). The two poles of early childhood and higher education are important components of lifelong learning approach of UNESCO. In fact, in these years UNESCO organized two major conferences. One in Moscow in 2010 on early childhood care and another one on Higher Education in 2009, following the important conference held in 1998. Another essential element of lifelong learning is adult education. Adult illiteracy was perceived as a global challenge of the period and UNESCO developed several activities in favour of reducing adult illiteracy rate. Particularly important was the organization in 2009 of the CONFINTEA VI adopting the Belèm Framework For Action. Finally, literacy was strongly promoted by UNESCO as a central component of quality education for all, for which UNESCO performed several activities such as:

- coordination of UNESCO’s Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE); mobilizing political, financial and technical support at international, regional and national levels;
- technical assistance and capacity-building in policy formulation and programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation in selected countries; research-based advocacy for integrating literacy into international initiatives and national policies;

research on the impact of literacy programmes and on quality indicators for literacy programmes; organization of platforms for policy dialogue, networking and exchange of expertise; and implementation of effective monitoring and evaluation systems (UNESCO, 2008b, p. 55).

The promotion of literacy has been done in different ways. UNESCO promoted the idea that literacy is one of the major priorities for the UN (UNESCO, 2008a) as well as a priority for many countries. UNESCO also promoted the concept of a “literate environment” (UNESCO, 2008b) and functional literacy, which is conceived as “a challenge to be faced” (UNESCO, 2010a). In addition, as already mentioned, together with teachers and skills development for the world of work, literacy has been “identified as the building blocks for achieving EFA and the education-related MDGs” (*idem*, p. 26).

5.4.5 Agenda-setting Mechanisms

The five main functions of UNESCO are presented again in this Medium Term Strategy (UNESCO, 2008a) and they can be associated with the agenda-setting mechanisms proposed in this research. The first mechanism remained the most used in terms of number of activities and the goal setting mechanism acquired even higher relevance in this period than the previous one. The activities related to the international education agenda EFA II are presented as overarching objective, strategic priorities, biennial sectoral priorities, as well as main lines of action. In line with the growing trend assessed in the previous period, all the other mechanisms benefitted from the activities performed under goal setting one. Goal setting, standard setting, capacity building and value setting showed in these years great interdependency. Therefore, this period is characterized by the growing interdependence of mechanisms while value setting and goal setting remained the most important.

VALUE SETTING

Exactly as the previous three periods, the value setting mechanism remains the most used. Indeed, UNESCO set and promoted values through different processes and activities. Some of these activities have the promotion of specific values as their ultimate aim (UNESCO, 2008a). Value setting is related to two of the five main functions illustrated by the Medium Term Plan (2008 – 2013), being a laboratory of ideas and a clearing house. In fact, the Organization recognized its role as custodian and repository of knowledge,

and tried to establish an intellectual leadership promoting dialogue and exchange on its field of competencies, functioning as a global intellectual clearing house and a think tank (UNESCO, 2008*b*). Values are diffused through the following five modalities: i) world-wide policy dialogue; ii) research activities; iii) advocacy measures; iv) decades and international conferences; v) and platforms, networks and partnerships.

i) World-wide policy dialogue. This value setting modality, in conjunction with the following one, seems to be the favourite of UNESCO in these years. UNESCO actively promoted policy dialogues with a wide range of actors to discuss educational issues and ideas that it wanted to promote. In fact, UNESCO established intellectual platforms of experts:

Convene intellectual platforms of experts on research findings and policy recommendations to be used to enrich the high-level policy dialogues at the global, regional, subregional and national levels, where UNESCO will organize consultations with a broad range of partners, especially on issues relating to literacy, quality of education, lifelong learning, education for sustainable development, and adult education, including in prisons and correctional facilities (*idem*, p. 18)

UNESCO also supported “global, regional, subregional and national policy platforms (meetings, conferences and forums) informed by research-based evidence on identified priority themes and quality-related processes” (*idem*, p. 37). Promoting policy dialogue and research is one of the Main Lines of Action of the first biennium. Interesting noting that policy dialogue greatly enjoyed from the structures already established for the international education agenda EFA II. In fact, much of the policy dialogue has been carried out with the High Level Forum on EFA and with the Working Groups. Indeed, one of the mandate of UNESCO within EFA II is to maintain the themes and values of EFA II on international and national agendas (UNESCO, 2010*a*). Particularly relevant for the work of UNESCO of these years and of following years is the establishment of links with the broader development agenda through activities for “sharing new education paradigms to guide the global education agenda beyond 2015” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 49).

ii) Research activities. The research activities of UNESCO was always an important component of its programme. However, this period saw a process of emphasize UNESCO’s work in research. Indeed, As a global intellectual clearing house, the

Organization focused on develop a research agenda (UNESCO, 2010a) with a wide range of stakeholders, from its specialized institutes and networks, to the United Nations University (*idem*). As stated:

UNESCO will work with not only its specialized institutes and centres at the global and regional levels, but also with qualified higher academic institutions at the country level in order to conduct research and prepare policy and position papers on selected topics of critical importance related to access and success as well as to the three EFA initiatives – teacher training, literacy, and HIV and AIDS education (UNESCO, 2008b, 33).

These research activities were supported and lead by a new Team within the Education Sector especially focused on future oriented studies:

The establishment of the Education Research and Foresight Team in the Education Sector is one response to this need to strengthen the capacity of UNESCO’s Education Sector as a platform that both mobilizes ideas and knowledge, analyses emerging development trends, anticipates their impact on education, and proposes relevant orientations and recommendations for the future of education (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 48).

The nature of research produced by the Organization in these years varied widely. Beside the well recognized EFA GMR that monitored standards for the achievement of EFA II, the Organization produced a series of policy papers, policy briefs, as well as action oriented research (UNESCO, 2010a). The outcomes of these research activities were disseminated through different channels and modalities such as during the policy *fora*, through the international conferences, through advocacy measures and through the established networks.

iii) Advocacy measures. Like the previous period, UNESCO tried to set values through a wide range of global advocacy measures. These activities have the aim of raising awareness on general public and the development community (UNESCO, 2008b; 2012b). A characteristic of these years is the creation of “an education knowledge management system for staff and Member States alike, with evaluated experiences summarized and available on the Internet in multiple language versions” (UNESCO, 2010a, p. 30). The Organization also developed an *ad hoc* communication and advocacy strategy to better engage with media and the press. Moreover, global advocacy has been performed through the creation of specific partnerships (UNESCO, 2012b) and through the celebration of

certain events. In particular, great attention was given to the literacy prize, the EFA II Global Action Week, the World Teachers' Day, and the celebration of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010 for which UNESCO was mandated to have a leading role. Finally, UNESCO produced and disseminate through different modalities its newsletters (UNESCO, 2010*a*) and the number of research production, such as the EFA GMRs and technical guidelines.

iv) Decades and international conferences. As mentioned, UNESCO organized and participated to various international conferences around education. In addition, it led and created numerous decades and actions plan promoting several concepts and values of education. The outcomes documents of these conferences and meetings are utilized as powerful tools to disseminate a notion of education. Indeed, the biennial sectoral priority of the second biennium is: "Providing global and regional leadership in education, including through the implementation of recommendations of major international education conferences" (*idem*, p. 28). Like the previous periods, the choice of the theme of the conference – when organized by UNESCO – as well as the choice of the conferences in which participate, is already an expression of preferences of values. As well as the activities on a decade instead of another one gives indications on what kind of ideas and educational goals UNESCO envisions. Among the most significant decades, the Organization led the UNLD, UNDESD, and the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Among the most significant conferences, UNESCO organized and participated in the followings:

Table 60: International conferences to which UNESCO contributed 2008 - 2013

Year	Conferences	Main issues and topics
2008	48 th session of the International Conference on Education	Inclusive education
2008	International Conference on Prison Education	Second chance education
2009	International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI)	Adult education
2009	World Conference on Higher Education	Higher education
2009	World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development	Education for Sustainable Development
2010	The World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education	ECCE
2012	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20	Sustainable Development
2012	3 rd UNESCO TVET Congress	TVET

v) Platforms, networks and partnerships. Particularly interesting is noting the channels through which UNESCO tried to establish values. Indeed, the Organization utilized its own set of networks, with the UNITWIN and UNEVOC declining of importance, with the enhancement of attention to the ASPnet, and with the establishment of the MGIEP. However, in these years UNESCO tried to build and create new strategic partnerships for education (UNESCO, 2012*b*). It created partnerships with the World Education Forum and particularly interesting is a position of openness toward the private sector (UNESCO, 2008*b*; 2010*b*). In addition, UNESCO explored networks and platforms such as the G77+China, the well established E-9, the G20, as well as regional organizations such as the African Union (UNESCO, 2008*b*). Finally, it continued its efforts in aligning with the UN systems through the establishment of Inter-Agency committee and platforms, as well as through the UNCCA and the UNDAF.

As it has been previously demonstrated, the values that are set through the value setting mechanism correspond to the values and principles that form and shape the notion of education of UNESCO. Indeed, UNESCO promoted the principles of equity, through its work on inclusive education, the concept of lifelong learning, through the activities on adult and second chance education as well as on ECCE, and the idea of education for sustainable development. Associated to these, UNESCO also promoted the principles of the enabling function of education and the pivotal role and importance of literacy and teachers.

CAPACITY BUILDING

This mechanism entails two sub mechanisms: sharing best practices and provision of technical guidance, assistance and judgement. Both sub mechanisms were used constantly. This mechanism was one of the most used. Like the previous period, many activities have “capacity building” as an expected result. This mechanism responds to the logic of providing “Member States with cutting-edge knowledge on what works” (UNESCO, 2010*b*, p. 41) through global actions on publication of good practices and guidelines for policy. It is important to recognize that capacity building is one of the main functions of UNESCO. UNESCO perceived the relevance of this function/mechanism because there is a need for institutional capacity development:

UNESCO will respond to the recognized need for a global framework and networks for capacity development. In the context of the ongoing efforts to harmonize development aid and cooperation (e.g. the Global Action Plan, EFA-Fast Track Initiative and United Nations reform process), the Organization will initiate a sustained dialogue aiming to coordinate and harmonize, among EFA stakeholders and development partners, country-level capacity development activities in the field of planning and management of education systems (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 30).

As to the activities that constitute the first sub mechanism particularly important are the activities of sharing practices through i) networks and platforms, new or already existing; and ii) research and forward looking debates. Interesting is noting that several of these activities are performed in order to achieve EFA II and that there is a growing link between capacity building, goal setting and standard setting in the domain of education: “as standard-setter for the right to education, UNESCO will develop and promote good practices, policies and legislation in this area” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 18).

i) Networks and platforms. UNESCO has always promoted best practices and during the years, especially during the 1990s, it has created numerous networks and platforms for cooperation. Although the UNITWIN network seems not really exploited (very few activities with it), the Organization aimed to “revitalize the global UNEVOC Networks to improve information sharing and cooperation” (UNESCO, 2010*a*, p. 40). Among the already established network, the ASPnet experienced a growing attention and an expected result of the first biennium linked ASPnet to information sharing activities: “Number of reports on knowledge-sharing/capacity-building sessions on ASPnet with field office staff and Member States” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 40). Best practices sharing, like previous periods, was also performed in the *fora* and initiatives established for the EFA II coordination, such as the High Level Forum, the Working groups, the CCNGO/EFA, the E-9 and so on. New modalities of sharing best practices are preformed through the creation of “communities of interests” or common online platforms provided by the new Knowledge Management Systems team. Moreover, UNESCO strongly supported the establishment of South-south and triangular cooperation for the exchange of effective practices in EFA II. Particularly relevant in this sense was the G77+China.

ii) Research and forward looking debate. Research and forward looking debates are perceived by UNESCO as effective tools to setting values through the promotion of policy

dialogues. However, these policy dialogues informed by research are also powerful modalities to promote “what works” and to showcase innovative approaches in the field of education. Moreover, UNESCO established the Education Research and Foresight Team in the Education Sector as a “platform that both mobilizes ideas and knowledge, analyses emerging development trends, anticipates their impact on education, and proposes relevant orientations and recommendations for the future of education” in order to “catalyse critical debate, creative thinking and knowledge-sharing in education” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, pp. 48-49). Finally, the Organization aimed at sharing best practices through the creation of Member States’ professional teams, developing their skills and providing them with training on good practices for education management (*idem*).

As to the technical advice sub mechanism, UNESCO performed activities in three directions: i) policy papers and policy review; ii) support for existing structures and centres; and iii) training. It basically aimed at reinforcing institutional capacities.

i) UNESCO mobilized its intellectual expertise to produce a number of policy research, policy briefs, tools and guidelines to inform policymakers. These activities constituted the main capacity building function of UNESCO in these years. Technical advice was provided in order to support institutional capacities or a variety of goals. Indeed, capacity building through technical advice is performed to integrate recommendations and conventions in national legal frameworks, to enhance the planning and management of education systems (UNESCO, 2008*b*), to create national strategies for the implementation of EFA II and UNDESD (UNESCO, 2010*a*), or to cope with the challenges of re-establishing and education systems in post conflict countries (UNESCO, 2008*b*). However, these policy guidelines and advices were mainly related to EFA II: the Organization provided “capacity development and technical support to assist national efforts in achieving the Dakar goals” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 41). The Organization also performed education sector policy review at request of countries (UNESCO, 2012*b*).

ii) Technical advice was also provided through already established structures, institutes and mechanisms of cooperation. UNESCO’s Category 1 institutes have all capacity building functions. In particular the newly established MGIEP and the IIEP. UNESCO strengthened the CapEFA programme and developed the Education Management Information System portal for ministers’ officials. Moreover, the Organization produced

an internal capacity development strategy paper (UNESCO, 2010*a*) in order to harmonize its actions and activities in the field of capacity development. In addition, UNESCO began the experience of the UNESS and worked closely with the UN in drafting the UNDAFs and UNCCA.

iii) Finally, capacity building is performed through the organization of training initiatives. In particular the IIEP is specialized in this field. It helped Member States official and national staff in data collection and analysis (UNESCO, 2010*b*). Other centres of UNESCO organized training initiatives. Among the most important are the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa, and the IICBA.

GOAL SETTING

This mechanism of agenda-setting in a way is related to the fifth main function of UNESCO of acting as a catalyst for international cooperation (UNESCO, 2008*a*). Goal setting saw a growing recognition of its importance. Like the previous period, the cross programmatic relevance of this mechanism is high, and in these years the activities and programmes related to it increased. All the other mechanisms enjoyed and used the structures and the content produced by the results of the goal setting mechanism, and this cross programmatic strategic importance is growingly recognized: there is an effort of integrating goal setting with the other global governance functions.

Moreover, particularly interesting is noting that UNESCO is more aware of the relevance of goal setting as an agenda-setting mechanism. In fact, UNESCO expressed that: “EFA coordination efforts have attempted to influence the agenda-setting exercises of influential international meetings. That a number of declarations of major global events such as the G8 Summits, and the 2005 MDG Summit, included language on EFA-related issues is evidence of some degree of achievement” (UNESCO, 2010*c*, p. 11).

As the previous period has demonstrated, the goals set were used to vehicle specific values, ideas and concepts; best practices sharing activities are performed within the structures of EFA II; capacity building and technical works are performed to enhance capacities to achieve the goals established; benchmarks and indicators are developed to monitor EFA II and other decades and framework for actions; and the financial leveraging activities of UNESCO involved a cooperation with the EFA-FTI (later called GPE), the

structure built in favour of EFA II. An example of these linkages can be found in the first biennium in which the goal setting, the standard setting, and the capacity building mechanisms are mutually reinforcing:

Performance indicator: Policy paper on capacity development in educational planning and management (EPM) for achieving EFA prepared and disseminated. [...] The Organization's first international treaty instrument, the Convention against Discrimination in Education, lies at the heart of the EFA goals. Indeed, it proscribes any form of discrimination and seeks to promote the right to education for all. [...] UNESCO will continue to promote, monitor and provide technical assistance in implementing its standard-setting instruments, including recommendations, declarations, guidelines and frameworks for action. (UNESCO, 2008*b*, pp. 32 - 34).

Similarly to the previous period, activities of goals setting are performed in three directions: i) the ever-growing importance of EFA II in UNESCO's programming in innovative ways; ii) the alignment with the broader UN goals and building the post 2015 agenda; and iii) the leading of different decades and action plans.

i) EFA II, together with the MDGs, is clearly the priority of the Organization and shaped UNESCO's programming. As the newly elected Director-General Irina Bokova stated in the introduction of the first biennium (*idem*, p. i): EFA II "is our Organization's first priority [and] maintaining global momentum is imperative. UNESCO must and will pursue its role more vigorously – both as global coordinator and advocate, as envisaged in the EFA Global Action Plan, and in terms of the technical assistance we provide at country level". This prominence of EFA II is also assessed in the Medium Term Strategy specifying that actions of UNESCO aimed principally at meeting the major goals and international commitments, such as EFA II and UNESCO's strategies, approaches and modalities of action should be in line with the six goals of the EFA II (UNESCO, 2008*a*). It can be then seen that there is a sort of EFA II mainstreaming in UNESCO's work. The overarching objective and the strategic programme objectives of the Medium Term Strategy, as well as the Biennial Sectoral Priorities and the Main Lines of Action of each of the Programme and Budget have to do with EFA II and/or quality basic education for all (the content of EFA II).

Table 61: Overarching objective, strategic programme objective and biennial sectoral priorities related to EFA II

Overarching objective 1: Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning		
Strategic programme objective 1: Strengthening UNESCO's global lead and coordination role for EFA and providing support to national leadership in favour of EFA		
Strategic programme objective 2: Developing policies, capacities and tools for quality education for all and lifelong learning as well as promoting education for sustainable development		
34 C/5	35 C/5	36 C/5
Biennial Sectoral Priority 1: Leading education for all (EFA) by ensuring global coordination and providing assistance to Member States to achieve the EFA goals and education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) based on the Global Action Plan (GAP).	Biennial Sectoral Priority 1: Supporting the achievement of Education for All (EFA).	Biennial Sectoral Priority 2: Strengthening global leadership in education
Main Line of Action 1: Global leadership in EFA, coordination of United Nations priorities in education, and development of strong partnerships. Main Line of Action 4: Provide capacity development and technical support to assist national efforts in achieving the Dakar Goals	Main Line of Action 1: Building blocks for EFA: literacy, teachers and work skills. Main Line of Action 4: Leading the international education agenda, including education for sustainable development (ESD) and tracking trends	Main Line of Action 1: Accelerating progress towards EFA, in particular at the country level Main Line of Action 4: Reinforcing leadership for EFA through advocacy, partnerships and monitoring

As the main lines of action explicit, the goal setting activities on EFA II are performed at two levels. On the one hand at the global level. Like the previous period, UNESCO aimed at ensuring and reinforcing its global leadership in EFA II. In particular through the coordination of partners and stakeholders at the global level:

UNESCO will ensure global leadership and coordination of EFA and assist national leadership to achieve the goals of EFA, including the education-related MDGs. It will

pursue vigorously its mandated role in coordinating partners, including the four other EFA convening United Nations agencies – UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank – as well as other United Nations entities, international organizations, governments and bilateral donors, NGOs and the private sector, in order to maintain their collaborative momentum towards the attainment of these goals (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 16).

On the other hand at the national level. UNESCO tried to coordinate partners not only at global level but also at the national levels. The Organization also tried to mobilize its technical expertise to help countries integrate EFA II goals within national plans. Particularly significant in this sense is the collaboration with the UN system in the development of the UNCCA. This alignment and harmonization of efforts was a result of a long process that started with the global mapping of 2005 and the Global Action Plan developed in 2007 (see § 4.2.3).

Particularly interesting is noting that UNESCO tried to build new partnerships and networks in support of the ongoing activities in favour of EFA II. These new partnerships at different levels assisted the already existing structures and modalities of action (High Level Group, Working Group, EFA-FTI, Global Action Plan, E-9 Initiative, EFA Flagship Initiatives) that would also be reformed. Among the networks mobilized there are the Task Force on “Teachers for EFA” (UNESCO, 2010a), the G77+China and the regional networks and organizations such as the African Union, the ALECSO, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The G-77+China [...] will continue to be UNESCO’s trusted and active partners in the international community’s endeavour to achieve the EFA goals, as they provide the platforms for building consensus on priority issues in education and fostering partnerships among all regions of the world, particularly between developing countries (UNESCO, 2008b, p. 29).

ii) UN Agenda. The effort began in the previous period to align the work of UNESCO to the overall processes of the UN continues in these years. Indeed, several activities were performed in order to harmonize efforts at global and national levels to achieve common goals and priorities, and specifically “to increase effective cooperation and avoid overlap” (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 46). In particular, UNESCO worked closely with other UN agencies through “common country programming approaches, including in UNDAFs, and regional

coordination mechanisms including the Education and Human Resources Sub-Cluster of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), the Regional Directors' Team (RDT) and UN Country Teams" (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 27).

Finally, UNESCO aimed at ensuring stronger linkages between the EFA II global coordination and the broader global development processes. In fact, this was one of the strategic direction toward which UNESCO decided to move after the "Strategic Review" of 2004. These activities are performed in order to better position EFA II on the broader political and development agenda and in order to start to be involved to the post 2015 process (UNESCO, 2012*b*). Indeed, one of the activities of value setting was to "share new education paradigms to guide the global education agenda beyond 2015" (*idem*, p. 49) through the establishment of a forward looking team and an Bureau of Strategic Planning. The Organization thus participated in the global debates on education beyond 2015.

iii) Leading numerous agendas. UNESCO in these years led and participated in several decades, initiatives and agendas that have goals and targets. Indeed, the fourth main line of action of the third biennium said that the Organization should lead international education agenda, but not uniquely the EFA II. Through this MLA, UNESCO aimed at coordinate international partners to bring governments together to take decisions on major international policy issues in education. In particular, beyond EFA II and MDGs, UNESCO worked on the following international agendas: UNLD; LIFE; UNDESD; UN Rio + 20; Brussel Programme of Action on LDCs; Mauritius Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS; Strategic Framework for UNAIDS Support to Countries' Efforts to Move towards Universal Access; Kigali Call for Action; EDUCAIDS; Second Decade for Education in Africa; Accra Action Agenda; UNGEI; Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace related to the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World; World Programme for Human Rights Education; Belem Framework for Action- CONFINTEA VI; Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation- World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education.

STANDARD SETTING

Although the standard setting mechanism is recognized as one of the five main function of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2008a), the attention to this mechanism slightly declined from the previous periods. In fact, the conceptual relevance of this mechanism is high but the activities that explicitly entail standard setting are less numerous than previous years. As mentioned, standard setting comprises two sub mechanisms: normative actions, and benchmarks and data production. Like previous years, this mechanism focused mainly, but not uniquely, on activities of standard setting in relation to EFA II. In one of the biennia UNESCO specifically stated that it “will continue to promote, monitor and provide technical assistance in implementing its standard-setting instruments, including recommendations, declarations, guidelines and frameworks for action” (UNESCO, 2008b, p. 34). The standard setting function of UNESCO seems to entail several activities that belong to other agenda-setting mechanism. Indeed, capacity building and value setting activities are strongly related to the standard setting function of the Organization. For example, a UNESCO’s programmatic document reported “as standard setter for the right to education, UNESCO will develop and promote good practices, policies and legislation in this area” (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 19). Hence, it is interesting noting that best practices sharing is entailed as a standard setting activity.

A little bit differently from previous periods, UNESCO’s work in normative actions can be divided in three segments: i) the provision of technical assistance to countries; ii) follow-up and revision of existing standards; and iii) ratification campaigns in cooperation with the UN system.

i) As previously mentioned, UNESCO in these years performed numerous activities that can be related both to the standard setting and to the capacity building. Indeed, the Organization provided its technical expertise to countries in order to develop national capacity to integrate the recommendations and conventions within national policies. It assisted countries “in establishing legal frameworks at the national level and in networking to ensure the implementation of standard-setting instruments” (UNESCO, 2008b, p. 20). UNESCO concentrated its work around support for policy development towards the enforcement of the right to education through technical assistance in translating international obligations into national legislation (UNESCO, 2012b).

ii) Like the previous periods, UNESCO followed up and revised existing conventions. In particular, UNESCO worked on the following ones: the Convention Against Discrimination in Education; the Convention and Revised Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education; the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers; the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel; the six Regional Conventions and the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education.

iii) Finally, UNESCO in these years, in its efforts to create closer links with the UN processes, worked together with the Joint Expert Group UNESCO (CR)/ ECOSOC on the Monitoring of the Right to Education and the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. In particular, this strengthened collaboration aim at “monitoring mechanisms reinforced along with a ratification campaign” (UNESCO, 2010a, p. 51). UNESCO thus promoted widely and disseminated information on the existing normative instruments. Indeed, an expected result of the second biennium is having “Member States aware of the normative instruments in education and actively reporting on their implementation” (*idem*). Particularly interesting is seeing a new collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education in “support for policy developments towards the enforcement of the right to education including technical assistance for translating international obligations into national legislation and monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO normative instruments” (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 31)

As to the benchmarks production, UNESCO recognized its role as global benchmarking organization. Indeed, in the Medium term Strategy it clearly stated that:

Global benchmarking and monitoring: In its role as a global benchmarking and monitoring organization, UNESCO supports the formulation and implementation of evidence-based policies by Member States. The Organization will pursue these efforts through the work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (which, inter alia, serves as global scorekeeper of the education-related MDGs) and through several flagship publications on policy development. (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 18)

Differently from the previous period, UNESCO worked in three directions: i) indicators development; ii) research and assessment; and iii) technical assistance.

i) Indicators development was a kind of activities that always characterized UNESCO's work in education from the '90s. In particular, UNESCO aimed at reinforcing the capacities of UIS database. Mainly, the data and benchmarks in education are related to the EFA II agenda. Indeed, UNESCO developed the EFA Development Index (EDI). Among the other indicators produced there are the holistic child development index (UNESCO, 2012*b*) and the education for sustainable development indicators (UNESCO, 2010*a*).

ii) Research and assessment. Benchmarking at the global level is mainly mandated to the GMR. Indeed, "monitoring is a critical tool for measuring commitment and improving accountability. In 2012-2013, UNESCO will continue to monitor progress towards the six EFA goals through the annual publication of the EFA Global Monitoring Report" (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 46). GMR and other research production aimed at establishing standards for EFA II but also for the post 2015 agenda (*idem*). The GMR publication, and the monitoring function of UNESCO, is also performed through the promotion of country assessments for the end of decade, and supported measurement of learning assessments at country level. Moreover, an expected result of the second biennium explicitly aimed at "global and regional progress in EFA monitored and education trends identified through applied research and the publication of studies and reports such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report" (UNESCO, 2010*a*).

iii) These measurements at country level are supported by technical assistance activities. For example, UNESCO improved national literacy policies "by bringing solid technical assistance to countries in assessing and monitoring national literacy levels, particularly through the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme" (UNESCO, 2010*a*, p. 38). A series of technical assistance work has been performed to increase national capacities in collecting and analysing data (UNESCO, 2008*b*).

FINANCIAL LEVERAGING

This mechanism of agenda-setting is still not of great relevance for UNESCO's programming, which is consistent with the previous three periods. The modalities of engagement in financial leveraging are similar to the previous period. In fact, UNESCO performed activities on financial leveraging that can be clustered within three modalities:

i) intellectual and technical contribution to global structures of donors; ii) high level advocacy for funds mobilization; and iii) technical assistance to mobilize resources.

i) Intellectual and technical contribution to global structures of donors. The most important activities related to financial leveraging is the participation and an increased role in the EFA-FTI. The partnership with the EFA-FTI goes back to the beginning and the creation of this multistakeholder partnership. In particular, the Medium Term Plan aimed at growingly playing “an active role within the EFA-FTI and other funding initiatives” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 18). In 2012 the EFA-FTI will be also reformed, becoming the GPE and UNESCO supported and contributed to this reform. Furthermore, UNESCO tried to increase its role “in global processes and donor coordination frameworks [...] paying special attention to new and emerging donors in support of EFA” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 46). The coordination of donors toward EFA II was thus the major kind of activities performed within the financial leveraging mechanism.

ii) Like the previous period, associated to the participation at the EFA-FTI, UNESCO’s activities were focused on high level advocacy for the mobilization of funds both at the national level and among donors. In particular, UNESCO tried to mobilized extra budgetary funds from the South-South Cooperation Fund in Education established in 2007, advocating during the Group of 77 and China meetings (UNESCO, 2010*a*). At the country level, UNESCO strongly advocated for prioritization of education among governments budget. Indeed, an expected result of UNESCO is a significant increase in the financial resources available or pledged to education by national governments (UNESCO, 2008*b*). Particularly interesting are the activities related to debts swaps (UNESCO, 2010*a*) and in promotion of the UNLD Fund to Advance Global Literacy (UNESCO, 2010*a*).

iii) Finally, UNESCO provided technical support to countries for the effective use of financial resources. Indeed, an expected result of the first biennium suggests that the UNESCO’s support aimed at increase national budget for education: “Number of countries having increased their national budgets for EFA as a result of UNESCO support to the planning process” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 31). Moreover, UNESCO provided support for government counterparts on donor coordination and fundraising.

5.4.6 Budget

The analysis of the budget reveals that the Organization experienced a nominal growth from the first to the second biennium. As the Director-General explained: “while the US \$22 million nominal increase represents an overall 3.5% growth over the 34 C/5, it does not represent a real growth budget, when taking into account all statutory and inflationary factors” (UNESCO, 2010a, p. i). Particularly important was the steady increase in the extra budgetary resources that reached in the third biennium almost 541 millions from the 358 of the first biennium.

Table 62: Total budget fourth period biennia

	Regular Budget	Extra Budget	Total Budget	% increase
2008 – 2009	631.000.000	358.334.700	989.334.700	-2,89
2010 – 2011	653.000.000	462.751.400	1.115.751.400	12,78
2012 – 2013	653.000.000	540.844.100	1.193.844.100	7,00

The *share* of total budget allocated to Part II raised constantly, reaching in 2012-2013 its historical maximum since 1990. The share of total budget allocated to Part II raised from 67 % (which constituted a net decline from the 74.8% of 2006-2007 budget) to 76 % in the period.

Table 63: Total budget programme fourth period biennia

	Regular Budget Programme	Extra Budget Programme	Total Budget Programme	% of Total Budget
2008 – 2009	332.235.600	335.101.500	667.337.100	67
2010 – 2011	359.489.500	430.168.400	789.657.900	70,77
2012 – 2013	392.716.000	512.955.700	905.671.700	76

As to the budget allocated to Major Programme Education, it is possible to see that education received less share of budget compared to previous periods. It therefore constitutes a third decline in a row. Although the percentage of programme budget allocated to education decreased from 30 % of previous budget to 26 %, education remained the top priority of the Organization. However, in absolute terms, the total budget for education of the third biennium (the highest in the period) of 232.969.800 USD exceeded the 230,755,800 USD of biennium 2006 – 2007 but it not reached the 243,547,500 USD of biennium 2000 – 2001.

Interesting is noting that the extrabudget to education from the second to the third biennium almost doubled and that it constitutes half of the increased in the total extrabudget.

Table 64: Total budget education fourth period biennia

	Regular Budget Education	Extra budget Education	Total Budget Education	% of total programme
2008 – 2009	108.468.300	68.582.200	177.050.500	27
2010 – 2011	118.535.700	62.008.300	180.544.000	23
2012 – 2013	115.421.300	117.548.500	232.969.800	26

Looking in depth at the Programme and Budget of the Education Sector (see tables 65; 66; 67), it is possible to appreciate a diversified ways of reporting programme. In this version of reporting, there is a budget column only for Main Lines of Action and not for expected results or performance indicators. Despite this limited information and data, it is possible to infer that some areas of work deserved prioritization and that there is continuity from the previous periods.

Table 65: Education programme and budget 2008 - 2009

34 C/5 Education	Budget	Extrabudget
1. Global leadership in EFA, coordination of United Nations priorities in education, and development of strong partnerships	17.286.400	11.979.300
The EFA Global Action Plan implemented.		
Coordinated, harmonized and effective partnerships pursued within the framework of the EFA Global Action Plan for strengthened political commitment at the global, regional and national levels for the EFA agenda.		
Significant number of countries with national education plans and policies that reflect a strong political commitment to EFA and include literacy as a priority in the national plan		
Significant increase in the financial resources available or pledged to education by national governments as well as by EFA partners.		
South-South and North-South collaboration on and exchanges of effective practices in EFA enhanced, and educational networks among developing countries strengthened.		
2. Development of a global framework and networks for capacity development in planning and management of education systems	17.868.200	9.245.300
Common approaches to capacity development in educational policy formulation and in planning, monitoring and evaluation of education systems proposed and shared with EFA stakeholders and development partners for implementation		

	Member States provided with the expertise, technical approaches, practice oriented tools, and best practices and innovations in educational policy formulation and in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of education systems identified and made available through networks and communities of practice		
	National capacities strengthened in educational planning and management.		
	Capacity requirements and constraints documented in educational planning management (EPM).		
	Education stakeholders informed of significant developments in EPM.		
3. Promote policy dialogue, research, set norms and standards		21.078.100	4.100.500
	Global monitoring report published and national and regional reports launched		
	Accessibility provided for key stakeholders and the general public to cutting-edge research, latest orientations, innovations and effective practices in education, including the use of technologies in education		
	Global, regional, subregional and national policy platforms (meetings, conferences and forums) informed by research-based evidence on identified priority themes and quality-related processes		
	Member States' capacities enhanced in analysing and monitoring learning achievement through regional networks.		
	Standard-setting instruments in the field of education reviewed and effectively promoted and monitored.		
	National educational policies linked with strategies for ICT applications formulated.		
	Enhanced and increased commitment to, greater visibility of, and political and financial support for adult education achieved through CONFINTEA VI		
	International policy dialogue on educational policies intensified and broadened through the International Conference on Education		
	Increased research on recruitment, training, retention and welfare of teachers conducted in a selected number of sub-Saharan African countries, with a focus on countries participating in the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA).		
	Access for Member States in the Latin America and the Caribbean region to high-quality information, knowledge and statistical data on orientations and best practices of higher education.		
	Improved management capacities of university systems in the Latin America and the Caribbean region through development and institutionalization of practices and mechanisms of evaluation and accreditation.		
4. Provide capacity development and technical support to assist national efforts in achieving the Dakar Goals		34.944.600	42.757.100
	Capacities of Member States developed for policy formulation, planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of education systems in both formal and non-formal education, as well as for the reform and revitalization of critical sub-sectors such as secondary, TVE, teacher education and training, education in prisons and correctional facilities, and higher education		
	Capacity for teacher education enhanced in all regions in need.		

	Enhanced and increased commitment, greater visibility of, and political and financial support for literacy, especially in LIFE countries, achieved through the six regional literacy conferences		
	National policies, plans and practices reviewed, revised and developed to improve the quality and sustainability of both formal and non-formal education at all levels to provide lifelong learning at the request of Member States		
	Regular and systematic cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU) established.		
	Policy dialogue and capacity-building to formulate national and regional research strategies and plans in the area of higher education integrated into United Nations common country programming exercises		
	National policies, plans and practices reviewed, revised and developed in literacy and life-skills development, teacher education and training as well as in HIV and AIDS education, through the implementation at the country level of the frameworks for the three core EFA initiatives – LIFE, TTISSA and EDUCAIDS – at the request of Member States		
	Enhanced quality teaching and learning materials developed with regard to teacher education, peace education, education for citizenship and democratic values, education for sustainable development, science and technology education, arts education and philosophy, as well as the mainstreaming of gender, HIV prevention and the use of ICTs		
	ASPnet worldwide strengthened as an efficiently coordinated network and as a vital resource to ensure quality education		
	Capacities of Member States enhanced in educational planning and management as well as in the mobilization of funds in support of national priorities through harmonization of EFA partners		
	Capacities for policy formulation and programme delivery in literacy in Member States increased, especially in LIFE countries		
	Capacities of ministries of education and teacher education and training institutions strengthened in a selected number of sub-Saharan African countries		
Institutes		17.291.000	500.000

Table 66: Education programme and budget 2010 - 2011

35 C/5 Education	Budget	Extrabudget
1. Building blocks for EFA: literacy, teachers and work skills	<u>31.895.500</u>	<u>17.136.700</u>
National capacities strengthened to plan, implement and manage quality literacy programmes, particularly through LIFE, building on an enhanced international coordination role of UNESCO for the UNLD		
National capacities strengthened to train and retain quality teachers, particularly through TTISSA in Africa		
TVET systems reformed and strengthened and capacity of Member States developed to equip youth and adults with knowledge, competences and skills for the world of work		

2. Building effective education systems from early childhood care and education to higher education, and furthering lifelong learning	<u>26.554.500</u>	<u>4.127.100</u>
National capacities strengthened in developing policies for early childhood care and education		
National capacities strengthened to plan, implement and manage basic education, mainly in Africa		
Secondary education systems renewed, in particular and as appropriate through curricular reform and improved learning assessment of students		
National capacities strengthened in higher education policy formulation and reform, promotion of research and quality assurance		
3. Sector-wide frameworks: helping governments to plan and manage the education sector	<u>29.415.500</u>	<u>15.216.500</u>
National capacities strengthened to prepare, implement and manage sector-wide education plans and inclusive policies, including for post-conflict and post-disaster situations		
National capacities developed to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into education sector policies and plans as part of global efforts to strengthen ESD		
National capacities strengthened to develop comprehensive education sector responses to HIV and AIDS through EDUCAIDS and related efforts		
4. Leading the international education agenda, including education for sustainable development (ESD) and tracking trends	<u>13.170.200</u>	<u>25.528.000</u>
Political and financial commitment mobilized to achieve the EFA goals through strengthened coordinated action of EFA partners and continued support to the regional initiatives/networks that serve as policy platforms		
Global and regional progress in EFA monitored and education trends identified through applied research and the publication of studies and reports such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report		
International coordination and partnership in support of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) strengthened and the Bonn Declaration of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development followed up		
Member States aware of the normative instruments in education and actively reporting on their implementation		
Institutes	<u>17.500.000</u>	<u>-</u>

Table 67: Education programme and budget 2012 - 2013

36 C/5 Education	Budget	Extrabudget
1. Accelerating progress towards EFA, in particular at the country level	<u>52.558.900</u>	<u>41.993.400</u>
National capacities strengthened for policy formulation and planning focusing on promoting the right to quality education and gender equality, and drawing on information and communication technologies		

	National capacities strengthened to plan, manage and scale up gender-sensitive, quality literacy and non-formal education policies and programmes		
	National capacities strengthened to develop and implement teacher policies, with particular emphasis on quality and gender issues		
	Capacities in Member States strengthened and comprehensive and evidence-based policies for technical and vocational education and training developed, and assistance provided for their implementation		
2. Building quality and inclusive education systems		<u>16.598.000</u>	<u>37.967.900</u>
	Basic education, including early childhood care and education, policies, programmes and practices improved in Member States, strengthening quality, equity, inclusion and gender equality		
	Capacities in Member States strengthened to ensure more equitable access to quality higher education and research, including through innovative modes of provision		
3. Supporting education system responses to contemporary challenges for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence		<u>13.150.700</u>	<u>31.138.800</u>
	Capacities in Member States strengthened to integrate a holistic vision of education for sustainable development, including climate change education and education for disaster preparedness and risk reduction, into educational policies, and development plans and programmes		
	Good quality comprehensive HIV and sexuality education delivered by Member States, promoting healthy lifestyles, gender equality and human rights		
	Education for global citizenship, with emphasis on universal values based on peace, mutual understanding and respect for human dignity, integrated into education policies, plans and programmes		
4. Reinforcing leadership for EFA through advocacy, partnerships and monitoring		<u>14.613.700</u>	<u>6.448.400</u>
	Political and financial commitment mobilized at the global, regional and national levels towards the achievement of EFA and monitoring mechanisms of EFA strengthened		
	Global and national commitment to education for girls and women strengthened through advocacy and appropriate multistakeholder partnerships which are in conformity with the objectives of the Organization		
	Education stakeholders informed through research and foresight studies on emerging trends and challenges in education		
Institutes		<u>18.500.000</u>	<u>-</u>

It can be inferred that EFA II and the work toward EFA II was central for UNESCO's programming and it received greater attention in terms of budget. Indeed, activities around EFA II had two Main Lines of Action in each of the biennia specifically related to the coordination role of UNESCO at the global level and to the implementation of EFA II at country level. Hence, it is reinforced what has been done in the previous period of having a separate budget chapter for the coordination of EFA II at the global level.

Therefore, like the previous period, the six goals of Dakar shaped UNESCO's programming and budget allocation.

Another priority in terms of budget seems to be the activities around policy and capacity development. As the third biennium shows, the work related to the implementation of EFA II at the country level (Accelerating progress towards EFA, in particular at the country level), which received by far budget prioritization (almost 50 % of education budget), was mainly related to activities of capacity building and enhancing institutional capacities.

Interesting is noting that the attention on and importance of education for sustainable development grew steadily within these biennia. In fact, during the first biennium education for sustainable development was just mentioned in an expected result; during the second biennium it was entailed in a Main Line of Action but related to the coordination of international agendas (specifically UNDESD); while in the third biennium it received a Main Line of Action (Supporting education system responses to contemporary challenges for sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence) and a budget line with three expected results. Therefore, it can be seen that the budget allocation also reflected the importance and relevance of specific themes that constitute the notion of education of UNESCO for that period. This is also witnessed by the presence within Main Lines of Action of other themes and concepts such as education for peace, inclusive education, lifelong learning, literacy, teachers, and work skills.

As to the changes from the previous years, contrarily to the previous period, there are no mentions to issues of building knowledge societies, and quality education is more incorporated in the mainstream work on EFA II rather than having a separate budget line. Moreover, lifelong learning received in these years budget prioritization with the second Main Line of Action of the second biennium "building effective education systems from early childhood care and education to higher education, and furthering lifelong learning" (UNESCO, 2010a). The number of expected results that cover the educational continuum from ECCE to adult education can also witness this process of prioritization.

5.4.7 Synthesis and Changes

This period was marked by several changes in the economic, social and political domains. Particularly important for the work of UNESCO were also the endogenous changes at the level of UN and the internal restructuring. At the UN level, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon took on his position in 2006, while in 2008 the Bulgarian Irina Bokova became Director-General of UNESCO who carried on the reform process of UNESCO - began with her predecessor - and brought forth a “new humanism” agenda. ‘Reform’ was a key element of these years and several reforms were conducted in many aspects of UN and UNESCO’s activities. The Organization strongly perceived the need for harmonization of international cooperation structures and aid (UNESCO, 2008a). For this reason, UNESCO reformed its working modalities in EFA II (through the reforms of the coordination mechanisms of EFA II) and it tried to align itself as much as possible with the broader UN development processes through the participation in the joint activities such as the UNDAFs, UNCCAs, and the delivery as one project. Moreover, during the last biennium, UNESCO was actively engaged in the development of shaping the post 2015 scenario. This alignment with the international development process was in line with what was done during the previous period. In addition, UNESCO contributed to the reform process of the UN systems as the Medium Term Strategy outlined:

United Nations reform: The reform process, upon which the United Nations has embarked since the 2005 World Summit, is the other driver affecting UNESCO’s action at the country, regional and global levels. The relevance and impact of all United Nations system organizations, including UNESCO, will increasingly be judged by Member States as to results orientation, impact and capacity to deliver. The Organization will engage in and contribute to the success of the United Nations reform process – especially at the country level –, while preserving its lead role in its fields of competence as a specialized agency at all levels, both in normative as well as in operational functions (*idem*, p, 13).

Although the “season” of MDGs and EFA II was ending, these two international development and education agendas were still perceived as the most important and relevant for the work of the Organization. However, several other important international agendas contributed to shaping UNESCO’s work. In particular, UNESCO was designated by the UNGA as lead United Nations agency for a number of UN decades, among these

there are the UNLD (2003-2012), the UNDESD (2005- 2014) and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010).

The thrust toward harmonization was reflected also in the global challenges perceived, in the notion of education, and through the agenda-setting mechanisms and activities. Indeed, it can be seen a sort of concentration of efforts toward less and more specific challenges and values building from previous reflections. Regarding the global challenges and the notion of education it can be seen that rather than having great changes there are similar macro categories more nuanced. In particular, there is no longer mentions to the knowledge societies, nor to globalization except for some contextual remarks. In terms of agenda-setting mechanisms and activities, this period is very much in line with the trends of the previous one: some of the processes of prioritization of the third period were carried on and accomplished during this one.

Indeed, in this period UNESCO perceived five global challenges: sustainable human development, peace, inequalities, quality basic education for all, and education systems; and it has promoted values concepts and principles that can be related to five macro categories: humanistic vision, equity and human rights, quality, literacy and lifelong learning, and the enabling function of education. As to the agenda-setting mechanism, value setting remained the most used in terms of number of activities and the goal setting mechanism acquired even higher relevance in this period than the previous one. However, the most interesting trend is seeing a growing interdependence between all agenda-setting mechanisms. Indeed, the international education agenda EFA II serves as bases for both value setting, capacity building, standard setting and financial leveraging. Policy guidelines and advice were mainly related to EFA II: the Organization provided capacity development and technical support to assist national efforts in achieving the Dakar goals. Moreover, it can be seen a growing link between capacity building, goal setting and standard setting in the domain of education: “as standard-setter for the right to education, UNESCO will develop and promote good practices, policies and legislation in this area” (UNESCO, 2008a, p. 18).

Among the most important global challenges and priorities of this period were sustainable development and quality basic education for all. Sustainable human development was

conceived as a global challenge of humanity and several activities are related to this issue. As the mission statement explained “as a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information” (*idem*, p. 7). In order to face the challenges of sustainability and climate change, UNESCO strongly supported and advocated for the concept of education for sustainable development. Indeed, education for sustainable development concept constituted the theme of UNDESD which UNESCO continued to lead and it was at the centre of several activities of value setting. With “a humanist agenda”, the development that UNESCO wanted to promote was people centred and sustainable. The prioritization of education for sustainable development was also evident in terms of budget analysis. Indeed, attention on and importance of education for sustainable development grew steadily within these biennia so that in the third biennium education for sustainable development reached the “Main Line of Action” level and a budget line.

Closely related to the new humanism brought forth by the Director-General, UNESCO also promoted the ideas associated with education for peace. In fact, education for peace and education for global citizenship were two important concepts that were developed and integrated in UNESCO’s activities. Peace is at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate and it is recalled at the beginning of the Medium Term Strategy: “The vision articulated in the preamble of the Constitution to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men remains a paramount endeavour of the Organization” (*ibidem*) and that “education for peace is a primordial task for UNESCO related to its mission” (*idem*, p. 18). It is important to highlight that UNESCO affirmed that the thrust toward peace should be sustained by sustainable development and human rights, which constitute the “mutually supporting pillars of peace” (*idem*, p. 7). Peace was conceived as a global challenge and for UNESCO much of the challenges related to peace lays on the capacity to live together. This attention to the forth pillar of Delors is emphasized through the development of the notion of education for global citizenship. This powerful idea not only was integrated as a specific goal of GEFII, but also it constituted one of the basis for the global consultations for the post 2015 agenda. Indeed, UNESCO, with the creation of the Knowledge Management

System and the Education Research and Foresight Team aimed at “sharing new education paradigms to guide the global education agenda beyond 2015” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 49).

Quality basic education for all was clearly the other priority for UNESCO of these years. Indeed, not only it constituted a global challenge, but also it is the ultimate content of EFA II which was the overarching objective of the period. In fact, the overarching objective of the period was “attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning”. As presented, the work related to EFA II and in general related to the content of EFA II (quality basic education for all) has an extremely cross programmatic importance. There was a sort of EFA II mainstreaming in programming: the overarching objective and the strategic programme objectives of the Medium Term Strategy, as well as the Biennial Sectoral Priorities and the Main Lines of Action of each of the Programme and Budget have to do with EFA II and/or quality basic education for all. As mentioned, this period saw an integration and interdependence of agenda-setting mechanisms, and goal setting (particularly related to EFA II) was of central importance. Indeed, EFA II content and structures were used to promote values, ideas and concepts of basic education, quality education and inclusion; best practices sharing activities were made within the High Level Forum and Working Groups; technical advices were performed to enhance capacities to achieve the six Dakar goals; benchmarks and indicators were developed to monitor EFA II; and the financial leveraging activities of UNESCO basically are related to the EFA-FTI.

The challenges of quality basic education for all are related universal access to education with a numerous out of school children and high drop outs rates. Associated to it there are challenges related to education systems in overcoming the obstacles of marginalization in basic education. There is also the challenge of illiteracy and functional illiteracy, specifically for adults and women. Finally, early childhood education reappeared as a challenge related to basic education. Particularly important is to highlight that UNESCO approached the challenges related to quality basic education for all with a human rights perspective. Indeed, the right to education was strongly promoted and safeguarded through its normative actions.

UNESCO strongly promoted a human right based approach in education. This approach aimed at overcoming the deep inequalities that were affecting the world. Like the previous

period, inequalities are seen both as between countries and within education. For this reason, UNESCO concentrated its efforts toward countries in Africa. Indeed, Africa was the declared global priority of the period, and although Africa was always a global priority for UNESCO, in these years it received more importance in terms of activities that explicitly contribute to the development of Africa. There is a sort of “Africa mainstreaming” in programming. Together with Africa, gender equality was the second global priority for UNESCO. Indeed, gender equality are “at the centre of [UNESCO’s] actions in education” (UNESCO, 2010*b*, p. 33). The Organization promoted a vast variety of concepts and activities related to gender equality, gender equity and gender parity and it has developed a Gender Equality Action Plan. The challenges related to gender inequalities laid within a broader framework of marginalization in education and UNESCO’s work and activities to face the challenge of marginalization belonged to the principle of inclusive education and equity. As the UNESCO GMR report of 2010, focused on marginalization in education, stated, marginalization in education has to do with a multiplicity of interrelated factors such as poverty, ethnicity, geographic location, disability, race, language and others, creating vicious cycles of disadvantage in education. Marginalization in education is indeed a complex and deep phenomenon. Hence, the notion of equity and the understanding of inequalities of this period are much more developed than previous years. Thus, UNESCO strongly promoted equity in education, the respect for the right to education and inclusive policies.

These inclusive policies are meant also for taking into considerations the need of youth. The enabling function of education, which was always promoted in UNESCO’s document, is not only related to the potential that education has in poverty eradication, leading to peace and to sustainable development. But also as a means for the development of skills and competencies that are relevant for the world of work: equipping youth with the competencies necessary to enter the job market. These links between education and employability saw in this period a renovated attention. Worth noting is that the Organization promoted also a vision of education not only that enables people and societies to adapt to change, but also an education that enables them to manage and influence changes (UNESCO, 2008*a*), a transformative role of education.

Finally, like previous years and periods, UNESCO maintained a humanistic vision of education. Indeed, it promoted several values, concepts and principles that can be related

to “a humanist agenda” such as education for sustainable development, education for peace, and education for global citizenship, giving “increased emphasis to promoting education for values, democratic citizenship, human rights, tolerance and dialogue for reconciliation and peace” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 22). This humanistic vision is closely associated to a holistic approach to education systems, which is growingly conceived as comprised by both formal and non-formal education opportunities throughout life. Lifelong learning is therefore an important paradigm for education and the achievement and reinforcement of lifelong learning was part of the overarching objective and strategic programme objective 2. A lifelong learning vision that is more consolidated than the previous years. Lifelong learning constituted basically a challenge for education systems that are called to deal with pressing trends such as growing demand for education, financial constraints, and several other important aspects related to governance. In order to face these challenges, the strategic planning and management and effective use of resources is needed. Indeed, UNESCO focused greatly its capacity building activities on creating and expanding institutional capacities in the areas of education policy and planning.

In the Medium Term Strategy UNESCO performed the five main functions of laboratory of ideas, clearing house, catalyst for international cooperation, standard setter and capacity builder. These functions can be associated with the agenda-setting mechanisms proposed in this research and it is important to notice that UNESCO growingly perceived them as more integrated and interdependent. Although the most important in terms of number of activities is value setting, goal setting gained cross-programmatic relevance and framed the other mechanisms. Indeed, the international agenda, as specifically the Dakar goals and the structures to coordinate and implement them, serves as a bases for value setting, capacity building, standard setting and financial leveraging. In particular, there was a growing link between capacity building, goal setting and standard setting in the domain of education: “as standard-setter for the right to education, UNESCO will develop and promote good practices, policies and legislation in this area” (UNESCO, 2008*a*, p. 18). Policy guidelines and advice were mainly related to EFA II: the Organization provided capacity development and technical support to assist national efforts in achieving the Dakar goals.

As said, like previous periods, value setting is the most important mechanism. This mechanism is performed through five main modalities: i) world-wide policy dialogue; ii) research activities; iii) advocacy measures; iv) decades and international conferences; v) and platforms, networks and partnerships. Value setting activities are associated to the two main functions of being a laboratory of ideas and a clearing house. The most important modality was the organization of world-wide policy dialogue. This modality enabled UNESCO to share its own view and principles with a wide range of actors. In addition, it created the right bases and platforms for sharing the outcomes of its own research activities. Indeed, the Organization aimed at improving its research competencies and impact. This goal was established in order to provide Member States with “evidence based” policies and promoting a “what works” approach in education policies. Particularly interesting is also the creation of the Education Research and Foresight Team that had the mandate to share innovative thinking and tracking trends for the design of the post 2015 education scenario. Interesting is noting that value setting was strongly linked to the goals setting mechanism. Not only because of the UNESCO’s involvement in the post 2015 debates (in which the Organization tried to shape the future agenda accordingly to its notion of education), but also because the outcomes documents of these research activities were disseminated through the structures already established for the international education agendas EFA II, UNDESD, and UNLD. Another important and innovative feature of period regarding value setting mechanism is the channels through which UNESCO tried to establish values. Indeed, the Organization utilized its own set of networks (UNITWIN, UNEVOC, ASPnet...), but also explored new networks, platforms and partnerships such as the G77+China, the G20, regional organizations such as the African Union (UNESCO, 2008*b*), and it also established a new category 1 institute: the MGIEP. Finally, UNESCO continued its efforts of the previous period in aligning its work with the UN systems processes through the establishment of Inter-Agency committee and platforms, as well as through the UNCCA and the UNDAF.

UNESCO perceived the need for institutional capacity building and it “will respond to the recognized need for a global framework and networks for capacity development” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 30). Capacity building was a second most used mechanism in terms of activities and it is related to the capacity building function of UNESCO. The sub mechanism of sharing best practices has been performed through establishing or using

existing i) networks and platforms; and ii) research and forward looking debates. In particular, the Organization tried to revitalize the UNEVOC network and the ASPnet while dedicating less attention to the UNITWIN. Particularly interesting in this sub mechanism are new modalities of sharing best practices such as the creation of “communities of interests” or common online platforms provided by the new Knowledge Management Systems team. As to the technical advice sub mechanism activities were performed in the modalities of i) creation of policy papers and policy review; ii) support for existing structures and centres; and iii) training initiatives. The capacity building mechanism was very similar to the previous period with policy research, policy briefs, tools and guidelines to inform policymakers as the most important modality. Interesting is noting the enhancement of the CapEFA programme, the creation of the UNESS, as well as the growing importance of institutional capacity building in the budget, where numerous expected results aimed at developing capacities.

As anticipated goal setting acquired greater relevance among agenda-setting mechanism. This process of prioritization of goals setting mechanism started in the previous period and it has been reinforced in this one. Indeed, EFA II and other international goals that UNESCO was leading were fully integrated within UNESCO’s programme. In particular, each of the biennium had two Main Lines of Action explicitly related to EFA II: one for the global coordination, the other for the assistance to countries for the implementation of the Dakar goals at national level. The activities related to the goal setting can be clustered in these three main modalities: i) EFA II in UNESCO’s programming in innovative ways; ii) the alignment with the broader UN goals and building the post 2015 agenda; and iii) the leading of different Decades and Plan of Actions. Goal setting mechanism continued the trends of the alignment with the UN system and it can be witnessed by the great involvement in the design of the post 2015 agenda, but also in the creation of joint activities such as the UNDAFs.

As to the standard setting, although recognized as one of UNESCO’s main functions and notwithstanding UNESCO’s commitment to “continue to promote, monitor and provide technical assistance in implementing its standard-setting instruments, including recommendations, declarations, guidelines and frameworks for action” (UNESCO, 2008*b*, p. 34), it does not have greater relevance in terms of number of activities, nor as a cross-programmatic action. It was still important, but it lost some of its relevance in

favour of the goal setting mechanism. In particular, in this period UNESCO was not prolific in the normative production. Indeed, the sub mechanism of normative action was performed mainly by i) provision of technical assistance to countries for the integration of recommendation in national frameworks; ii) follow-up and revision of existing standards; and iii) ratification campaigns in cooperation with the UN system. As to the benchmarks and data production sub mechanism, it continued the modalities of working of the previous years: i) indicators development; ii) research and assessment; and iii) technical assistance. Particularly interesting is noting that this mechanism focused mainly, but not uniquely, on activities of standard setting in relation to EFA II and the most important publication of the UNESCO Education Sector was the GMR with its monitoring function performed in collaboration with the UIS.

As to the financial leveraging mechanism, exactly as the three previous periods, it is not of great relevance for UNESCO's programming. This mechanism was developed mainly through three kinds of activities: i) intellectual and technical contribution to global structures of donors; ii) high level advocacy for funds mobilization; and iii) technical assistance to mobilize resources. Indeed, UNESCO, not having the possibility of directly financing, aimed at participating in already established *fora* for the coordination of aid and in which it can contribute technically and advocating for its own priorities such as within EFA-FTI or at the G20, the OECD, the World Economic Forum, and the G77+China.

Table 68: Global challenges, notion of education, agenda-setting mechanisms fourth period

Fourth period 2008 – 2013		
GLOBAL CHALLENGES	NOTION OF EDUCATION	AGENDA-SETTING MECHANISMS
SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT people centred development, a humanist agenda	HUMANISTIC VISION a humanist agenda, education for sustainable development and education for global citizenship	VALUE SETTING i) world-wide policy dialogue; ii) research activities; iii) advocacy measures; iv) decades and international conferences; v) and platforms, networks and partnerships
PEACE Learning to live together	EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS right to inclusive, gender responsive education	CAPACITY BUILDING Sharing best practices: i) networks and platforms, new or already existing; and ii) research and forward looking debates Technical advice: i) policy papers and policy review; ii) support for existing structures and centres; and iii) training
INEQUALITIES Attention to Africa, youth and women.	QUALITY The right to quality education	GOAL SETTING i) EFA II in UNESCO's programming in innovative ways; ii) the alignment with the broader UN goals and building the post 2015 agenda; and iii) the leading of different Decades and Plan of Actions.
QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL EFA II goals to be met.	LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING an holistic vision of education systems	STANDARD SETTING Normative actions: i) provision of technical assistance to countries; ii) follow-up and revision of existing standards; and iii) ratification campaigns in cooperation with the UN system. Benchmarks and data: i) indicators development; ii) research and assessment; and iii) technical assistance.
EDUCATION SYSTEMS Governance of education systems and teachers.	ENABLING FUNCTION skills and competences development for the world of work.	FINANCIAL LEVERAGING i) intellectual and technical contribution to global structures of donors; ii) high level advocacy for funds mobilization; and iii) technical assistance to mobilize resources

5.5 Fifth Period (2014 – 2017)

5.5.1 Context

This period is shorter than the previous one and is marked by the continuation of the trends of previous years. In fact, in the economic domain, the financial crisis still affected countries and economies world-wide with diverse political responses to it. This long lasting crisis had several implications for the availability of funds for education in many countries and political economic austerity measures reduced the willingness and possibility of public spending and investment in traditional public services. However, these years also saw a slow economic recovery.

In the international relations domain, the civil war in Syria began in 2011 and has expanded its length. This conflict was at the centre of international political attention and Nations are still trying to find a peaceful resolution of it. Other regions of the world are threatened by conflicts and social unrests. African countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, Burkina Faso and Mali suffered from social unrest and terrorist attacks. Moreover, in East Europe, the Ukrainian Crimea was annexed by the Russian Federation in 2014, leading to raising tensions between the two countries. These and other conflicts caused a situation of 500 million people who live in countries at risk of instability and conflict, and it has important implications for education as it would be explained below (see § 5.5.3).

UNESCO and UN

At the UN level, the mandate of Ban Ki-moon ended in 2016 and after an election process, the Portuguese Antonio Guterres became the 9th Secretary General of the Organization as of the 1st of January 2017 with a statement “Challenges and Opportunities for the United Nations” in which he suggested a process of reforms of the UN:

The future of the UN will be determined by its readiness to change and adapt, in full respect of the provisions of the Charter and the competences of the main bodies. The SG must promote reform and innovation, focused on delivery and results. Reform is not a onetime action, it is a permanent attitude to make the UN less bureaucratic and more efficient, productive and field oriented; to simplify processes, eliminate redundant structural costs and make full use of modern technology and innovation. (Guterres, 2016, p.1).

Particularly important for these years is the establishment, after a three-year process of consultations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the A/RES/70 in September 2015. As noted above (see § 4.2.4), this agenda comprises 17 goals and 164 targets. These goals would serve as the guide of international cooperation on sustainable development of the UN and its partners for the following 15 years.

Beyond the UNGA resolution, other important declarations were formulated, such as the Outcome document of World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; the Incheon Declaration; the Sendai Declaration for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; and the Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All: New Urban Agenda.

These declarations were mostly related to important conferences held in the period: the UNGA Special Session on progress and achievements of International Conference on Population and Development; the Third International Conference on SIDS; the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples; the Nagoya Conference on Education for Sustainable Development; the World Summit on the Information Society + 10 High-Level Event; the World Education Forum; the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction; the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III); and the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit.

Moreover, the international community celebrated the International Year of Small Island Developing States (2014); the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (2015); and the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017.

Together with the SDGs, other decades and action plans were implemented in the period:

Table 69: International agendas and plan of actions with educational components 2014 - 2017

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
2 nd International Decade				3 rd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism										
EFA II									SDGS					
MDGS														
International Programme of Action on Population and Development														
		2 nd Decade for African Education												
World Food Summit Plan of Action														
World Programme for Human Rights Education														
	2 nd UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty													
Programme of Action for the LDCs				2 nd The Programme of Action for the LDCs										
United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development														
				Seoul Agenda and Development Goals for Arts Education										
							International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures							
								International Decade for People of African Descent						

At UNESCO this period was marked by great changes. In fact, during these years the Director-General and the Secretariat prepared the Medium Term Strategy and the Programme and Budget documents following the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO that was developed in 2010 (UNESCO, 2010*e*). In particular, the evaluation considered four major directions for change:

1. Increasing UNESCO's focus;
2. Positioning UNESCO closer to the Field;
3. Strengthening UNESCO's participation in the United Nations system;
4. Developing and strengthening UNESCO's partnerships.

One aspect of change was visible in the new way of operating of the Organization. In fact, the Medium Term Strategy now covers eight years and “the strategic orientations laid out in the present document will be translated into two consecutive programme and budget documents, beginning with document 37 C/5, each covering a four year cycle, while the budget allocation to the programmes will be appropriated biennially” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 5).

The mission statement was “as a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO – pursuant to its Constitution – contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 13). Particularly interesting is seeing a slight change of the five main functions that UNESCO attributed to itself:

1. Serving as a laboratory of ideas and generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence;
2. Developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking;
3. Setting norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation;
4. Strengthening international and regional cooperation in its fields of competence, and fostering alliances, intellectual cooperation, knowledge-sharing and operational partnerships;

5. Providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities.

However, what characterized this period for UNESCO was the financial constraints. Indeed, after the decision of UNESCO's Member States to admit Palestine to be a Member of UNESCO, the U.S.A. decided to pull out their budget support to the Organization. This decision had important implications on the financial situation of UNESCO which received 22 % budget less than the expected due.

In terms of normative instruments, UNESCO developed the following instruments. It is important to notice a renewed attention to the use of these normative instruments in education since in the previous period the normative instruments and actions were less than the ones performed in this:

- Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States. 12 December 2014
- Recommendation on adult learning and education. 13 November 2015.
- Recommendation concerning technical and vocational education and training (TVET). 13 November 2015.
- Recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society. 17 November 2015
- Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form. 17 November 2015
- Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport. 17 November 2015

Particularly interesting is noting that UNESCO embarked in a process of revisiting existing conventions rather than developing new ones as a reflection of the change of time.

After the great changes in membership of the previous period, in these years only Montserrat joined the Organization as Associate Member in 03/11/2015.

5.5.2 Educational Themes

In the four documents analysed (UNESCO, 2014a; 2014b; 2015b; 2016c), there are some preeminent education themes which have great cross programmatic relevance and are spanned throughout the texts. The first preeminent educational theme is education for sustainable development. Indeed, equitable sustainable development is one of the global challenges of the period. Moreover, within the framework of the SDGs, education for sustainable development gained importance and relevance also for the international development and education agenda. In fact, during the EFA II period, education for sustainable development was not fully integrated into the six Dakar goals but it was enshrined in the UNDESD.

A second preeminent educational theme is “learning” and specifically lifelong learning. There is a growing attention and shift from education to learning, both in terms of process of acquiring knowledge as well as the outcomes of this process. Quality education was growingly associated with effective learning and greater focus on the different pathways, modalities and contexts through which learning happens. Lifelong learning for all became the central concern for education systems and it is the key element of the new SDG agenda.

A third preeminent theme is equity and inclusion. In fact, the equity dimension of sustainable development, although always present in previous periods, is remarked with a stronger emphasis. Inequalities, and socio-economic inequalities in particular, are perceived as global challenges for development and for education systems. Equity in and through education was thus recalled throughout the documents. Moreover, UNESCO maintained Africa and gender equality as two global priorities, focusing its attention to the countries and section of population most in needs and in which inequalities are deeper.

As to prominent education themes, education for peace, human rights and global citizenship figure high in the agenda. These constitute the pillars of the humanistic vision of education together with education for sustainable development. Several activities were performed in these thematic areas and they are integral parts of the ultimate purposes of education.

Particularly important in the period is the attention paid to employability and the transition from education to the world of work. Indeed, youth unemployment was perceived as a challenge for development and UNESCO strengthened its work in the domain of TVET and skills acquisition for the world of work. The focus on youth was always present but these years showed an increase in the mentioning of the need to enable youth to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in order to find their places in the labour market.

Another important theme was related to the enabling factors of quality education. In particular, UNESCO paid attention to teachers and, innovatively, to educators beyond the formal sector. Moreover, ICTs and mobile learning deserved several analyses and mentions throughout the programmatic documents as new tools and ways to “reach the unreached” and to ensure effective learning.

Finally, a renewed attention to the issue of relevance of education can be noticed. In particular, UNESCO repeatedly recalled the need to provide relevant education and an education that is responsive to the local and cultural context.

5.5.3 Global Challenges

During these years, UNESCO continued its process of alignment to the UN system and this alignment is also evident in the global challenges that are perceived. Like the previous period, the Organization concentrated its attention to fewer global challenges. Although they seem to be similar to the previous periods, there are important nuances and changes within each of the challenges observed. Indeed, UNESCO perceived five global challenges: equitable sustainable development, peace, security and vulnerability, inequalities, quality learning, and education systems.

EQUITABLE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – a central concern. New humanism

Like previous periods, sustainable development is the central concern of these years. In fact, the Medium Term Strategy clearly defined the mission statement which is: “As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO – pursuant to its Constitution – contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and *sustainable development* and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture,

communication and information” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 13. Emphasis added). “Equitable and sustainable development” together with peace constituted the overarching objective of the period. In line with the strategic directions for change suggested by the Independent External Evaluation in 2010 of “strengthening UNESCO’s participation in the United Nations system”, the Organization fully contributed to the broader development processes of defining and implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see § 4.2.4).

Sustainable development is considered by this period’s flagship publication “a central concern” for the entire international community (UNESCO, 2015*b*). The kind of development that is proposed in UNESCO’s reflections is sustainable, equitable, human and social development. Like previous period, it is people centred and approached with a humanistic vision, corresponding to a humanist agenda (UNESCO, 2014*a*). This particular vision of development has important implications for education. In fact, UNESCO strongly promoted concepts such as education for sustainable development (see § 5.5.4), and the idea that through education (and its work on education for sustainable development) everyone is provided “with the opportunity to acquire the values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are needed to contribute to sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 46).

Particularly innovative is the fact that the dimensions of inclusiveness and equity are more explicit and present while discussing the challenges of sustainable development. Indeed, the challenge of inequalities within and between countries constitute an important brake for development: “equity and inclusion remain central challenges to ensure sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 19). For this reason, UNESCO focused its attention of development on the countries most in need, such as African countries and LDCs.

“Sustainability is understood as the responsible action of individuals and societies towards a better future for all” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 20) and is closely related to the challenge of environmental stewardship. Like the previous periods, sustainable development is strongly related to the concern for climate change and the protection of the environment. Indeed, “climate change continues to be of paramount concern to the future of humankind, and has been characterized by the United Nations Secretary-General as the defining challenge of our time” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 14). Particularly important is

noting the reference to the COP 21 and the Paris Agreement of 2015 as the overarching framework for addressing climate change, together with the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2016c). Related to this, this period's flagship publication indicated that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are one of the main challenges of sustainability and the need to redefine development models (UNESCO, 2015b).

However, there are other trends that are shaping several local contexts and that are presenting challenges related to development. In particular, UNESCO perceived these to be demographic trends, urbanization processes and interconnection and technological transformations (*idem*). These trends, are approached by UNESCO in a global perspective because “in an increasingly interconnected world, inequality, poverty, poor health, human rights violations, conflict and sustainable development are not only local issues [...]linking knowledge with action at a local, national and global level” (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 38).

A new feature of the period is the growing attention to employment and youth. Although youth issues were always considered important, in these years the Organization developed a specific UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth for 2014-2021, and contributed to mainstream youth issues (*idem*). Indeed, due also to the financial crisis, unemployment and youth unemployment rates were rising and UNESCO strongly focused on them. Patterns of “low-employment growth, rising youth unemployment and vulnerable employment” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 15) are perceived as damaging security and equity, not only national economic growth.

This focus on youth and employability has several implications for the work of UNESCO in education. In fact, greater attention is now paid to the relevance of education and the acquisition of competencies for the world of work, and the constant need to upgrade competencies to meet labour market demands (UNESCO, 2014b). This has led UNESCO to reinvigorate its TVET work:

Globalization, technological advances, demographic pressures, social inequalities and the quest for sustainable development are creating rising demand for TVET policies and programmes that respond to labour market demands, support youth transitions between

education and the world of work, and promote poverty reduction, social inclusion and gender equality. This calls for a holistic transformation of TVET, based on policy evidence and experience, with a focus on lifelong learning through horizontal and vertical articulation within education and between education and the world of work (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 36).

PEACE, SECURITY and VULNERABILITY – violence, human rights and inequalities

During these years, peace maintained its importance as one of the main global challenges perceived by UNESCO. In fact, the Medium Term Strategy stated that peace and security remained key challenges (UNESCO, 2014a). As already noted the mission statement clearly defined that the mission of UNESCO is to contribute to peace building. “Peace” together with equitable and sustainable development constituted the overarching objective of the period and “all overarching objectives must also guide the Organization’s work with respect to the two global priorities – Africa and gender equality – and to activities for youth, LDCs, SIDS and countries in transition” (*idem*, p. 16).

There are several dimensions of peace and security that are entailed in the discussions and reflections of UNESCO. Indeed, “A range of factors continues to deepen vulnerability, induce social breakdown and threaten global peace and stability” (*idem*, p. 19). One of these factors is persisting conflicts and violence, which are of various kinds and nature. In fact, UNESCO envisioned the challenges of “cultural and religious chauvinism and identity-based political mobilization and violence” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 16), “terrorism, drug-related violence, wars and internal conflicts and even intra-family and school related violence”, as well as “ethnic, cultural and religious intolerance” (*idem*, p. 23), with an estimate of 500 million people who live in countries at risk of instability and conflict. Among the forms of violence, the Organization continued to be sensitive to the challenges of violence against women. These conflicts “are amongst the greatest obstacles to the realization of the internationally-agreed development goals” (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 33).

Particularly important in these years is noting a strong link between peace, equity and sustainable development. In fact, “discrimination, violence, human rights violations and

conflict remain major challenges for peace as well as equitable and sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 38). A key pillar in contributing to peace, social justice, reducing poverty and ensuring equitable sustainable development is the respect for human rights. Human rights are essential to the creation of peaceful societies and foster mutual understanding and social cohesion. Among the challenges related to peace there is also social justice and social cohesion (UNESCO, 2015*b*), as well as HIV/AIDS (UNESCO, 2016*c*), and natural disasters (UNESCO, 2014*a*). These challenges are reflected in the broader concern for vulnerability (UNESCO, 2015*b*).

The challenges of peace, security and vulnerability have several implications for education. In fact, on the one hand, the Organization developed the UNESCO’s response to post-conflict and post-disaster situations because it “is a necessary part of the continuum of operational activities linking peace to sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 27). On the other hand, major programme I (education) “is focused on three strategic objectives conducive to peace and sustainable development” (*ibidem*). Indeed, UNESCO promoted education for social inclusion, mutual understanding, and intercultural dialogue, the latter was construed as “increasingly necessary for social inclusion, mutual understanding and durable peace” (*idem*, p. 8). The Organization has also participated in the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures and has worked in line of the framework of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (UNESCO, 2014*b*). Moreover, it has reinforced the attention to the pillar of learning to live together, promoting the concept of education for peace, human rights education and education for global citizenship (see § 5.5.4).

INEQUALITIES – social inequalities. Privatization and inequalities of learning opportunities

In these years, the challenges related to inequalities are of central relevance for the work of the Organization. As already mentioned, for UNESCO, inequalities, peace and sustainable development are closely related:

The gap between the rich and the poor is widening within and between countries. Equity and inclusion remain central challenges to ensure sustainable development. A large part

of the world's population is living in areas affected by conflict and violence. Moreover, natural disasters including those linked to climate change are having a particularly ravaging impact on the poorest (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 19).

Similarly to the previous periods, inequalities are perceived within and among countries, and are reflected within education.

While extreme poverty has been reduced, inequalities are growing within and among countries. Mounting inequalities raise new challenges to the enjoyment of human rights and to the values of social justice, solidarity and inclusion. They translate into unequal access to quality education, to the benefits of scientific information, to freedom of expression, to the right to participate in cultural life. The narrowing of inequality gaps is a major strategic challenge (*idem*, p. 8).

Many considerations within the discourse of the Organization are concentrated on social inequalities (UNESCO, 2014a; 2014b), and as the programme and budget of the second biennium stated, they become a major societal issue (UNESCO, 2016c). These inequalities reinforce and reproduce “social exclusion and undermin[e] social cohesion. In all societies, extreme inequalities are a source of social tension and a potential catalyst of political instability and violent conflict” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 23). These reflections led UNESCO to increase its attention to the issues of equity and inclusion. Indeed, the principle of “reaching the unreached” is reaffirmed (UNESCO, 2014b; 2016c) and will be later reinforced by “leaving no one behind”, the guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015).

Like previous periods, UNESCO perceived the most visible inequalities among countries in Africa. Africa, together with gender equality is, to this day a global priority for UNESCO. The Organization continued its “Africa mainstreaming in programming” of the previous period, and it supported the work on the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 - 2024). However, the Organization focused its work on closing the gap between other countries such as LDCs and SIDS. In particular, UNESCO followed the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020, and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. It has also focused its attention to the countries far

from achieving EFA in the first biennium and continued its work in education with the E-9 countries.

As noted above, inequalities are also perceived within education. Principally, UNESCO focused its attention to the inequalities of learning opportunities. Particularly significant in this regards are the reflections on gender equality which remained a central concern and a global priority. Indeed, “gender has been a traditional factor of inequality and disparity in education, most often to the disadvantage of girls and women” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 43). Among the out of school population, girls constitute the majority; gender violence is on the rise, and two third of illiterate adults are women. For these reasons, UNESCO continued its successful activities in mainstreaming gender equality in programming developing the UNESCO’s second Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021 (UNESCO, 2014*a*).

Moreover, the inequalities in learning opportunities can be seen in marginalized sections of society. Differently from previous periods, several discourses are concentrated on the impact of privatization in exacerbating education inequalities. Although UNESCO directly promoted public private partnerships as successful ways to increase access to education, the Organization also warned about the equity issue associated to private engagement in education provision: “this [privatization] could have a negative impact on the enjoyment of the right to a good quality education and on the realization of equal educational opportunities” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 74). In particular, UNESCO saw the challenges of shadow education (*idem*), of low fee private schools (UNESCO, 2015*d*), and of higher education institutions where privatization trends are more evident and inequalities deeper (UNESCO, 2014*b*; 2016*c*).

QUALITY LEARNING – learning challenge, effective lifelong learning for all

The reflections contained in the programmatic documents of this period showed a slight change in the perception of this challenge from previous periods. Indeed, during the EFA lifespan, quality basic education was always a global concern. Although quality basic education remained a key challenge, the Organization expanded its attention focusing on a broader “learning challenge” and on “neglected education areas” beyond primary education (UNESCO, 2014*a*).

Quality basic education remained essential. Indeed, several are the passages in which UNESCO perceived it as a global concern. For example, it is recognized that EFA remained an “unfinished business” (UNESCO, 2014a; 2014b). “Despite this progress, the pledge made as long ago as 1990 by governments and international development partners to ‘meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults’ has not been kept” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 42), with more than 50 million children still out of school and high illiteracy rates in adult population. One of the causes that were indicated for this challenge was the demographic trends. In fact, education systems worldwide could not create basic education opportunities with the same pace of growing demand for education. Women illiteracy and gender disparities in education persisted and UNESCO tried to face this challenge through the “last big push” toward 2015 with the GEFI.

It should be also recognized that the success of EFA in enhancing access to basic education, and particularly to universal primary education, has led to further pressures on higher levels of education. “Expansion of access to basic schooling worldwide has increased demand for secondary and tertiary education and concern for vocational skills development, particularly in a context of growing youth unemployment and a process of qualification” (*idem*, p. 45). This also represented a challenge for education systems. Moreover, associated to it, the Organization perceived a growing demand for quality at all levels of education. Thus, the term (and the challenge of) *quality* was associated to ECCE, TVET, secondary education, higher education, as well as to the new Massive Online Open Courses (UNESCO, 2016c).

Notwithstanding the attention to basic education, the key concern of these years is related to lifelong learning. The focus of UNESCO moved from a concern with basic education to a more general and broad quality of learning. “This emphasis is in response to increased demand from Member States for support in these areas which are important building blocks for equitable lifelong learning societies” (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 26). UNESCO strongly promoted the concept of “lifelong learning for all”, the goal to be achieved. Indeed, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development entailed a lifelong learning vision and the SDG-4 explicitly declared as its objective to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015). The attention to lifelong learning is witnessed by the first strategic objective, which is construed within

the framework of lifelong learning: “Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 17).

UNESCO recognized also that “the remarkable progress made in improving access to basic education has not been accompanied by a commensurate rise in the quality and relevance of education” (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 32). There is a growing concern for “learning outcomes”, for an education that is conducive to “actual learning”, a phenomenon that was called by other international development partners as the “learning crisis”. Indeed, UNESCO performed several activities related to learning assessment. In fact, relevant learning outcomes became “a growing concern for the majority of Member States” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 9). Therefore, in a context of a knowledge-based and lifelong learning society (UNESCO, 2014b), in which the volume and amount of knowledge and information are growing, “learning” was the essential challenge perceived in these years. “Improving learning” was thus one of the expected results of UNESCO’s programme (*idem*), while “learning to learn has never been as important as it is today” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 41) as the flagship publication stated:

The volume of information now available on the internet is staggering. The challenge becomes how to teach learners to make sense of the vast amount of information they encounter every day, identify credible sources, assess the reliability and validity of what they read, question the authenticity and accuracy of information, connect this new knowledge with prior learning and discern its significance in relation to information they already understand (*ibidem*)

EDUCATION SYSTEMS - governance of lifelong learning systems

Growingly in respect of previous periods, the attention to education systems constituted a global challenge but also a priority for UNESCO. Indeed, one of the three strategic objectives (which are translated into three Main Lines of Action) is completely focused on “Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 17).

Education systems are thus the “places” in which all other challenges and trends perceived by UNESCO are reflected and produce significant implications. For example, the

challenge of inequalities has important implications for education systems. Indeed, it is recognized that the educational systems can contribute to foster inequalities through ignoring the learning needs of disadvantaged students and concentrating efforts on the high-quality training which became exclusive (UNESCO, 2015*b*).

Central to the concerns of education systems are the issues of governance and management. In fact, the growing demand for education at all levels, the financial constraints resulted from the financial crisis, the growing attention to accountability, and the increase influence of other (international and private) players in education provision and decision-making, are challenging the ordinary management and governance processes of education systems (UNESCO, 2014*b*; 2015*b*; 2016*c*). Thus, the Organization strongly perceived the need for institutional capacity building and an augmented strategic capacity in sector-wide planning. Moreover, with the shift of focus from basic education to ensuring “lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015), the governance of education systems became more complex.

Yet today most education systems are still not in a position to offer quality lifelong learning opportunities for all. To make it a reality implies holistic and sector-wide educational reform involving all sub-sectors and education levels of the education system to ensure the creation of learning opportunities in all settings or delivery modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) for people of all ages (infants, children, adolescents and adults whether girls or boys, women or men), meeting a wide range of learning needs (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 25).

Related to the governance of lifelong learning systems, UNESCO still perceived education personnel of central importance and the attention to them seems to grow in these years. In fact, on the one hand UNESCO recognized the importance of various kinds of educators beyond formal sector, recalling the essential role of educators in the learning that is happening beyond formal education (UNESCO, 2015*b*). On the other hand, the idea that teachers are the main factors of the quality of learning is reinforced, and one of the central challenge of these years is teacher shortage (UNESCO, 2014*b*; 2016*c*) and de-professionalization (UNESCO, 2015*b*). UNESCO urged for the teacher quality imperative (UNESCO, 2016*c*) addressing the acute shortage of *qualified* teachers and supporting teacher professional development through capacity development (UNESCO, 2014*a*). The importance of teachers in UNESCO’s reflections is also in line with the

broader development agenda. Indeed, if in EFA II improving teachers' conditions was part of the strategies to achieve EFA II goals, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development teachers issues are framed within the formulation of the education target. In particular as a Means of Implementation. Target 4.c commits to "By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States" (UN, 2015, p. 35).

The perception of a changing and evolving role of teachers is a new trait of the global agenda (UNESCO, 2015*b*). UNESCO recognized that their role is changing, moving from "transmitter of knowledge" to "enabler of learning" (UNESCO, 2014*a*). Finally, UNESCO strongly supported the idea of improving teacher training for the use of ICTs (UNESCO, 2014*b*; 2016*c*).

Indeed, ICTs are one of the main drivers of change in education. In UNESCO's reflections, some trends are drastically changing and transforming education systems and how learning opportunities are organized. Among these, ICTs are shaping the future for mobile learning, expanding access to knowledge and information. Another driver of change is privatization. In fact, "as a way to meet demand and alleviate their financial burden, many governments have encouraged the expansion of private providers. The arrival of new education providers and delivery modalities present important policy challenges, from quality, financial and equity perspectives" (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 31). These two drivers transformed education systems "to serve as facilitators of learning, of enhancing the opportunities for personalized learning and of making learning more relevant to the needs of individuals and society" (*idem*, p. 34). Thus, systems of recognition and validation of acquired learning should be envisioned.

UNESCO perceived the need for a call for dialogue (UNESCO, 2015*b*) in order to reconsider the ways in which learning is organized: to reconsider education systems. It also reinforced the need to strengthen the relevance of education systems to the changing needs of the 21st century:

There is a growing call for increasing the quality and relevance of education, and for supporting countries in the development of "neglected" education areas – early childhood care and education, secondary education, technical and vocational education, and tertiary

education and research. Reviewing the content of education and the learning/teaching processes – including science education, technical and vocational education and training, education for global citizenship and learning to live together –, as well as the assessment of learning outcomes have become a growing concern for the majority of Member States. Education systems designed for the second half of the twentieth century begin to fall short of meeting the demands for twenty-first century knowledge societies (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 9).

5.5.4 Notion of Education

The macro categories and the main elements of the notion of education of UNESCO in this period are similar to previous periods. Throughout the documents analysed, the Organization promoted values, concepts and principles related to education which belong to five macro categories: a humanistic vision of education; equity in and through education; quality and relevant education; enabling function of education; and holistic approach to lifelong learning.

HUMANISTIC VISION – foundational humanistic principles. Education for peace, global citizenship and sustainable development

During these years, UNESCO reinforced its humanistic vision of education. In fact, the values, concepts and principles that formed and shaped the humanistic vision of the previous period are integrated and taken forward in the programmatic and flagship documents of these years.

The Medium Term Strategy clearly stated that UNESCO works in education with a “humanist mandate” (UNESCO, 2014a). This humanist mandate is reflected in a humanistic vision of both education and development (UNESCO, 2015b) which meant to sustain and enhance “the dignity, capacity and welfare of the human person, in relation to others and to nature, [and this] should be the fundamental purpose of education in the twenty-first century” (*idem*, p. 36). The vision of education and development is based on humanistic principles. Moreover, the purposes of education and development envisioned by UNESCO are humanistic. Indeed, UNESCO’s vision of education goes beyond the utilitarian role of education based on the human capital approach: humanistic values such as “respect for life and human dignity, equal rights and social justice, respect for cultural

diversity, and international solidarity and shared responsibility all of which are fundamental aspects of our common humanity” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 14) constitute the foundations of education. Moreover, the purposes of education entailed personal development, social cohesion, creation of a culture of peace, international understanding, and responsible citizenship (UNESCO, 2016*c*). In particular,

UNESCO’s programme in education will promote education and learning that impart the skills and competences needed for the twenty-first century, shape attitudes and behaviours, and instil the values that underpin peace, social inclusion and sustainable development, such as democracy, tolerance, respect for cultural diversity and human rights and global citizenship (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 25).

Like previous period, the Organization tried to link more closely culture and education focusing on the cultural aspects of education. Indeed, the flagship publication directly promoted the idea that education should celebrate cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2015*b*). Moreover, UNESCO promoted the principles of education for intercultural understanding and heritage education in light of the thrust toward “learning to live together”. In fact, as the Medium Term Strategy stated: “in advancing dialogue, “learning to live together” and inclusiveness, UNESCO will promote the role of shared or cross-border cultural heritage and initiatives to build bridges among nations and communities” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 24). Furthermore, UNESCO promoted arts education through the Seoul Agenda and Development Goals for Arts Education, and it promoted the attention to indigenous knowledge systems (UNESCO, 2015*b*), particularly in the context of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 - 2024).

This humanistic vision of education had important implications for the content of education. In fact, UNESCO strongly promoted and supported Member States to integrate into education systems four interrelated pillars of this humanistic vision of education: education for sustainable development, education for peace and human rights, education for global citizenship, and health education (UNESCO, 2014*b*; 2016*c*).

Like the previous period, education for sustainable development is a central principle for UNESCO; it constitutes an integral element of quality education (UNESCO, 2014*a*). In UNESCO’s reflections, education *must* contribute to a new vision of sustainable global

development (UNESCO, 2015*b*) and it is possible because education has a transformative role and has the potential to enable people to acquire the necessary knowledge and behaviours to contribute to sustainable development. In fact

Sustainable development cannot be achieved through technological solutions, political regulations or fiscal incentives alone. It requires a fundamental change in the way people think and act, and consequently a transition to sustainable livelihoods. Only education and learning at all levels and in all social contexts can bring about this critical change (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 39).

Through its work on Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO aims at reorienting education worldwide, so that it provides everyone with the opportunity to acquire the values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are needed to contribute to sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) entails the inclusion of key sustainable development challenges into all areas and levels of education and learning (*idem*, p. 30).

The second pillar of this humanistic vision is education for peace and human rights, which is strongly related to education for sustainable development. “UNESCO considers that the fundamental objective of education is to build peace in the minds of men and women” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 44) and the Organization promoted a rights-based approach to education with particular emphasis on education for peace and human rights and education for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2014*a*). As already mentioned, this kind of education aimed at fostering international and intercultural understanding, as well as building a culture of peace. Indeed, “peace and human rights education has a vital role to play in reducing prejudice and shaping attitudes and behaviours of tolerance, and in creating a culture of peace and respect for human rights for all people” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 44). Moreover, the Organization framed its work with the UNESCO’s Interdisciplinary and Intersectoral Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (UNESCO, 2014*a*).

The third pillar is education for global citizenship. This principle, developed during the previous period and which has its roots in previous UNESCO’s reflections on education for responsible citizenship, is strongly promoted in UNESCO’s programmatic documents. Indeed, the second strategic objective (and relative Main Line of Action) is

“empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 19). It is perceived that education should be relevant and responsive to the challenges of the 21st century, and education for global citizenship (together with education for peace and education for sustainable development) is a key element of the relevance of education. However, global citizenship education is not unproblematic. In fact, UNESCO recognized that in today’s world, transnational forms of citizenship are growing and there is a need to rethink citizenship education in a context of a globalized interconnected world. There is a need to rethink the “commitment to engage in civic and social action based on a sense of individual responsibility towards communities, at the local, national and global levels” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 67). These three pillars are particularly important because they are enshrined in the formulation of the SDG-4. In particular target 4.7 includes the commitment to:

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development (UN, 2015, p. 17)

The last pillar of this humanistic vision is health education. Health education is one of the thematic areas on which UNESCO focused its efforts. It constituted an expected result and it was focused on the promotion of healthy lifestyles, comprehensive sexuality education and safe environment (UNESCO, 2016c).

UNESCO’s work on health education, including HIV and comprehensive sexuality education, will benefit from existing partnerships and initiatives including EDUCAIDS; Focusing Resources for Effective School Health (FRESH); renewed partnership with WFP and UNICEF on school feeding; and other approaches that emphasize the importance of a holistic, sector-wide view of the impacts and challenges of health issues and the need to bring together the health and education sectors, with the priority for UNESCO to support learning in relation to the achievement of better health and wellbeing. (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 41).

EQUITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION – Inclusive education

The reflections of UNESCO on equity are very similar to the previous periods. In fact, the Organization promoted values and principles such as education as a human right, the principle of inclusion and gender equality.

UNESCO strongly advocated for a human rights based approach to education, and for education for human rights. The right to education is conceived as a key right that enables the enjoyment of other rights and conduces to development. “Indeed, education is both a fundamental human right and a precondition for reaching other development objectives such as poverty reduction and health improvement, and thus contributes directly to UNESCO’s overarching objectives to help build peace and sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 24). Particularly interesting is noting that literacy is promoted as a human right (UNESCO, 2016*c*). During this period, there is a renovated attention to education as a public good, a principle for governance. This principle was promoted and investigated during the third period and it was “abandoned” during the fourth one.

Particularly interesting is that it was clearly and openly stated that equity should be promoted *in and through* education (UNESCO, 2014*a*; 2016*c*). Education has a role to play in not reproducing socio economic inequalities (UNESCO, 2015*b*), which are perceived as a global challenge, and also to reduce these equality gaps. Equity is then promoted and monitored at all levels of education:

In particular, recognizing that the development of key competencies among disadvantaged groups early in their lifecycle can play an important role in fostering social and individual development and in reducing socio-economic inequalities, UNESCO will build on its work in the areas of early childhood care and education (ECCE) and literacy to broaden the framework of education by mobilizing and working effectively with partners that are traditionally outside the education sector, such as health and nutrition. (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 34)

For UNESCO there are several factors that enable equity. The idea that teachers are not only the enabling factors of quality, but also of equity in education is promoted in this period (UNESCO, 2014*b*). ICTs also enhance the opportunities to “reach the unreached”

and the most disadvantaged and they are essential to build more equitable lifelong learning societies (*idem*).

Like the previous period, the central, promoted principle is inclusion. Indeed, the first of UNESCO's strategic objective is to "supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and *inclusive* lifelong learning for all". Inclusive education, and particularly inclusive lifelong learning, is strongly linked to a humanistic vision. In fact, the flagship publication stated that "a humanistic approach takes the debate on education beyond its utilitarian role in economic development. It has a central concern for inclusiveness and for an education that does not exclude and marginalize" (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 37). In this view, UNESCO promoted inclusive education environments (UNESCO, 2016*c*), learner centred pedagogy (*idem*), as well as the collaboration with the private sector in expanding the educational opportunities to reach the unreached (UNESCO, 2014*b*). The importance of inclusion is also witnessed by the fact that inclusive education is integrated in the SDG-4 "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all".

Gender equality was still a global priority together with Africa. UNESCO recognized that "gender has been a traditional factor of inequality and disparity in education, most often to the disadvantage of girls and women" (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 43). Indeed, despite the progress made since 1990 in increasing access to basic education and reducing gender inequalities in education, "there are still millions of children, youth and adults who are deprived of opportunities for learning, the majority of whom are girls and women" (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 24). In the Organization's programme there is the will to intensify efforts towards achieving gender equality in education by mainstreaming gender equality in and through education, and gender- specific programming in targeted programme areas (UNESCO, 2014*a*) such as for example the gender responsive literacy programmes (UNESCO, 2016*c*). UNESCO also developed the second Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2014-2021 and collaborated in the Secretary-General's Five-Year Action Agenda in which gender equality is presented as an accelerator for sustainable development.

QUALITY AND RELEVANT EDUCATION – meaningful, effective and relevant learning

In these years, UNESCO promoted several values and concepts that are related to the principles of quality and the relevance of education. Although the reflections on quality education are similar to previous periods, the renewed attention to relevance is noteworthy. This attention to quality and relevance is clearly reflected in the Medium Term Strategy that suggested that education systems designed during the past century are no longer relevant for the demands for the knowledge societies of the twenty-first century (UNESCO, 2014a).

As noted above, quality learning is a global challenge for UNESCO and has been a central concern and area of work of UNESCO from the beginning of EFA. Like in previous periods, there is a sort of “quality mainstreaming”, in which the term quality is associated to all levels and dimensions of education, so that there is “quality lifelong learning”, “quality early childhood care and education”, “quality TVET” and so on (UNESCO, 2014b; 2016c). It thus demonstrates the importance it had in constituting the notion of education for UNESCO. Moreover, if “quality” was one of the six goals of EFA II, now in the SDGs framework it is enshrined within the formulation of the goal 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable *quality* education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

The reflections of UNESCO seem to associate the notion of quality with learning outcomes and effective learning. Indeed, in several passages, UNESCO has noted that there is a mass of children and youth who did not learn the basics although they went to school. 250 million children are not able to read, write or count well even after spending several years at school. An increase in the attention of effective learning is noticeable: “growing concerns for the quality of education have led to heightened interests in learning, particularly in monitoring and assessing the processes and outcomes of learning to improve the overall quality of education” (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 34). Improving learning is thus one of the expected results of these years, and in order to pursue it, UNESCO performed activities on curriculum, pedagogy, and learning assessment. The assessment of learning became an important activity of UNESCO which participated in

the Learning Metrics Task Force in the definition of the “essential set of competencies and the assessment tools of education quality” (*idem*, p. 35).

The programmatic and flagship documents reveal an attention to the drivers and enablers of quality. Like previous periods, teachers and their training constitute the essential element of quality education. However, they are not the only driver. In fact, the programmatic documents also showed that “school leadership” has an important function in ensuring quality education. Moreover, in light of quality education as effective learning, UNESCO promoted the adoption of ICTs in education to improve quality: “the increasing availability of information and knowledge through technology is transforming education systems and expanding learning opportunities. UNESCO will promote the adoption of ICTs in education to improve access to knowledge, facilitate its dissemination and ensure more effective learning” (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 32). Another element of quality is the content of education, and UNESCO promoted education for sustainable development as an integral component of quality education (UNESCO, 2014a). This is due to the fact that an essential element of quality is the relevance of what is learnt. In fact, the flagship publication provided an interesting understanding of quality education: “the right to quality education is the right to meaningful and relevant learning” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 32).

As already mentioned, there is a renewed attention to relevance: “relevance” is mentioned in UNESCO’s programmatic documents several times and many concepts and ideas related to it are promoted. In particular, UNESCO believed that education should enable people to acquire competencies that are relevant for the contemporary challenges such as education for sustainable development and global citizenship:

This will be achieved by supporting Member States to ensure that learning content, environments, practices and processes foster the acquisition of relevant competencies necessary to tackle local and global challenges, such as critical thinking, creativity, understanding of the ethical dimensions of human development, and active and responsible citizenship (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 19).

Moreover, higher education should be reinvented in light of relevance. Indeed, UNESCO recognized that with the expansion of student population at higher level, there is a need

to increase the different forms and specializations of higher education, adapting it to changing and pressing demands (UNESCO, 2016c). However, the reflections of relevance touched upon issues of culture. In fact, there is a growing attention to provide an education that is relevant to local context and to diverse knowledge systems. In particular, UNESCO enhanced its attention to the needs of indigenous peoples who “continue to be disproportionately represented among the most marginalized and impoverished segments of society” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 17). Therefore, the Organization aimed at implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and contributed to the UNGA World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014. Although always present in the Organization’s reflections, in this period the importance of relevance and cultural diversity is more explicit:

Relevant learning must therefore reflect what each culture, each human group, defines as what is required to live in dignity. We must accept that there are many different ways of defining the quality of life, and thus very diverse ways of defining what needs to be learned. Dominant utilitarian conceptions of education should accede to the expression of other ways of understanding human well-being, and thus, to a focus on the relevance of education as a common good (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 33).

ENABLING FUNCTION – Transformative and adaptive roles of education

Particularly innovative in respect to previous periods, UNESCO clearly defines education as having both a transformative and adaptive role which are two essential dimensions of the enabling function of education and constitute the UNESCO’s notion of education for the period. Indeed, as the flagship publication stated:

All forms of organized learning can be both adaptive and transformative. Basic education of good quality and further learning and training are essential to enable individuals and communities to adapt to environmental, social and economic change at local and global levels. But learning is also crucial for empowerment and the development of capabilities to effect social transformation (*idem*, p. 32).

The transformative role of education was strongly promoted in all documents. The key publication directly pointed it: “there is no more powerful transformative force than education” (*idem*, p. 4). Like in the previous period, there is a growing understanding of the capacity of education to face and impact global challenges. Indeed, education

constitutes a powerful means to instil values and attitudes to tackle climate change, leading to a more sustainable, environmentally aware development (UNESCO, 2014a). In this view, UNESCO strongly believed that education is a driver of change because learners are provided with the necessary competences to be aware and to respond adequately to the pressing global challenges of the time: such as inequalities, equitable sustainable development, peace and security.

At the heart of these reflections, there is the idea that education plays a role in the development of learners' capacity to transform and improve their future and the one of their communities (UNESCO, 2014b). In this regard, UNESCO promoted the concept of "learning for empowerment" and specifically the role of education in empowering women (UNESCO, 2016c). The second strategic objective and Main Line of Action explicitly address this vision: "empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens". Therefore, sustainable development, peace, and global citizenship can be achieved through an enabling and transformative education.

Although the transformative role seems to be the most promoted concept, UNESCO developed several activities that are more related to an adaptive role of education. In particular, in order to face the global challenge of unemployment, the Organization focused its attention on the transition from education to the world of work. Education should enable youth to adapt to the changing needs of labour market and education systems should be transformed in these view (*idem*). In particular, the flagship publication reflected that "this [the changing societal context] has spurred efforts to establish more responsive education and professional skills development that include greater diversification and flexibility, allowing for the adaptation of competencies to rapidly changing needs" (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 60), and that there is a need to reconsider the links between education and the world of work.

In this view, UNESCO reinforced its activities on TVET. In particular, it promoted a new TVET Strategy based on the recommendations of the Third International Congress on TVET, known as the 'Shanghai Consensus', as well as in light of the SDGs. In fact three (4.3; 4.4; 4.5) of the targets of SDG-4 integrated TVET issues, in particular Target 4.3: "By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" (UN, 2015, p. 17).

Globalization, technological advances, demographic pressures, social inequalities and the quest for sustainable development are creating rising demand for TVET policies and programmes that respond to labour market demands, support youth transitions between education and the world of work, and promote poverty reduction, social inclusion and gender equality. This calls for a holistic transformation of TVET, based on policy evidence and experience, with a focus on lifelong learning through horizontal and vertical articulation within education and between education and the world of work (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 30).

HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LIFELONG LEARNING – life-wide learning

In this period UNESCO further developed its reflections on the holistic approach to education. Promoting a holistic approach meant promoting an education which is “encompassing all levels, pathways and delivery modes” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 25). Therefore, the Organization fully embraced and took forward the lifelong learning paradigm and vision of previous periods.

UNESCO recognized that “lifelong learning is the philosophy, conceptual framework and organizing principle for education in the 21st century” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 26). The Organization integrated this paradigm in programming promoting an holistic approach to education that goes from ECCE to higher education and it includes adult literacy and life skills development (UNESCO, 2016*c*); thus, concentrating efforts in the educational continuum. In particular, UNESCO focused its energies in “three building blocks” of lifelong learning societies: literacy, TVET, and higher education.

The extreme importance of lifelong learning paradigm in UNESCO’s reflection and activities can be witnessed by the fact that the first strategic objective (and Main Line of Action) clearly refers to this principle. It can be noticed that, here and elsewhere in UNESCO’s programmatic documents, lifelong learning is often associated with the terms “quality” and “inclusive”. Indeed, quality and inclusive lifelong learning is at the centre of the SDG-4.

This attention to learning that is happening lifelong and life-wide derived from an historic reflection and approach to learning that UNESCO held from the 1972 Faure Report, which promoted the concept of lifelong education, and from the 1996 Delors Report. At

the basis of this idea there is the perception that “learning landscapes” are changing, as the flagship publication stated: “there is a move from traditional educational institutions towards mixed, diverse and complex learning landscapes in which formal, non-formal and informal learning occur through a variety of educational institutions and third-party providers” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 48). These new learning landscapes are shaping the ways in which people learn, and in particular how learning opportunities are organized. Indeed, UNESCO advocated for an holistic approach to education that recognized the importance of alternative pathways to learning and the interdependency of all delivery modes of learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2014*b*).

Moreover, there are other factors that encouraged UNESCO to promote the “relevance of lifelong learning” framework (*idem*) and to move toward “open and flexible lifelong learning systems” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 63). For example, the availability of information and knowledge through technology that is expanding learning opportunities and self-learning (UNESCO, 2014*b*) or the mobility of workers and learners between countries, across jobs and in learning spaces (UNESCO, 2015*b*). These processes have created the need to reconsider the recognition, validation and assessment scheme of learning outcomes and competencies. Indeed, a lifelong learning framework requires the recognition and validation of competencies acquired through different (even non formal) pathways (*idem*).

However, the holistic approach to education promoted by UNESCO is not limited to recognizing the organization of learning. In fact, it recognizes the interdependence of “physical and intellectual well-being, as well as the interplay of the emotional and cognitive, analytical and creative brain” (*idem*, p. 27). Holistic approach meant that all forms of learning should be taken into account and the traditional dichotomies between cognitive, emotional and ethical aspects should be overcome. “Learning” is thus the central and essential element of this period. Hence, UNESCO performed several activities in defining “learning”, advocating for an holistic approach to learning which takes into account the development of capabilities, skills and competencies in a lifelong learning perspective (UNESCO, 2014*b*). In the flagship publication, “learning” is conceived as both the processes of acquiring knowledge, as well as the results of this process

(UNESCO, 2015*b*). In this regard, particularly relevant became the work UNESCO performed on learning assessments.

5.5.5 Agenda-setting Mechanisms

Value setting remained the most used mechanism in terms of number of activities together with capacity building, while the goal setting mechanism acquired high relevance in terms of cross programmatic importance. In line with previous period, all mechanisms benefitted from the activities performed under goal setting and they showed patterns of growing interdependency. Therefore, like previous period, these years are characterized by the interdependence of mechanisms while value setting, capacity building and goal setting remained the most important. For example, UNESCO supported Member States in design of technology policies through policy dialogue, capacity development, peer learning and benchmarking (UNESCO, 2014*b*). Further, UNESCO aimed at

...undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment; facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge-sharing and standard setting; monitoring progress towards the education targets; convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide the implementation of the agenda; and functioning as a focal point for education within the overall SDG coordination architecture (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 49).

Moreover, these years are marked by a growing awareness of the global governance significance of these mechanisms. In fact, it is clearly presented that performing such activities has important implication in the identification of policy priorities at national and international levels. A sentence in the Medium Term Strategy is particularly illustrative: “it will facilitate national assessments of progress towards EFA and support the identification of policy priorities at country level and as a foundation for establishing the post-2015 education agenda at the regional and global levels” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 20).

VALUE SETTING

The fifth period reaffirmed that, like all previous periods, value setting is the most used mechanism of agenda-setting of UNESCO. In particular, this mechanism showed a paramount programmatic and conceptual relevance. Indeed, it is related to the first function of UNESCO which is “serving as a laboratory of ideas and generating innovative

proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence” (*idem*, p. 19), but it is also closely related to all other agenda-setting mechanisms. In fact, there are several activities performed by UNESCO which are both related to value setting and capacity building, goal setting, and standard setting. For example, values are set through capacity building activities. Indeed, in the second biennium, UNESCO focused on ensuring that planning activities promoted the principle of equity in education systems (UNESCO, 2016c), or in the first biennium UNESCO recognized that policy reviews are a strategic process for knowledge sharing, peer learning and policy dialogue on common educational challenges (UNESCO, 2014b). Values are also set through goal setting:

At a time when the new development agenda is being set, UNESCO will continue to seek to raise the profile of education among competing development priorities and lead the debate on EFA and the education-related MDGs after 2015 [...] In MLA 3, UNESCO’s work will aim at steering international debate on critical issues and emerging challenges for education. The Organization is expected by the international community to take a leading role in identifying lessons for the future, guide the debate on the future of education, monitor global education progress, mobilize partnerships for education and provide a coordination role at the global level (*idem*, p. 42).

Finally, values are set through policy dialogue on standards set and through the work on defining learning assessment. Indeed, UNESCO encouraged the use of monitoring and benchmarking systems to foster policy dialogue (UNESCO, 2016c).

From the programmatic documents, it can be inferred that values are set through these five different modalities which are similar to the ones of previous periods: i) worldwide policy dialogue; ii) research and foresight activities; iii) global advocacy measures; iv) decades and international conferences; and v) partnerships and networks.

i) Worldwide policy dialogue. UNESCO organized several kinds of global policy dialogues. These policy dialogues organized by UNESCO saw the participation of various stakeholders at different levels. In fact, UNESCO performed interministerial coordination, regional debates and national *fora*. This global dialogue can be of a more technical nature, for example: UNESCO promoted an expanded vision of skills and competencies through technical consultations with several stakeholders for identifying a precise set of competencies (UNESCO, 2014b). However, the majority of these policy

dialogues were performed in light of the establishment of the new education agenda, or through the structures of the global education agenda. Indeed, UNESCO was mandated to lead the debates on post 2015 and it aimed at “keeping education high on the global development agenda” among competing priorities (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 19). Moreover, it built regional policy dialogues to recognize education challenges and needs in order to lay the foundations for the post 2015 scenario (UNESCO, 2014*b*)

ii) Research and foresight activities. In these years, the research and foresight was strengthened as a measure to promote values and principles in line with what was done during the previous period. As the first Programme and Budget stated, UNESCO has always been demanded to inspire forward looking directions and approaches to education in order to guide education policy development thanks to the wealth of knowledge and the comparative advantage it had (UNESCO, 2014*b*). Thus, the research and foresight activities are perceived as relevant and an essential element of UNESCO’s function in the international education landscape.

Moreover, the research and foresight activities aimed at promoting international debates on the educational challenges perceived and analysed. In addition, it suggested issues and educational themes to be further developed and integrated into the research agendas (UNESCO, 2014*b*; 2016*c*). The Organization aimed at being a platform for global debates, a laboratory of ideas, inspiring a new call for dialogue through the new world report on education (the flagship publication analysed for this period):

Charting new paradigms of learning: Building upon the work initiated in the past biennia, in particular the critical review of the two landmark UNESCO publications, *Learning to be* (1972) and *Learning: The treasure within* (1996) in light of social transformations underway since the mid-1990s, UNESCO will initiate further debate and research on learning in a changing world and may consider the possible development of a new world report on education and learning in the twenty-first century (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 43).

In addition, UNESCO produced a series of technical and monitoring works which showcased important educational values and principles and can shed light, and capture the international community’s attention on particular aspects of education. For example, UNESCO produced the guidelines on open educational resources, various reports on the

right to education, and the flagship publication GMR which after 2015 it was renamed as Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR).

iii) Global advocacy measures. Like in previous periods, UNESCO performed some activities to capture global attention and to advocate for particular aspects of education. Among these activities, there is the celebration of prizes such as the Japan ESD Prize (UNESCO, 2014*b*), as well as Literacy Prizes. Moreover, it celebrated international days and weeks. For example, UNESCO took part of the celebration of the Global Action Week (UNESCO, 2016*c*), and organized the Mobile Learning Week. In addition, it contributed to global initiatives and *fora* such as the GEFI, the Education Cannot Wait Fund established in 2015 after the Oslo Summit on Education for Development, and the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity.

iv) Decades and international conferences. Several are the decades and framework for action that are established in these years and UNESCO contributed to some of them (see § 4.2.1). However, in this period UNESCO organized some pivotal educational events. Firstly, it participated to the World Conference on indigenous people in 2014. It organized the second Global EFA Meeting in Oman in 2014 leading to the Muscat Agreement for the preparation of the post 2015 agenda. It then organized the World Conference on education for sustainable development, which helped UNESCO in its effort to include education for sustainable development in the post 2015 global education and sustainable development agenda.

Finally, UNESCO organized the World Education Forum in Incheon (Republic of Korea) in 2015 which adopted the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

v) Partnerships and networks. Differently from previous period, UNESCO was much keener on using its own set of networks and partnerships rather than developing a new and innovative one. Values were thus promoted through the work of its Category 1 Institutes, the UNEVOC, and UNITWIN. It also promoted values through the structures built for the international agendas such as the Steering Committee, the CCNGO, and the E-9 initiative. Among the partnerships built during these years there are the “Interagency working group on TVET”, and UNESCO advocated within the G20 and G7 processes.

Particularly important was also the historic UNESCO's school network ASPnet, which would be tasked to support countries in translating knowledge in action, promoting global citizenship education, in the context of the 60th Anniversary of the Network (UNESCO, 2014*b*).

CAPACITY BUILDING

This mechanism entails two sub mechanisms: sharing best practices and provision of technical guidance, assistance and judgement. This mechanism was one of the most used and gained even more attention in this period. The importance of this mechanism is witnessed by the fact that eight (out of thirteen for the first biennium, and out of eleven for the second biennium) expected results are clearly and strongly related to capacity building (see § 5.5.6). Indeed, capacity building is an aspect of one of the five main functions highlighted in the Medium Term Strategy: “providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 19). Both sub mechanisms are used extensively in UNESCO's work programme and capacity building is growingly interrelated to the other agenda-setting mechanisms. For example, some capacity building activities are related to the implementation of the international education agenda: UNESCO's work in the second biennium aimed at providing technical support and capacity development for Member States in order to implement the new Education 2030 agenda (UNESCO, 2016*c*).

Regarding the dissemination of best practices, UNESCO performed activities of two kinds: i) promoting best practices through established networks; and ii) performing and disseminating research analysis. Differently from the previous period, the best practices shared are of more general nature and not only related to EFA II. This can be explained by the fact that the new agenda is not focused on basic education but it covers a wider range of educational issues.

i) Networks. Among the different modalities of best practices sharing, UNESCO privileged using its own already existing networks. Indeed, “UNESCO with its worldwide networks and global reach is well placed to enhance international and regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing among all its Member States” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 20). Differently from previous period, the range and number of networks engaged in best

practices sharing is shorter and mainly already linked to the Organization (no longer G 77 + China for example). UNESCO aimed at strengthening cooperation and knowledge sharing with its UNEVOC project, the UNITWIN programme and the ASPnet. Moreover, the Organization established a particular modality in the different educational domains. For example, UNESCO engaged its Category 1 Education Institutes and networks in sharing best practices and providing policy advices in their specific domains (UNESCO, 2014*b*). While in education for sustainable development UNESCO aimed at creating “a global community of practice” showcasing best practices through global *fora* and the celebration of prizes (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 47).

ii) Research analysis. Although less used than the first modality, through its clearing house function (which is not openly recognized in this period), UNESCO developed vast research that collected best practices to disseminate to Member States. As the second biennium Programme and Budget stated: “there is growing demand for policy review and policy learning. Policy reviews are emerging as a strategic process for promoting dialogue, exchange and peer learning around education challenges and related responses” (*idem*).

As to the technical assistance provided by UNESCO, it is possible to recognize three kinds of activities: i) global policy analysis; ii) national policy review and assessment; and iii) training. In particular, the first Programme and Budget defined and shared different tasks among decentralization levels of the Organization:

Headquarter units will carry out work related to setting and monitoring global norms and standards; serve as a laboratory of ideas; strengthen international cooperation and knowledge sharing; and provide overall strategic direction and programmatic backstopping to field offices. The regional education offices will also provide direct backstopping to the field offices in their respective region, implement regional activities, and facilitate regional exchange and cooperation. National offices will carry out capacity development activities and provide direct technical assistance and policy advice at country level (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 25).

i) Global policy analysis. One modality of work on capacity building is to perform global policy analysis and to inform Member States with the results of such analysis. These analyses contribute to policy development through the process of identification of current

challenges and trends and through the provision of possible policy solutions and policy options. In particular, this kind of activity is performed by Headquarters which has the mandate to provide overall strategic direction and reflection, often in light of the broader international development goals (UNESCO, 2014*a*). For example, UNESCO aimed at documenting new trends and pioneering ways in the use of technologies in monitoring and evaluation processes, enhancing national capacities in these processes (UNESCO, 2014*b*).

ii) National policy review. Technical assistance at country level is among the most used kind of capacity building activity. Indeed, UNESCO provided technical advice for needs analysis and policy formulation at country level (UNESCO, 2016*c*). Moreover, technical assistance at country level showed an increased interconnection with other agenda-setting mechanisms such as value setting and standard setting: policy reviews were seen as a strategic process to foster policy dialogue and peer learning (UNESCO, 2014*b*). This technical support is mainly performed by National and Field Offices, as well as by Category 1 Institutes, such as the UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning, which worked for supporting Member States in developing lifelong learning policies (UNESCO, 2014*b*). Often these activities are performed in countries facing particular challenges in achieving education goals and lacking institutional capacities. Interesting is noting that UNESCO growingly recognized the global governance significance of these activities of capacity building, which have a decisive role in setting policy priorities. For example, UNESCO provided support for sector-wide planning and

Educational planning provides the rigorous and evidence-driven framework and process to guide priority setting and budgeting decisions. Contemporary successful planning involves wide consultative processes bringing together all stakeholders, as a means to ensure national ownership, intra- and intersectoral coherence as well as consistency with the country socioeconomic development and long-term planning (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 33).

iii) Training. At country level capacity building has been performed also through training activities in order to develop institutional and human capacity. Training activities are also part of the CapEFA (later on called CapEd) programme. Category 1 Institutes and national offices are mainly in charge of carrying out training activities and provide direct

technical assistance and policy advice at country level. Particularly active in delivering training are the IIEP and the IICBA. Indeed, UNESCO developed an ad-hoc strategy on teachers and “teacher quality imperative” which entail teacher training activities through its IICBA (UNESCO, 2014*b*).

GOAL SETTING

As already noted, goal setting activities are closely related to the main functions of UNESCO. In particular, the Medium Term Strategy presented as a second function: “developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 14). The formulation of this second function already shows the close integration of global agenda-setting with the other mechanisms such as capacity building and standard setting. However, like previous period, all agenda-setting mechanisms benefit from the structures and content of the goals set by UNESCO (see § 1.3.5). The connections between goal setting and standard setting is even more evident in the activities performed during the first biennium in which the monitoring function is also related to EFA II goals. “UNESCO will continue to play a central role in monitoring compliance with various international normative instruments that promote different dimensions of the right to education and progress towards the six EFA goals and beyond” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 44). This integration demonstrates the high conceptual and cross programmatic relevance that acquired this mechanism throughout the periods.

Particularly interesting is noting that UNESCO acquired a growing awareness of the significance of goal setting in global governance. In fact, it is clearly associated to policy priority identification at national, regional and global levels. As stated by the Medium Term Strategy: UNESCO “will facilitate national assessments of progress towards EFA and support the identification of policy priorities at country level and as a foundation for establishing the post-2015 education agenda at the regional and global levels” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 20).

This period is marked by a transitional phase from EFA II to SDG framework. For this reason, it is possible to see four different directions of activities of goal setting: i) accelerating progress toward EFA II; ii) prepare and set the new education agenda; iii)

coordinate and lead the implementation of SDG-4; and iv) participate in other international agendas.

It is important to notice that UNESCO aimed at working more closely with the UN as the Independent External Evaluation suggested. This alignment with the UN is witnessed by important initiatives. On the one hand, UNESCO is contributed “towards successful United Nations system-wide cooperation at country, regional and global levels, aiming at a strong and effective United Nations system” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 6) also through special project such as the ‘One UN’ and Humanitarian Reform processes; on the other hand, UNESCO agreed to integrate its EFA experience of leading an international development agenda with the broader UN development agenda of SDGs. Indeed, as it has been explained, in this phase of EFA II coordination, the commitments of UNESCO were twofold: i) to support the final push toward EFA II goals, and ii) to lead the debate for the post 2015 education agenda (see § 4.2.4).

i) EFA II. Since the period started, in 2014, there was still one year before the end of the EFA II agenda. For this reason, UNESCO maintained its commitment toward EFA II and tried to accelerate progress toward the achievement of the six Dakar goals. In fact, the third Strategic Objective of the Medium Term Strategy aimed at “advancing Education for All (EFA) and shaping the future international education agenda” (*idem*, p. 13). Indeed, UNESCO performed activities in order to “mobilize the international community to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals before the target year of 2015” (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 24), supporting the countries most at risk of not achieving the goals, and aimed at maintaining “the collaborative momentum” of all EFA partners entering the final phase of EFA II and reviewing and examining “EFA progress and process for the period 2000-2015 at national, regional and global levels in order to report on them in 2015” (*idem*, p. 45). Moreover, it supported the “final push” through the existing EFA II coordination structures (regional structures, Steering Committee, GEM) and through providing the Secretariat for GEFI.

ii) Post 2015 debate. Among the activities of goal setting there is the coordination of the debate for setting the new education agenda. In fact, the strategic objective entailed the aim to shape the future international education agenda (UNESCO, 2014a) and one of the expected results of the first biennium is: “future education agenda and global education

policies shaped, drawing on relevant research and foresight studies conducted by UNESCO and other institutions” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 43). In particular, UNESCO aimed at keeping education high in the development agenda and enhancing the “profile of education among competing development priorities” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 42). Moreover, through its research and foresight activities, UNESCO recognized the most pressing education challenges in order to identify and guide the definition of the new international education agenda beyond 2015 (*idem*). Particularly telling is the following programme activity:

Setting a new education agenda: Leading up to 2015, UNESCO will inform the international education debate and organize sub-regional and regional debates on the post-2015 education agenda. In 2015, it will organize a global conference which will provide direction and guidance for the coming years by adopting a new education agenda. Beyond 2015, UNESCO will facilitate policy dialogue and knowledge generation on all aspects of the new agenda. Furthermore, with financial support from Member States, UNESCO will organize during this period an International Conference on Education (ICE) as a platform for debate on an education issue of global concern. (*idem*, p. 43)

iii) Coordinate SDG-4. After the World Education Forum of Incheon and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNESCO was mandated to lead and coordinate the implementation of the Education 2030 agenda. As noted above (see § 4.2.4), the Education 2030 agenda means the education related agenda entailed in the broader development agenda enshrined within the SDG framework. In particular, the 38 C/5 included a new Main Line of Action different from the previous one: “leading and coordinating the education 2030 agenda through partnerships, monitoring and research” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 49). As the Programme and Budget stated, UNESCO performed several activities in order to coordinate this agenda. As the Incheon declaration and Framework for Action stated, UNESCO was mandated to build a global coordination mechanism for Education 2030. Several activities were thus related to maintaining and creating new or existing partnerships and structures, such as the regional conferences, the GPE, the E-9 Initiative, the Steering Committee, the GEMs, the partnerships with parliamentarians, academia and the private sector, as well as modifying accordingly the Teacher Task Force and the GEMR (see § 4.2.4).

iv) Other international agendas. Together with the overarching SDGs framework, UNESCO contributed to other international agendas and decades. Among these, UNESCO contributed to the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, the UNESCO's Interdisciplinary and Intersectoral Plan of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, the Seoul Agenda and Development Goals for Arts Education, the LIFE, as well as the International Conference on Adult Education and the Abuja Framework of Action and Cooperation. Particularly important was the follow up of the UNDESD. In fact, UNESCO organized, with the Government of Japan, the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in 2014 and built the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development for a post-UNDESD programme framework (UNESCO, 2016c). Moreover, UNESCO continued its work on health education with the initiatives such as EDUCAIDS, FRESH and renewed partnership with WFP and UNICEF on school feeding.

STANDARD SETTING

Standard setting mechanism is related to one of the five main functions established by the Medium Term Strategy: “setting norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 19). This mechanism maintained almost without variation its importance and relevance in terms of number of activities performed, while the *conceptual* relevance of this mechanism is high. Standard setting comprises two sub mechanisms: normative actions, and benchmarks and data production.

The normative actions performed by UNESCO in these years can be grouped in three interrelated dimensions: i) monitoring implementation of existing instruments; ii) reviewing instruments; iii) providing technical assistance for countries. It is important to notice that normative work is clearly defined as one implementation modality among others in the work programme, establishing a close relation to the other mechanisms: “implementation modalities will include capacity development, technical assistance and normative work, with increased emphasis on policy advice and knowledge building” (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 26).

i) Monitoring implementation. As a standard setter, UNESCO continued in this period to monitor “compliance with various international normative instruments” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 44) and these are mainly related to the different dimensions of the right to education and, more broadly, to the EFA II goals. Among the normative instruments that UNESCO monitored in these years there were the following:

the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960), Recommendations Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relation to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), Recommendation concerning the Status of higher Education Teaching Personnel (1997), Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher education (1993) and related regional conventions, the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989) and the 2001 recommendation. Moreover, the instruments elaborated by the UN (notably the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child) carry provisions analogous to those contained in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (*ibidem*).

Interesting noting that for UNESCO a particular convention also shapes the work of the Organization itself: “the Organization’s work will be framed by the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and other major international instruments” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 45). This monitoring function of existing conventions has the aim of positioning UNESCO as a central forum to elaborate and discuss ethical, normative and intellectual issues, exchanging visions, rallying intellectual cooperation and defining benchmarks (UNESCO, 2014*b*).

ii) Reviewing existing instruments. These years are not particularly prolific for new normative instruments. However, UNESCO considered the possibility of the development of a global convention on the recognition of higher education qualification (UNESCO, 2014*b*). More efforts are made to reviewing and updating existing conventions and frameworks in order to adapt them to increasingly fast changing reality, in particular in the field of TVET and the links between education and the world of work. Indeed, UNESCO’s work on standard setting aimed to support the Revised 2001 Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education, to map the most

relevant skills and competencies for the world of work, to enhance TVET monitoring and evaluation, and to better define the quality assurance of TVET qualifications at regional and global level (UNESCO, 2016c).

iii) Technical assistance. Technical assistance activities related to normative actions were already performed in previous years. In this period UNESCO continued its efforts in providing assistance to Member States in light of the recommendations that come from international normative instruments. Particularly interesting is noting that these kinds of activities connect strongly normative actions with capacity building mechanism: “within UNESCO’s normative mandate and with a view to assisting Member States in strengthening the foundation of the right to education in national legal systems, UNESCO will continue to monitor the compliance with these instruments and provide technical assistance to their implementation and translation into national legislation and practices” (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 44). As to the UNESCO’s work on benchmark and data production, the activities performed can be divided in two strands: i) indicator development and technical assistance to collect data for those indicators; and ii) policy oriented research and assessments.

i) Indicator development. Within the context of the new international education agenda, UNESCO took a role in the definition and development of the new sets of education indicators. In particular, the UIS led this process in consultation with the UN system’s bodies for the definition of the overall indicators for monitoring SDGs. Moreover, it helped Member States in the creation of necessary capacities to collect data for monitoring Education 2030 implementation.

Finally, UNESCO will take a lead role in reviewing and monitoring progress towards the Education 2030 agenda, both at the global level and by providing support to countries to develop national monitoring and evaluation systems, with a view to generate sound evidence for policy formulation and the management of education systems. [...] UNESCO will furthermore pursue its work related to identifying appropriate indicators to measure the new targets, building on the work previously undertaken by the technical advisory group (TAG) on the post-2015 indicators. (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 50)

ii) Policy oriented research and assessments. Associated to indicator development, UNESCO performed several activities in order to research and investigate further trends

in order to inform Member States on the possible policy solutions. In response to the need for evidence-based policy-making, the Organization fostered and encouraged the use of monitoring and evaluations systems to collect data and take necessary measures. The Organization developed and improved its education management information systems “to ensure evidence-based policy and planning but also to support education reforms and programme implementation, particularly through regular monitoring and evaluation” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 27). In addition, UNESCO continued to monitor progress toward the international education agenda established “through data collection, analysis and dissemination, also building on the rich experience of UIS and UNESCO’s flagship publication, the EFA Global Monitoring Report” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 20). This process of monitoring is encouraged in order to stimulate social dialogue and facilitate peer learning among Member States (UNESCO, 2014*b*).

Moreover, UNESCO engaged in the global efforts towards the definition of the essential set of competencies and the assessment tools of education quality. Indeed, UNESCO strengthened its technical and political support in contributing to “improve learning” through enhancing critical areas of learning effectiveness: *curricula*, pedagogy, and assessment (*idem*). In particular, UNESCO (the UIS) co-convened the Learning Metrics Task Force and continued to expand its work on system-level educational assessments through the existing work at the regional level “to develop local capacities in education assessment, and by providing data on learning achievement for policy-making” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 42).

FINANCIAL LEVERAGING

Financial leveraging was the least used among the mechanisms. Previous periods had always some activities that can be related to it. However, in these years, it was hard to find activities of financial leveraging. In fact, only two of them had to do with financial aid and financial leveraging. In particular, the Medium Term Strategy envisions for UNESCO a technical cooperation role in fundraising. Indeed, it strengthened “technical cooperation between developing countries and attracting funding from new and emerging donors” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 20). Furthermore, in the first biennium, UNESCO played a role in “facilitate equal partnerships and technical cooperation between developing countries and new donors” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 42).

5.5.6 Budget

With the withdrawal of the budget support of the United States of America, the Organization experienced a deep financial crisis. In fact, UNESCO saw a reduction of available funds of almost 20 % from regular budget. Moreover, the decrease in extra budgetary funds diminished total budget by another 10 %. Member States thus requested the Secretariat to provide a double budget line in the Programme and Budget. On the one hand, the Secretariat presented the normal allocation of funds with regular budget, on the other hand, it produced an expenditure plan which took into consideration only the actual funds available.

Therefore, out of the 1.055.397.000 USD of the first biennium (which was already a decrease of 11 % from previous biennium), UNESCO was able to spend only 909.397.000 USD, almost 24 % less. The second biennium had a similar situation. Moreover, the nominal growth of the regular budget was halted by a further decrease in the extrabudget support. This cut from regular budget meant that the Organization had to rely more on extra budgetary sources. However, extrabudget support returned to the levels of 10 years before.

Table 70: Total budget fifth period biennia

	Regular	Expenditure plan	Extra Budget	Total Budget	Total plan	% inc.
2014 2015	653.000.000	507.000.000	402.397.000	1.055.397.000	909.397.000	-11,60
2016 2017	667.000.000	518.000.000	392.012.600	1.059.012.600	910.012.600	0,34

However, the *share* of total budget allocated to Part II raised, reaching in 2016-2017 81%, which is the highest level ever.

Table 71: Total budget programme fifth period biennia

	Regular Budget Programme	Expenditure plan	Extra Budget Programme	Total Budget Programme	% of Total Budget
2014 – 2015	404.555.000	216.3000.000	376.125.600	780.680.600	73,97
2016 – 2017	485.844.400	363.911.100	373.084.100	858.928.500	81

As to the budget allocated to Major Programme Education, it is possible to see a strange trend. In fact, although education was declared as the top priority of the Organization, the share of total budget programme allocated to education was at the lowest level. Indeed, the Director-General stated in the Education Sector Strategy that “since 2009, I have been determined to promote education development as the top priority of the Organization – because education is a basic human right and the foundation for more sustainable, inclusive and just development” (UNESCO, 2014c, p. 3). However, the share fell from 26 % of the biennium 2012-2013 to 23 % of the biennium 2014-2015, which was still the highest share compared to the other Major Programmes.

Moreover, in real terms, looking at the expenditure plan of the regular budget, UNESCO had only 83 million USD. This meant that the education sector had the same amount of the biennium 1992-1993. In addition, the level of extra budget fell almost by half, from the 117.5 million USD to 63 million USD.

Table 72: Total budget education fifth period biennia

	Regular Budget Education	Expenditure plan	Extra budget Education	Total Budget Education	% of total programme
2014 2015	117.964.600	83.131.800	62.904.500	180.869.100	23
2016 2017	124.437.800	83.258.500	84.573.700	209.011.500	24

With these financial constraints, UNESCO was thus obliged to take emergency measures and find ways to prioritize actions. In July 2013 a special session of the Executive Board was held. During this Executive Board, Member States decided “to designate in each major programme the following order of priorities among the expected results, taking into consideration the priorities identified in 36 C/Resolution1” (UNESCO, 2013a, p. 1). A code of priority was assigned for each expected result, considering that a minimum of 20% of the resources should be earmarked for operational activities, as follow:

- budget priority A: 80-100% of the amount foreseen in document 37 C/5
- budget priority B: 40-80% of the amount foreseen in document 37 C/5
- budget priority C: 0-40% of the amount foreseen in document 37 C/5

Therefore, in this period, it is possible to trace what the budget priorities are for Member States.

Table 73: Education programme and budget 2014 - 2015

37 C/5 Education		Budget	Extrabudget
1. Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all		<u>64.878.600</u>	<u>37.525.900</u>
A	National capacities strengthened to develop and implement policies and plans within a lifelong learning framework	10.114.000	5.113.300
A	National capacities strengthened to scale up inclusive and gender responsive quality literacy programmes	9.582.000	8.620.600
A	Capacities of Member States strengthened to design and implement policies aiming at transforming TVET	9.701.000	6.172.000
B	National capacities strengthened to develop evidence-based higher education policies to address the challenges of equity, quality, inclusion, expansion, mobility and accountability	10.520.000	2.958.000
A	National capacities strengthened, including through regional cooperation, to develop and implement teacher policies and strategies so as to enhance the quality of education and promote gender equality	10.810.000	12.432.300
C	Capacities of Member States strengthened to promote, monitor and assess the processes and outcomes of competency-based learning	9.683.000	2.101.200
B	National capacities strengthened to develop and implement technology policies in education, particularly in teacher training and professional development	4.468.600	128.500
2. Empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens		<u>19.509.000</u>	<u>14.952.400</u>
B	Member States integrate peace and human rights education components in education policies and practices	7.486.000	1.566.600
B	Capacities of Member States strengthened to integrate ESD into education and learning, and ESD strengthened in the international policy agenda	8.850.000	4.400.600
B	Member States deliver good quality health education, HIV and comprehensive sexuality education that contribute to healthy lifestyles and gender equality	3.173.000	8.985.200
3. Advancing Education for All (EFA) and shaping the future international education agenda		<u>15.077.000</u>	<u>10.426.200</u>

C	Future education agenda and global education policies shaped, drawing on relevant research and foresight studies conducted by UNESCO and other institutions	2.230.000	194.200
C	Implementation of the right to education and progress towards international education goals promoted and monitored, and policy dialogue informed by the evidence generated	2.267.000	9.626.700
B	Political commitment for education reinforced sustained in the global, regional and national development agendas, and cooperation modalities promoted	10.580.000	605.300
Institutes		<u>18.500.000</u>	-

Table 74: Education programme and budget 2016 - 2017

38 C/5 Education		Budget	Expenditure plan	Extrabudget plan
1. Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all		<u>67.883.400</u>	<u>48.322.800</u>	<u>63.724.900</u>
A	National capacities strengthened to develop and implement policies and plans within a lifelong learning framework	15.707.400	10.898.700	11.840.100
A	National capacities strengthened to scale up inclusive and gender responsive quality literacy programmes	11.800.600	8.020.900	35.995.300
A	Capacities of Member States strengthened to design and implement policies aiming at transforming TVET	11.250.400	8.065.800	6.538.900
B	National capacities strengthened to develop evidence-based higher education policies to address the challenges of equity, quality, inclusion, expansion, mobility and accountability	7.963.100	5.962.600	3.107.700
A	National capacities strengthened, including through regional cooperation, to develop and implement teacher policies and strategies so as to enhance the quality of education and promote gender equality	14.183.100	10.194.200	3.500.600

C	Capacities of Member States strengthened to promote, monitor and assess the processes and outcomes of competency-based learning	4.365.300	3.145.300	1.975.500
B	National capacities strengthened to develop and implement technology policies in education, particularly in teacher training and professional development	2.613.500	2.035.300	766.800
2. Empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens		<u>11.806.500</u>	<u>8.777.700</u>	<u>8.488.500</u>
B	Member States integrate peace and human rights education components in education policies and practices	4.921.000	3.657.400	1.325.100
B	Capacities of Member States strengthened to integrate ESD into education and learning, and ESD strengthened in the international policy agenda	6.058.900	4.446.100	1.363.800
B	Member States deliver good quality health education, HIV and comprehensive sexuality education that contribute to healthy lifestyles and gender equality	826.600	674.200	5.799.600
3. Leading and coordinating the education 2030 agenda through partnerships, monitoring and research		<u>19.256.600</u>	<u>11.338.000</u>	<u>12.360.300</u>
B	Coordination and monitoring mechanisms established and evidence from research generated in support of sustained political commitment for Education 2030 agenda	19.256.600	11.338.000	12.360.300
Institutes		<u>25.491.300</u>	<u>14.820.000</u>	<u>-</u>

From the budget priority, several interesting findings can be inferred. In fact, as the codes of priority showed, capacity building activities related to lifelong learning and education systems are the ones that are most prioritized. In fact, not only the Main Line of Action 1 received the greatest share of regular budget, but also to the expected results contained in the first Main Line of Action was attributed the budget priority A. In particular, the first

expected result of “National capacities strengthened to develop and implement policies and plans within a lifelong learning framework”, which has to do with capacity building for lifelong learning systems, was the one that received the highest budget allocation.

Particularly controversial is the prioritization of education for sustainable development, peace and global citizenship. In fact, although the 38 C/5 stated that “in continuity with the 2014-2015 biennium, a stronger focus will be placed on enhancing the contribution of education to sustainable development, peace and global citizenship” (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 31) the budget priority assigned to the expected results of the second Main Line of Action was “B”. Therefore, the stronger focus on these areas is not reflected in budget prioritization.

Another interesting trend is seeing that coordinating and leading the international education agenda acquired a recognized position as a Main Line of Action. In fact, coordination activities of international goals, goal setting kinds of activity, was positioned as a Main Line of Action from the third period. With the new international agenda, the third Main Line of Action was completely dedicated to “leading and coordinating the education 2030 agenda”.

5.5.7 Synthesis and Changes

The reform process that was carried out during the previous period saw a decisive impulse in these years and several results can be witnessed in UNESCO’s prioritization of work. The Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO of 2010 had the mandate to “provide actionable and timely recommendations to the governing bodies and the Director-General on the positioning of the Organization to meet future needs and challenges, taking into account recent changes and reforms, past and future prospects, trends and opportunities” (UNESCO, 2010e, p. 6) and suggested important recommendations for the work of UNESCO. The Medium Term Strategy and the Programme and Budget documents integrated several of these recommendations (UNESCO, 2014a). In particular, UNESCO developed a Comprehensive Strategy Partnerships and promoted public private partnerships in education; and the Organization strengthened its participation in the broader development framework of the UN system.

The alignment with the UN process saw different steps in UNESCO's recent history and during these years it achieved important results. Indeed, a decisive alignment can be seen in relation to the participation in the SDGs and broader development agenda. UNESCO led (and aimed at leading) the debates on the post 2015 development agenda on educational issues, and it was appointed as the UN leading agency for the coordination and implementation of SDG-4. Therefore, UNESCO merged the experience of EFA II into the SDG framework.

A particular aspect that marked these years for the Organization was the financial crisis. In fact, with the withdrawal of budget support from USA, due to disagreement with UNESCO's Member States' decision to admit Palestine as a Member of the Organization, together with a fall of extra budgetary support, UNESCO saw a reduction of available funds of more than 22 %. Hence, the Secretariat prepared for 2016-2017 an expenditure plan in education of 167.832.200 USD, close to the 1992 – 1993 biennium levels.

Therefore, the concentration of efforts requested by budget constraints, together with the strategic direction of alignment with the UN development process is reflected in the prioritization of issues and activities in UNESCO's programme. This prioritization can be appreciated through the five analytical categories. Indeed, the global challenges perceived in these years are five: equitable sustainable development, peace, security and vulnerability, inequalities, quality learning, and education systems. The challenges perceived are similar but not equal to the previous period. While the macro categories constituting the notion of education are: a humanistic vision of education; equity in and through education; quality and relevant education; enabling function of education; and holistic approach to lifelong learning.

In particular, the three most important global challenges perceived are equitable sustainable development, peace, security and vulnerability, and inequalities which are all interrelated. In fact, UNESCO's mission statement covered two of the challenges and the global priorities of Africa and gender equality, to some extent, aimed at dealing with the challenge of inequalities: "as a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO – pursuant to its Constitution – contributes to the *building of peace*, the *eradication of poverty*, and *sustainable development* and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information" (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 13).

Particularly innovative is noting that the dimensions of inclusiveness and equity are more explicit and present while discussing the challenges of sustainable development. Moreover, “conflict and natural disaster are amongst the greatest obstacles to the realization of the internationally-agreed development goals” (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 28).

The gap between the rich and the poor is widening within and between countries. Equity and inclusion remain central challenges to ensure sustainable development. A large part of the world’s population is living in areas affected by conflict and violence. Moreover, natural disasters including those linked to climate change are having a particularly ravaging impact on the poorest (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 19).

These global challenges have important implications for the notion of education UNESCO held and the values, concepts and principles promoted. In fact, during these years UNESCO produced an important flagship publication (UNESCO, 2015*b*) which reflected upon and reaffirmed a humanistic vision of education. This vision, of both education and development (*idem*), consistent with the UNESCO’s humanistic mandate and agenda (UNESCO, 2014*a*), is based on humanistic principles, and has humanistic purposes. For UNESCO, humanistic values such as “respect for life and human dignity, equal rights and social justice, respect for cultural diversity, and international solidarity and shared responsibility all of which are fundamental aspects of our common humanity” (UNESCO, 2015*b*, p. 14) constitute the foundations of education. Moreover, the purposes of education entailed personal development, social cohesion, creation of a culture of peace, international understanding, and responsible citizenship. In fact, the three pillars on which UNESCO focused its attention and work were education for sustainable development, education for global citizenship, and education for peace and human rights. The prioritization of these three areas is reflected in the conceptual relevance they had and in the fact that they gained the status of being a separate Main Line of Action, although they did not received budget prioritization. Moreover, they are enshrined in the target 4.7 of the SDG-4.

Another important value that is strongly promoted in these years is equity in and through education. The equity dimension was an important component of previous period and this trend was followed in this years. Indeed, the reflections of UNESCO on equity are very similar to the previous periods, and the Organization promoted values and principles such

as education as a human right, the principle of inclusion and gender equality. Interesting is noting that literacy is promoted as a human right (UNESCO, 2016c), and that during this period, there is a renovated attention to education as a public good, a principle for governance. Under the attention of UNESCO, there were enabling factors of equity in education, such as qualified teachers, ICTs, school leaderships, and good governance. These factors are enablers of an inclusive education. As a matter of fact, the principle of inclusion is central to UNESCO's reflections on the kinds of education that should be promoted. Inclusive education is related to a humanistic vision, as the flagship publication stated: "a humanistic approach takes the debate on education beyond its utilitarian role in economic development. It has a central concern for inclusiveness and for an education that does not exclude and marginalize" (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 37). Moreover, UNESCO's attention to inclusion is reflected in UNESCO's first strategic objective: "supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and *inclusive* lifelong learning for all", and in the efforts done to integrate inclusion within the formulation of the SDG-4. The focus on equity is also witnessed by the overarching objective Africa and gender equality, and the work in favour of LDCs, SIDS, and youth.

Another novel feature in these years is the growing attention to employment and youth. The Organization developed a specific Operational Strategy on Youth for 2014-2021, and contributed to "mainstreaming of youth issues" (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 16). Indeed, unemployment and youth unemployment rates were rising and UNESCO perceived it as a global challenge: for UNESCO, patterns of "low-employment growth, rising youth unemployment and vulnerable employment" (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 15) are damaging security and equity, not only national economic growth. In this light, a stronger focus was placed on the enabling function of education and the link between education and the world of work. Indeed, UNESCO revised the recommendation on TVET, greater attention was paid to the relevance of education and the acquisition of competencies for the world of work, "and the constant need to upgrade competencies to meet labour market demands" (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 25).

As already mentioned, an important aspect that marked these years was the creation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with the passage to the new agenda the priority of work of UNESCO shifted from quality basic education to quality and

relevant *learning*. Although quality basic education remained a key challenge, the Organization expanded its attention focusing on a broader “learning challenge” and on “neglected education areas” beyond primary education (UNESCO, 2014a). UNESCO recognized that “the remarkable progress made in improving access to basic education has not been accompanied by a commensurate rise in the quality and relevance of education” (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 32). For these reasons, UNESCO growingly focused its attention on “learning outcomes”, for an education that is conducive to “actual learning”. Indeed, UNESCO performed several activities related to learning assessment and the recognition of learning acquired through different pathways. Indeed, the flagship publication illustrated that in a context of a knowledge-based and lifelong learning society (UNESCO, 2014b), in which the volume and amount of knowledge and information are growing, “learning” was the essential challenge of the time. “Improving learning” was thus one of the expected results of UNESCO’s programme (*idem*), while it stated that “learning to learn has never been as important as it is today” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 41). Interesting noting that there is a renewed attention to the issue of relevance of education and learning in light of the cultural contexts.

The attention to learning is associated to a global challenge of ensuring educational systems that can foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all. A holistic approach to lifelong learning is the paradigm and the organizing principle for educational systems. Indeed, the budget prioritization of the programme revealed that for UNESCO the key concern is “supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all” (UNESCO, 2014b), the first overarching objective. UNESCO strongly promoted the concept of “lifelong learning for all”, which is the aspiration of the SDG-4, and the challenge associated to create education systems that respond to the challenges of an holistic approach to learning: “this emphasis is in response to increased demand from Member States for support in [...] areas which are important building blocks for equitable lifelong learning societies” (*idem*, p. 26). For these reasons, UNESCO concentrated its efforts toward the governance of lifelong learning systems, performing activities related to teachers, monitoring and evaluation, supporting sector-wide educational reform and planning, and ensuring accountability in contexts of private public partnerships.

Therefore, it can be noticed that the goals and targets set in the SDGs are encapsulated in UNESCO's work in several ways. SDG-4 formulation influenced the prioritization of work of UNESCO, shaping the notion of education, which is now much more focused on learning and lifelong learning rather than quality basic education for all. Moreover, it required attention to certain aspects and challenges, with a growing focus on inclusion and employability. In addition, being a lead agency for the coordination and implementation of SDG-4, UNESCO reinforced and focused its goal setting activities on the coordination of the agenda through a separate Main Line of Action: "Leading and coordinating the education 2030 agenda through partnerships, monitoring and research". Particularly interesting is seeing a reduction of goals and decades to follow with a concentration of efforts in the overarching 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Finally, it can be noticed that UNESCO acquired a growing awareness of the global governance significance of goal setting. In fact, it is clearly associated to policy priority identification at national, regional and global levels. As stated by the Medium Term Strategy: UNESCO "will facilitate national assessments of progress towards EFA and support the identification of policy priorities at country level and as a foundation for establishing the post-2015 education agenda at the regional and global levels" (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 20).

As to the other agenda-setting mechanisms, like previous period, there is an increasing integration -and more awareness- of interdependency among mechanisms and activities. All mechanisms benefitted from the activities performed under goal setting, and value setting, capacity building, and standard setting are growingly interconnected. For examples,

Through policy dialogue and capacity development, UNESCO will support Member States in the design and analysis of comprehensive technology policies for the reform of their education systems. It will facilitate benchmarking and peer-learning among Member States, and contribute to the definition of an international set of policy indicators and corresponding data collection (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 36).

...undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment; facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge-sharing and standard setting; monitoring progress towards the education targets; convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide the implementation

of the agenda; and functioning as a focal point for education within the overall SDG coordination architecture (UNESCO, 2016c, p. 49).

Value setting is still the most used mechanism of agenda-setting of the Organization. It is related to the first function of UNESCO which is “serving as a laboratory of ideas and generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 19). From the programmatic documents, it can be inferred that values are set through five different modalities: i) worldwide policy dialogue; ii) research and foresight activities; iii) global advocacy measures; iv) decades and international conferences; and v) partnerships and networks. Particularly important for this mechanism was the organization of international conferences, such as the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in 2014, as well as the Global EFA Meeting and the World Education Forum in Incheon in 2015, in which the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action were adopted. Importantly, UNESCO expanded and strengthened its research and foresight activities in order to promote international debates on the educational challenges and to lead the discussion on the post 2015 agenda, and also in order to be a platform for global debates, a laboratory of ideas, inspiring a new call for dialogue through the new world report on education.

Capacity building was one of the most used mechanisms and gained even more attention in this period. The importance of this mechanism is witnessed by the fact that the vast majority of expected results are clearly related to capacity building and entailed capacity building activities. Capacity building is also an aspect of one of the five main functions highlighted in the Medium Term Strategy: “providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities” (*ibidem*). UNESCO performed activities on sharing best practices through: i) established networks; and ii) performing and disseminating research analysis. While technical assistance was performed in three ways: i) global policy analysis; ii) national policy review and assessment; and iii) training. Particularly interesting is noting a growing awareness of the importance of this mechanism and the division of labour among levels of decentralization of the Organization (UNESCO, 2014b).

As to the standard setting mechanism, its conceptual relevance is high, while the activities performed are less numerous than other mechanisms. Standard setting is related to one of

the five main functions established by the Medium Term Strategy: “setting norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation” (UNESCO, 2014*a*, p. 19). While the normative actions performed by UNESCO in these years can be grouped in three interrelated dimensions: i) monitoring implementation of existing instruments; ii) reviewing instruments; iii) providing technical assistance for countries; the UNESCO’s work on benchmark and data production can be divided in two strands: i) indicators development and technical assistance to collect data for those indicators; and ii) policy oriented research and assessments. Particularly relevant for the work of the Organization are the activities related to the definition of indicators for the SDGs and to “defining learning”. Indeed, UNESCO engaged in the global efforts towards the definition of the essential set of competencies and the assessment tools of education quality. UIS co-convened the Learning Metrics Task Force and continued to expand its work on system-level educational assessments through the existing work at the regional level “to develop local capacities in education assessment, and by providing data on learning achievement for policy-making” (UNESCO, 2016*c*, p. 42).

Table 75: Global challenges, notion of education, agenda-setting mechanisms fifth period

Fifth period 2014 - 2017		
GLOBAL CHALLENGES	NOTION OF EDUCATION	AGENDA-SETTING MECHANISMS
EQUITABLE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT A central concern. New humanism	HUMANISTIC VISION Foundational humanistic principles. Education for peace, global citizenship and sustainable development	VALUE SETTING i) worldwide policy dialogue; ii) research and foresight activities; iii) global advocacy measures; iv) decades and international conferences; and v) partnerships and networks.
INEQUALITIES Social inequalities. Privatization and inequalities of learning opportunities	EQUITY IN AND THROUGH EDUCATION Inclusive education	CAPACITY BUILDING Sharing best practices: i) promoting best practices through established networks; and ii) performing and disseminating research analysis Technical advice: i) global policy analysis; ii) national policy review and assessment; and iii) training.
QUALITY LEARNING Learning challenge, effective lifelong learning for all	QUALITY AND RELEVANT EDUCATION Meaningful, effective and relevant learning	GOAL SETTING i) Accelerating progress toward EFA II; ii) prepare and set the new education agenda; iii) coordinate and lead the implementation of SDG-4; and iv) participate in other international agendas.
PEACE, SECURITY and VULNERABILITY Violence, human rights and inequalities	ENABLING FUNCTION Transformative and adaptive role of education	STANDARD SETTING Normative actions: i) monitoring implementation of existing instruments; ii) reviewing instruments; iii) providing technical assistance for countries Benchmark and data: i) indicators development and technical assistance to collect data for those indicators; and ii) policy oriented research and assessments.
EDUCATION SYSTEMS Governance of lifelong learning systems	HOLISTIC APPROACH TO LIFELONG LEARNING Lifewide learning	FINANCIAL LEVERAGING Technical cooperation

CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this thesis was to examine the landscape of the global governance of education, the theoretical and methodological framework that highlights the current global space in which governance takes place, and describes the multiple processes and structures by which power and authority are distributed and exercised in order to steer education in a contemporary interconnected world. This research has focused on the role of IGOs in the global governance of education, and particularly on the role of UNESCO, the specialized agency of the UN with an educational mandate. By means of a thorough review of literature, an attempt has been made to understand “agenda-setting” better as a process of global governance, and specific agenda-setting mechanisms have been suggested as a key for this purpose. Thus, the research has aimed at shedding light on the evolution of the role of UNESCO in agenda-setting over time. This exercise has been useful as it not only provides a fresh outlook on the ways in which governance can be analysed, but it also creates new perspectives for studying the role of IGOs in global education policy. This new framework is a contribution to the field that could be also utilized by governance actors in order to reflect on, review and problematise their positioning within global governance.

Based on the research assumptions, and adopting a mixed methodology, an *ad hoc* theoretical framework and analytical categories were constructed and utilised to carry out content and discourse analyses of the main political documents of UNESCO from 1990 to 2017. From the analyses and main findings, four main conclusions can be drawn. The first conclusion highlights the possible usefulness of the theoretical framework built, which may contribute towards a better understanding and framing of the landscape of education governance in innovative ways. The second conclusion illustrates the evolution of UNESCO’s priorities in agenda-setting, taking into account its notion of education, its main lines of actions, and the challenges for which the Organization works. The interrelation and interdependence of these factors confirmed the importance of embracing new features, which had not been brought together before, as an assemblage. That was the case of the analytical categories utilized, which unveil the complexity of UNESCO’s role and action in global governance. The third conclusion shows how goal setting has gained predominance and relevance as a mechanism of agenda-setting for the work of the

Organization, and problematizes its consequences. Finally, the fourth conclusion elucidates how the policy priorities of the global education agendas which UNESCO helped set, dialectically shaped UNESCO's work. In so doing, the thesis reveals the complex interrelation and mutual constitution of priorities between the agenda setter and the agendas set.

Conclusion 1. Global governance of education: a useful theoretical and methodological framework for analysing governance in a contemporary world.

The theoretical framework explains the structures and processes by which an IGO can exercise its power and authority in order to steer, influence, and create changes in education with multilocal repercussions, which go beyond the principles of territoriality and traditional sovereignty of Nation States. It has also applied global governance theory to the educational realm and, particularly, to the work of UNESCO as an active actor in the global governance of education. Indeed, the research shows how UNESCO has interpreted its constitutional mandate of contributing “to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the Nations through education” (UNESCO, 2016a, p. 17) by developing specific mechanisms which have an impact on the identification of policy priorities for educational stakeholders at different levels, and in different places.

One of the processes of global governance identified in this work is that of agenda-setting. It has been defined as the *global governance process of collectively identifying and pursuing policy priorities for global commitments that shape and influence education*. Based on the literature review, and validated through its utilization in the analysis of UNESCO's political mobilization, a taxonomy was developed of mechanisms and activities constituting the agenda-setting process. Five mechanisms were found to be at the core of this activity, the first of which is *value setting*. This mechanism aims at creating political trends through the promotion of specific values, concepts and principles on education. The second, *capacity building*, entails two sub mechanisms of sharing best practices and providing technical advice, and its aim is to advance policy solutions to perceived common problems, orienting policies and practices alike. The third mechanism, which has proven to be the most favoured in the case of UNESCO, is *goal setting*. This mechanism aims to install coordination of work among partners through the establishment of international agendas and frameworks for action. The fourth, *standard*

setting, includes two sub mechanisms: normative works and “governing with data”, and aims to create a model to which all States should conform. Finally, *financial leveraging* consists of providing financial aid so as to force action in a certain direction.

The importance of these mechanisms has grown over time, as well as the international recognition of their relevance which has seen a steady increase from the 1990s. Through these mechanisms several global education agendas have been set and pursued. Indeed, the research has established that in the years from 1990 to 2017, more than 200 different sources of global education agendas have been installed, such as international summits, declarations, treaties, and international agendas, which derive from the results of the agenda-setting process.

As this thesis suggests, UNESCO’s work can be analysed in the light of the agenda-setting process, as the Organization has become more aware of its agenda-setting capacity and function over the years. This has been confirmed by an analysis of UNESCO’s actions in the past 27 years and, particularly, from 2006 to 2017, a period characterized by the identification of policy priorities for the post 2015 international education agenda. All of UNESCO’s activities have been framed by the five mechanisms of agenda-setting described above. These mechanisms have been found to be intimately linked to UNESCO’s five main functions. Indeed, as reported in the analysis, at the beginning of this century, UNESCO developed five main functions that it envisaged for its role in the 21st century: 1) a “laboratory of ideas” which identifies appropriate strategies and policies to deal with emerging problems in its spheres of competence based on its technical expertise; 2) a “clearing house” which gathers and transfers relevant and innovative knowledge and information in its fields of competence; 3) a “capacity builder” which helps its Member States in building human and institutional capacities; 4) a “standard setter” serving as a forum for developing the normative and ethical issues and benchmarking targets; and 5) a “catalyst for international cooperation” which “ensures that the objectives, principles and priorities that it champions are incorporated in development cooperation programmes and projects implemented” (UNESCO, 2000*f*, p. 5). The analysis of UNESCO’s *raison d’être* has revealed that there are important correlations between the functions of “laboratory of ideas” and “clearing house” with the value setting mechanism; the “capacity building” mechanism with the third function, as well as the “standard setting mechanism” with the fourth; while the “goal setting”

mechanism has been related to the function of serving as “a catalyst for international cooperation”.

Conclusion 2. The evolution of UNESCO’s priorities in the global governance of education

By analysing its priorities in the agenda-setting process, it has been possible to trace the evolution of UNESCO’s role in the global governance of education. The historic perspective was helpful in unveiling the relationship of these changes with contextual events (both endogenous and exogenous causes). In fact, the increased pace of the processes of globalization which became evident during the 1990s, as well as the evolution of the international education agendas, have been effective in conditioning UNESCO’s work.

The Organization’s activities and priorities have evolved over time. As suggested in the study, the priorities of UNESCO’s work in agenda-setting are complex and take into account a wide variety of issues ranging from budget allocation, educational themes, discourses around the notion of education and views of what the challenges to which UNESCO should respond are. Hence, the analysis of these categories informed the construction of complex and multifaceted priorities for a determined period of time which have been compared to the previous period, as well as the contextual developments in the domain of international agendas.

Although it has been possible to identify changes in priorities, several elements and issues have always been present in UNESCO’s reflections and programmatic documents, and attention towards them has remained constant throughout the years. These elements mark the identity of UNESCO’s work in the field of education and, more broadly, in the field of international cooperation, between the 20th and 21st centuries.

In particular, UNESCO has demonstrated persistent attention to the global challenges of peace, development, environment, inequalities between countries and in education, and, in some ways, education system governance. Peace, development and environment were always perceived as the three main interrelated global challenges from the beginning of this analysis. Peace building and the construction of a culture of peace is not only integrated in UNESCO’s Constitution, but it was also flagged as a mission statement in

all the periods. The programmes of the second period, for example, were framed in the Medium Term Strategy of promoting peace for development and development for peace. Development was increasingly conceived of as being people-centred, human, social, and sustainable, in line with the “humanistic agenda” of the Organization, and promoted as a right. Sustainability was, thus, growingly perceived as the key challenge of development from the Agenda 21, long before the SDGs, and the attention towards the environment, “making peace with nature”, added an intergenerational dimension to reflections on peace and development. Moreover, these three challenges were closely related to the perception of the challenge constituted by inequalities, especially the ones between and within countries. These inequalities are not only related to the financial capacity of States, but also the inequalities in educational opportunities for the population, and the intellectual and knowledge gaps exacerbated by the brain drain in the context of a knowledge-based society and economy. These inequalities are sources of conflicts, social unrest and constituted a brake for development and social cohesion. Inequalities and, more broadly, social challenges are often reflected in educational challenges. Indeed, inequalities are also perceived in education. UNESCO has always been concerned about, and developed several activities in favour of specific sections of the population which have limited access to educational opportunities of adequate quality, such as minorities, people living in rural areas, disadvantaged, people with disabilities and women. However, although the attention to these sections of the population has remained constant, the nature of the programmes to address the challenges related to them has changed. In addition, educational systems governance has also been a constant challenge of priority for UNESCO, in particular, the institutional capacity in management and evaluation, adequate and relevant policies, the educational structures, as well as education personnel.

Although UNESCO’s notion of education has evolved over time, some specific values, concepts and principles have remained unchanged; they have always been promoted directly, or at least inspired and shaped UNESCO’s activities. These principles belong to some of the macro categories delineated in this thesis, that is the case of a humanistic vision of education, the equity dimension, an enabling function of education, and the importance of teachers. Throughout the years, it has been possible to recognize the constant promotion of a humanistic vision of education, which has evolved in terms of nuances, as well as in the activities performed to promote it. This vision is based on

humanistic principles and has consequences on the purposes and content of education. Indeed, for UNESCO's humanistic agenda, education should be aimed at improving the quality of life and preparing people to foster their all-round personal fulfilment. It implies recognizing the importance of the cultural dimension of education, integrating the four pillars of learning into curricula, especially "learning to be" and "learning to live together" which address education for sustainable development and education for global citizenship. This humanistic vision is also based on a human rights approach to education that is at the basis of the equity reflections and promotions. In fact, UNESCO has been strongly supportive of the right to inclusive education, a concept that it helped create. Inclusive education means considering all sections of the population and this concept was also translated into attention to gender equality. In the period analysed, women have always been considered as a global priority, and UNESCO has performed several activities in favour of installing gender responsive policies and gender mainstreaming in programming. A third element of constant consideration has been the enabling function of education. Indeed, UNESCO perceives education as the central element for personal and societal development, a key right for the enjoyment of other rights, and the crucial factor of empowerment. This enabling function has revealed equally important attention to the adaptive and transformative role of education and has been translated into actions such as the ones on global, democratic and responsible citizenship education, as well as the development of skills and competences for the world of work and TVET. Finally, persistent attention has been shown to the importance of teachers in education, and, more in general, of all education personnel. Indeed, UNESCO has always worked to follow up the ILO/UNESCO Convention on the Status of Teachers, proposing reflections on their evolving role in the learning process, and promoting the idea that teachers constitute the fundamental basis of an education of good quality.

Besides these, there are four other key and fundamental elements that have marked UNESCO's notion of education, and thus UNESCO's priorities in agenda-setting, that have evolved considerably over time: i) literacy and basic education, ii) relevance, iii) quality education, and iv) lifelong learning.

i) Literacy and basic education. UNESCO has always been concerned about the forms of basic education since it was set up. Indeed, the first programme developed by the Organization was related to the promotion of fundamental education. Related to

fundamental education were the considerations on the importance of literacy as the key enabler of personal development and of dignity. During the years, UNESCO has closely associated literacy and basic education work, as witnessed by the Director General report to the Executive Board stating that “the point that should be noted is that 'literacy' and 'basic education' are different terms, but usually refer to essentially the same activities” (UNESCO, 1991*b*, p. 3). In fact, in preparation for the WCEFA and in the first years of the 1990s, the fight against literacy was conceived as the absolute priority. With the growing importance of EFA I, and later of EFA II, UNESCO redirected its attention to basic education, promoting the expanded vision of it as enshrined in the Jomtien Declaration which covers all the basic learning needs (tools and content) of children, youths and adults. The activities and development of the EFA II agenda led to the shaping of UNESCO’s reflections on basic education and constituted constant, albeit evolving priorities from the 1990s to the present.

ii) Relevance. Particularly important during the first years of the 1990s, the concept of educational relevance is at the basis of UNESCO’s vision of education. In the context of the UN Decade for Cultural Development, UNESCO performed several activities in favour of a revision of curricula and a pedagogical approach in the light of relevance, taking into account the learners’ needs (with learner-centred pedagogy), the learning needs of local and cultural contexts, as well as the challenges posed by a changing society. This attention to the challenges of the changing society at the dawn of the new Millennium formed the basis for the creation of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century. Stimulated by the work of the Commission, the Organization promoted a broad notion of relevance which entails the concepts of appropriate, useful, responsive, adaptable and adequate education. This notion of relevance also included the one of quality: indeed, a characteristic of a relevant education was that of being of good quality. Furthermore, the notion of quality overshadowed relevance, and relevance was conceived as an element of educational quality. However, within the discussions related to the post 2015 agenda, both education quality and relevance were revived and in a flagship publication UNESCO promoted the idea of the right to a quality education as the right to meaningful, effective and relevant learning.

iii) Quality. The notion of quality has been one of the most debated of all times. In fact, whereas there were activities performed in order to increase the quality of education, at

the same time reflections were also developed to define the quality education concept. Indeed, the quality education concept was one of the central elements of UNESCO's work in the field of basic education and has been recalled several times in UNESCO's work, as well as in the international education agendas EFA I and II, and SDG-4. As has been proposed, at the beginning of the 1990s UNESCO's notion of relevance included that of quality, and only with the development of the international education agenda was it questioned, requiring further reflections and a separate significance. Indeed, in 1993 the International Consultative Forum secretariat produced a report on "the quality puzzle"; in Dakar the sixth goal was directly related to the notion of quality, outlining areas and dimensions of successful quality education systems; in 2003 UNESCO organized a Ministerial Round Table on quality education which focused on defining the "most elusive of the goals"; a couple of years later the GMR issued a report on the "quality imperative" demonstrating that the attention to access had overshadowed quality; and finally attaining quality became a strategic objective for UNESCO in the EFA II follow-up for the period 2005 – 2015. As a result of these reflections the notion of quality education evolved, and UNESCO keenly supported the multidimensionality of quality education, which overcame the narrow vision of learning outcomes. In fact, quality education entailed enabling factors of learning (such as the environment, the materials, and teachers), the relevance of education for the cultural context, as well as learning effectiveness assessed through learning outcomes. This vision also assumed a human rights aspect so that UNESCO started promoting the concept of the right to quality education and it also led to the formulation of quality learning. Within the context of the SDGs framework, as presented above, the right to quality education has been interpreted as the right to meaningful, effective and relevant learning.

iv) Lifelong learning. The concept of lifelong learning has evolved dramatically over time. Indeed, before the second half of the 1990s, UNESCO used the term "continuing education" and it was mainly associated with adult literacy. With the expansion of the internet, the reflections of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century promoting the learning society and the spread of the knowledge-based economy, the concept of lifelong education, and later lifelong learning, have overcome the traditional dichotomy between basic education and continuing education. The lifelong learning concept started being promoted at the end of the last century and, over the years,

has acquired a holistic character. Indeed, the activities promoting it integrated not only the lifelong aspects, but also the life-wide one, taking into account the cultural elements and the non-formal education. It thus required UNESCO to develop activities for the recognition and validation of learning, as well as monitoring systems for non-formal education. Programmatically, lifelong learning was translated into activities covering the entire education continuum: from early childhood to higher education. The Education 2030 agenda fully incorporated the vision and aspirations of a broad notion of lifelong learning and UNESCO developed reflections on strengthening holistic lifelong learning systems.

In terms of agenda-setting mechanisms and activities, a rather clear line can be traced. Indeed, value setting was by far the most used mechanism in all the periods in terms of activities performed, with the growing importance of global advocacy, world-wide policy dialogue, research and foresight activities, and by the specific centres and networks established such as the UNEVOC, UNITWIN and ASPnet. As has been demonstrated, activities of agenda-setting are interdependent, concomitant and ambivalent. Hence, networks and platforms were also instrumental in exchanging best practices, promoting common policy solutions for enhancing institutional capacities. Throughout the years, UNESCO has built several important centres such as the IITE, the IICBA, as well as the UIS, which, together with Category 1 Institutes, are mainly its capacity building activity performers, providing technical advice, training, developing policy guidelines and national policy reviews and assessments, as well as global policy analyses. Capacity building as a mechanism and function of UNESCO, is the second most recurrent strategy in terms of activities, and these activities in turn have become so widespread in UNESCO's programme that almost all the main lines of action include a capacity building scope.

As argued below, goal setting has seen an important growth in terms of cross programmatic relevance, framing the other mechanisms and activities, and it is mainly related to the construction and follow up of specific decades and plans of action. However, within the goal setting domain a convergence of UNESCO towards the UN system and the broader development strategies can be witnessed. The standard setting mechanism received constant attention by UNESCO particularly in its normative activities. Indeed, some specific normative principles (such as education as a human right)

and instruments (such as the Convention Against Discrimination in Education) have always been monitored and activities on it have always been performed. As to the second sub mechanism of standard setting, UNESCO developed activities in monitoring and benchmarking in relation to the goals of EFA I and II, developing indicators, supporting monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as providing policy oriented research and assessments. Financial leveraging has never been on UNESCO's priorities and very few activities are related to it. During the 1990s, UNESCO used to provide subventions to NGOs, but then it turned to strategies of global advocacy with donors, the coordination of partners in managing resources, and technical assistance to mobilize external and internal funds. Particularly relevant for UNESCO's work in financial leveraging was the creation of the EFA-FTI, within which the Organization has a seat in the Board of Directors.

In general terms, an increased integration -and more awareness- of interdependency among mechanisms and activities of agenda-setting has been established, and is particularly evident from 2006 onwards, mostly due to the growing importance of goal setting in framing the activities of the other mechanisms. Indeed, value setting, capacity building, and standard setting have become increasingly interconnected. The performance of activities of policy dialogue (value setting), technical assistance (capacity building), benchmarking and supporting peer learning (standard setting), have often been parts of a broader thrust to support countries in achieving EFA (goal setting).

1990 – 1995: Literacy and education relevance

The first period taken into analysis encapsulates years of profound changes in the international landscape. From 1990 to 1995 the international community witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War and the increased pace of globalization. Twenty-seven new Member States joined UNESCO and several important international conferences and summits were held, promoting ideas of sustainability with Agenda 21 and the human and social dimensions of development. The world was changing drastically, becoming more and more interconnected, and there was the perception of being in a transition phase. These changes had a significant impact on the definition of global challenges, as well as on the promotion of a humanistic dimension of education by UNESCO.

The first priority area in UNESCO's agenda-setting process was, undoubtedly, literacy, considered as the "absolute priority", due also to the shocking data on illiteracy released in those years which captured global attention. Indeed, UNESCO developed the Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000. The implementation of this plan required an internal restructuring of the education sector, and had a significant impact on the budget and programme with a steady increase in the funds allocated for literacy and the creation of a specific mobilizing project on "combating illiteracy". One of the strategies of the plan was to "rally international community" and this strategy was pursued through the celebration of the International Literacy Year (a value setting activity), as well as the organization of the WCEFA, which began the EFA experience (a goal setting activity). In fact, UNESCO managed to host the Secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on EFA. Although the priority was clearly "literacy", the Organization's activities also included broader work on basic education, involving universal primary education and adult education. However, UNESCO's reflections equated basic education to literacy work.

Besides the work on literacy, a great deal of UNESCO's work was dedicated to a second priority area: education relevance. In the context of the UN Decade for Cultural Development, which UNESCO was mandated to lead, the Organization oriented programmes and activities in support of it, and the prioritization of relevance was visible in terms of budget allocation and programme development. Indeed, UNESCO focused its attention on the necessity for a revision of curricula (through capacity building activities) in the light of cultural diversity, the need of people in changing societies, the challenges of the twenty-first century, and on technical and vocational education (through standard setting activities such as the follow-up of the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education of 1989), facilitating knowledge sharing (capacity building activities) through the creation of the UNEVOC and UNITWIN. Moreover, UNESCO established the International Commission for the 21st Century chaired by Jacques Delors, for the purpose of rethinking the basis for education and learning of the future, developing the four pillars of learning. The creation and the results of this Commission constituted one of the greatest value setting activities performed in those years by UNESCO.

1996 – 2001: Basic education and lifelong education

The Medium Term Plan affirmed a twofold mission for UNESCO: development for peace and peace for development. These two issues marked the aspiration of the Organization, which witnessed the steady spread of a knowledge-based economy and the breakout of several conflicts. Indeed, the contextual expansion of information technologies deeply affected the reflections on how learning takes place. Thus, the Organization strongly promoted peace, giving a creative meaning to it, which embraced the notion of social justice and a culture of peace, celebrating the year of tolerance and the year of the culture of peace (powerful value setting activities). Moreover, UNESCO supported the development of innovative approaches in human and social development through the participation at the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women.

During these years, thanks also to the increased importance of the EFA I agenda, the work on basic education overshadowed the one on literacy (witnessed by the disappearance of the Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy and mobilizing project) and it figured as the top priority of the Organization which dedicated 50% of its budget to the main lines of action on basic education. These activities in favour of basic education were accompanied by significant reflections on what constitute the broad vision and understanding of basic education. Indeed, with the work towards the establishment of the EFA II and the World Education Forum, UNESCO affirmed that the four pillars of learning are all basic, underlining the multidimensionality of human existence, and multidimensionality of basic education. Moreover, UNESCO integrated into the work and reflections on basic education the issues of adult education (with the organization of CONFINTEA V), education for peace, tolerance and human rights (participating in the UN Decade for Human Rights Education), and the increasingly important concepts of inclusive education and “reaching the unreached” developed during the Salamanca Conference.

The second priority area of the period was lifelong education. Indeed, this concept gained importance through a series of activities promoted by UNESCO. In particular, the reflections of the Delors Report gave a significant stimulus to the debate envisioning a learning society and the need to rethink educational systems in the light of the lifelong

education concept. In addition, UNESCO organized the CONFINTEA V on adult education, the World Conference on Higher Education, the International Congress on 'Education and Informatics' which all contributed towards focusing attention on the broad, lifelong and lifewide aspects of learning. In terms of activities, for the first time UNESCO dedicated its attention to secondary education, strengthened its TVET work, and developed programmes on recognition and validation of experiential learning. Capacity building in lifelong education acquired importance and was also witnessed by the creation of several specific centres such as the IICBA, the UIS, and the IITE.

2002 – 2007: Education for all, quality education for knowledge societies

In 2000, with the Millennium Declaration, the World Education Forum and the Dakar Framework for Action the main international development and education agendas were constituted which would frame international cooperation for the following 15 years. This period saw decisive progress towards a better integration of approaches in international cooperation, due also to the parallel developments of reforms at UNESCO and at the UN, whose institutions tried to harmonize their activities and work closer in “delivering as one”. UNESCO began the long process of alignment with the broader UN work, while facing the problems for which it was created. Indeed, the Organization interpreted its mandate in terms of trying to bring “globalization with a human face” and in preparing countries for the challenges posed by knowledge societies.

With the establishment of the EFA II agenda, and the role UNESCO was mandated to play by the World Education Forum, basic education as a human right completely framed in terms of the EFA II agenda was definitely the Organization’s top priority and the “core purpose” of UNESCO was to achieve EFA II: “basic education for all has been designated as principal priority [for 2002-2008] and its allocations benefit from an increase of 41.7%” (UNESCO, 2001c, p. 1). The goal setting mechanism increased its cross programmatic relevance with the outcomes and follow-up activities of the World Education Forum shaping UNESCO’s programming, education sector organization, and budget allocation. Indeed, UNESCO established an EFA Observatory at the newly created UIS (for standard setting purposes), hosted the GMR for monitoring and global advocacy, as well as facilitated the creation of specific flagship programmes (value setting). One such programme was the UNLD, which recaptured UNESCO’s attention to

literacy issues. Furthermore, the work on basic education and EFA II had a human rights focus, with the Organization strongly advocating and integrating principles of inclusion and equity in the EFA II activities: “UNESCO’s overriding priority is ensuring the right to education for all through the realization of the six objectives of Education for All in the Dakar Framework for Action” (UNESCO, 2002*b*, p. 18).

Associated with it, the second priority area for UNESCO’s agenda-setting work was quality education for a knowledge society. An expanded notion of quality, informed by the development of reflections related to the “most elusive of goals of EFA”, was part of UNESCO’s Strategic Objectives in the follow-up of EFA II. As presented by the GMR, which advocated and brought global attention to “the quality imperative”, the focus on access to schooling which characterized EFA I and the first years of EFA II overshadowed quality. In those years, UNESCO developed and promoted a multifaceted and multidimensional notion of quality education which incorporated that of relevance. This was reflected in the kinds of activities promoted under quality education, promoting the introduction of relevant components within curricula: such as human rights education (with the World Programme on Human Rights Education), and education for sustainable development (with the UNDESD). The ultimate aim of these and other initiatives was to equip people to face the challenges of knowledge societies. Indeed, in UNESCO’s reflections, quality education systems had to be rethought in terms of knowledge societies.

2008 – 2013: Quality basic education for all and education for sustainable development

In the context of a tremendous financial crisis which affected most countries in the world, UNESCO’s mission and activities were framed in what was called “a new humanist agenda”, a concept that was keenly supported by the new Director-General of the Organization. Furthermore, as suggested by the Independent External Evaluation’s conclusions, UNESCO strengthened its participation in the UN system, collaborating on a country level in the framework of the UNDAF, and on an international level it led educational consultations and contributed to the development of the broader post 2015 international development agenda, advocating education to be at the core of development efforts.

The work on EFA II was still the central priority. There was a sort of “EFA II mainstreaming in programming”, so that virtually all activities had a component that referred specifically to EFA II. Indeed, in those years a greater integration of agenda-setting activities was noticed: several value setting, capacity building and standard setting activities were performed in favour of and within the structure of the international education agenda. Moreover, the two Strategic Programme Objectives and the six Biennial Sectoral Priorities dealt with EFA II coordination and implementation, promoting directly the concept of quality basic education for all, with “quality” fully integrated into the work on basic education for all. In fact, assisting countries in the development of quality education was one of the strategic objectives in support of EFA II that UNESCO chose for the period 2005-2015. Besides the work on EFA II, UNESCO started the process of consultation for the future of the education agenda, creating the Education Research and Foresight team with the aim of “sharing new educational paradigms to guide the global education agenda” (UNESCO, 2012*b*, p. 49).

Among the most important paradigms mainstreamed in UNESCO’s action in global governance, education for sustainable development and education for global citizenship stand out. These two concepts were perceived by UNESCO as of fundamental relevance in pursuing its mission statement, to face the challenge of sustainable human development, as well as to sustain its humanist agenda, and they were at the centre of several agenda-setting activities. Indeed, the Organization performed policy and capacity development to integrate education for sustainable development and global citizenship education in curricula, and it also aimed at integrating them into EFA II, advocated for their incorporation in the post 2015 agenda, and flagged them as one objective of GEFI. The prioritization of education for sustainable development was also evident in terms of budget allocation, which increased steadily compared with previous periods. Moreover, these elements were strongly interconnected with education for peace and human rights education, reflected in the two pillars of Delors “learning to be” and “learning to live together”, and constituted the basis of UNESCO’s notion of education. Indeed, they were considered the supporting columns of peace and development.

2014 – 2017: Learning and Sustainable Development Goals

With the withdrawal of the U.S.A. budget support in 2013, UNESCO experienced a profound financial constraint crisis and was required to revise its prioritization. These years also saw a twofold process of activities, on the one hand UNESCO aimed at supporting the “big final push” for EFA II, while on the other hand it contributed towards the preparation of the Education 2030 agenda and the SDGs. Hence, with this thrust towards the post 2015 UNESCO decisively aligned its work with that of the UN system.

The most relevant activities of agenda-setting of these years were of a capacity building nature related to lifelong learning and education systems. Indeed, the creation and development of institutional capacities in countries was the most prioritized effort as has been shown by the number of expected results with capacity building components, as well as the budget prioritization of the Special Session of the Executive Board. Lifelong learning was definitely the top priority, and reflections focused on the “broader learning challenge”. UNESCO performed several activities in favour of a holistic approach to lifelong learning, integrating this concept in the Education 2030 agenda, participating in international projects on defining learning such as the Learning Metrics Task Force, supporting recognition and validation of experiential learning projects in countries, and promoting the critical importance of “learning to learn” within value setting activities such as the “Rethinking Education” project. Associated with it, the Organization recaptured its reflection on education relevance considering the changes of societies as demonstrated in the revision of normative instruments and conventions on education to adapt them to contemporary challenges.

However, all the reflections and activities on education that UNESCO performed in those years were framed within the overarching framework of SDG-4 with its goal of ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, as well as its targets covering the entire educational continuum. It is of particular importance to note that the formulation of the targets also included issues of education for sustainable development and education for global citizenship, which reaffirmed the humanistic agenda of UNESCO. Thus, not only did goal setting become one of the most relevant agenda-setting mechanisms, but such mechanisms were also fully integrated and framed by goal setting, thus shaping UNESCO’s role in global governance. Associated with it,

UNESCO also reinforced its value setting work through the elaboration of “Rethinking Education”, as well as its standard setting mechanism leading to the debate on SDG-4 Indicators.

These priorities had an impact on the kind of education system reforms that UNESCO promoted. Indeed, from 1990 to 1995, in UNESCO’s reflections education systems should have been rethought in terms of relevance; from 1996 to 2001, they should have been rethought in terms of lifelong education; from 2002 to 2007 in terms of the challenges of knowledge societies; from 2008 to 2013 in view of ensuring quality basic education for all and sustainable development; while in the last years UNESCO promoted education systems to be reformed in terms of lifelong learning systems as presented in SDG-4 Education 2030.

Conclusion 3. The growing relevance of the goal setting mechanism in UNESCO’s agenda-setting process

It has, therefore, been established that goal setting became one of the most important mechanisms due to several factors. The activities constituting this mechanism in UNESCO’s work were related mainly to the creation of ad hoc decades and frameworks for action, such as the UNESCO Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000, and the participation (sometimes with a leading role) in broader UN initiatives such as the UNDESD and the MDGs. This mechanism benefitted from some existing structures that had already been set up for coordinating efforts of partners, such as regional consultative committees and interagency projects and plans. Furthermore, it served increasingly as the overarching framework for activities that usually pertain to other mechanisms. Goal setting is thus reinforced by advocacy and discourses around the purpose of education, as well as the creation of a shared sense of community based on common global challenges that have to be faced with a “global” coordinated approach. Moreover, several ministerial roundtables and technical guidelines, which are mainly devoted to value setting and capacity building purposes, were implemented in favour of the goals that were established. Thus, throughout the years, agenda-setting mechanisms began to be more integrated and interconnected thanks to the unifying role of the structures and visions built by the international goals resulting from the goal setting mechanism.

In addition, UNESCO became increasingly aware of the global governance significance of goal setting. This “policy learning” was witnessed not only by the increasing reliance on goal setting activities, but also by the growing awareness of the important impact of shaping local and international agendas that this mechanism had. Indeed, while referring to the agenda-setting work carried out by High Level Group and the Working Group on EFA, the Organization stated that “EFA coordination efforts have attempted to influence the agenda-setting exercises of influential international meetings. That a number of declarations of major global events [...] included language on EFA-related issues is evidence of some degree of achievement” (UNESCO, 2010c, p. 11).

UNESCO participated in numerous goal setting exercises, but it was evident that the work on EFA I and II and on SDGs was the most relevant for the Organization in relation to this particular mechanism of agenda-setting. In fact, EFA and SDGs were referred to as “collaborative commitments” that consist of inter-*national* education agendas, but with a substantive involvement of UNESCO and other IGOs. The contribution of UNESCO to EFA was so significant that there was even concern that EFA would mainly be perceived as a UNESCO effort, and an “UNESCO-centric process”. Due to the increasing involvement in these agendas and the growing relevance that they have for UNESCO’s work, it has been demonstrated that the coordination and follow-up of EFA I and II, as well as the Education 2030 cannot be dissociated from the history of UNESCO’s coordination of these agendas.

In fact, the work towards EFA and SDGs acquired over time prioritization in terms of budget allocation, programme level, and the progressive increase of cross programmatic relevance. Indeed, this growing prioritization has been demonstrated by the analysis of the specific evolution of UNESCO’s work in favour of EFA and SDGs.

At the beginning of the 1990s, EFA I was first conceived as a strategy for achieving other educational objectives. EFA I was thus part of the strategy to “rally the international community” in order to achieve UNESCO’s own Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000. In terms of programme and budget, literacy work received the greatest share of attention and figured as a subprogramme and EFA work was just a main line of action under the broader subprogramme “Expanding and improving

provision of basic education”. The coordination activities of partners for EFA I was at the level of expected results with a little share of the budget allocated to them.

With the development of EFA, and of EFA I in particular, UNESCO recognized the potential of this mechanism, that goes beyond simply reaching literacy by 2000. Indeed, the Organization developed broader activities and reflections in favour of basic education for all that started to refer explicitly to EFA I purposes. EFA work acquired a specific subprogramme level and coordination activities were part of the subordinate main line of action. The growth of importance of this mechanism is witnessed by UNESCO’s great efforts to organize the World Education Forum and develop a Framework for Action that explicitly mandated UNESCO to continue its role as goal setter.

With the creation of the EFA II agenda, the beginning of the century constituted a significant breakthrough. In fact, EFA II not only became an educational strategy, but also an educational objective in itself. Programmatically, it can be noticed that EFA II constituted one specific UNESCO subprogramme and the overarching framework for the basic education programme, and the coordination of partners for EFA II acquired a more relevant position gaining the status of subprogramme level receiving an increased budget. As will be presented in detail below, the important dialectical relationship that has been developed between the priorities of the agenda and UNESCO’s priorities in agenda-setting has explained this phenomenon. Indeed, UNESCO was mandated by the international community by means of the Framework for Action of the international education agenda to coordinate partners, maintain their collaborative momentum, as well as redirect their educational programme towards the goals of Dakar.

The coordination of partners has proved to be a rather challenging task, but nonetheless it receives UNESCO’s constant attention. In fact, the requests for a stronger and better coordination of partners was often an issue during the High Level Group and Working Group on EFA meetings. Over the years, UNESCO developed several strategies to coordinate partners more profitably. More specifically, the Organization produced the “International Strategy to Put the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA into Operation” in 2002, which appeared not to receive a particular following. Then, UNESCO prepared the Joint Plan of Action for achieving EFA by 2015 in 2004, which was developed further in the “Global Action Plan: Improving Support to Countries in Achieving EFA Goals” in

2006 and finally approved in 2007. However, in early 2009 the coordination structure was perceived to be weak by UNESCO and EFA partners and the Global Action Plan was not followed up as expected (UNESCO IOS, 2016). Indeed, already in 2008 at High Level Group and Working Group meetings there were no mentions of the Global Action Plan. Finally, in 2010 a review process was started that led to “Enhancing the Effectiveness of EFA Coordination” and was translated into a reform of the coordination structure in 2012, three years before the end of the EFA II movement.

From 2006, it has been possible to note that UNESCO has growingly recognized the importance and relevance of goal setting for its own global governance role. In particular, EFA II was not only at the heart of UNESCO’s action, but all the activities of the other mechanisms were performed through and within the structures and processes built up for the goal setting mechanism. One of UNESCO’s specific and declared aims of the years between 2008 and 2013 was to strengthen its leadership role in EFA II and all the other activities made reference to the EFA II work. Therefore, goal setting framed the content of the other mechanisms’ activities and activities of value setting, capacity building, standard setting and financial leveraging have been found within the structures of, and contribute towards the achievement of EFA II.

This consolidation of the goal setting mechanism and the progressive interdependence of mechanisms also reveal a multifaceted process of convergence. Indeed, with this process on the one hand a more coordinated approach and clear prioritization in programming has been noted, while on the other hand there has been a narrowing of the scope to the goals and targets framed by the international agenda.

The process of consultation for the post 2015 agenda has demonstrated how important goal setting was perceived to be by UNESCO. In fact, starting from 2012 UNESCO engaged in the consultation process for the definition of the education agenda in post 2015, and it aimed at integrating education in the broader international development agenda, while maintaining a special role in coordinating partners with the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Moreover, several activities of value setting were performed in order to establish new educational paradigms to be integrated in the future education agenda.

UNESCO's activities related to the international agendas after the establishment of the SDGs and the Education 2030 Framework for Action also showed how integrated the agenda-setting mechanism became. In fact, the capacity building mechanism, as well as the standard setting mechanism were completely devoted to the achievement of the objective of the SDGs since these objectives are fully integrated in UNESCO's programming. All the other mechanisms are perceived as strategies that contribute towards achieving the educational objectives stated in the SDGs.

Conclusion 4. The dialectical relationship and mutual definition of priorities between UNESCO and agendas

The research has also demonstrated the existence of a dialectical relationship and mutual definition of priorities between UNESCO and the agendas set. Indeed, UNESCO's activities played an important role in shaping global education agendas, but reversely its priorities in agenda-setting were affected by the global education agenda it helped to create. This dialectical relationship has been particularly evident in the context of EFA work and can be showcased in four key examples.

1) UNESCO's mandate in international education agendas. In all international education agendas taken into consideration in this analysis UNESCO had a precise mandate. While in the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action UNESCO was mandated to "provide appropriate services to facilitate the follow-up" (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990*b*, p. 65), with the Dakar Framework for Action UNESCO's role was twofold: i) coordinating EFA partners and maintaining collaborative momentum, and ii) "refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work" (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 10). The second line of this mandate specifically required UNESCO to orient its own work in the light of the agenda's priorities. In fact, this mandate was translated into staff and budget allocation, as well as a decisive alignment of programme purposes. Indeed, one of the UNESCO's priorities of those years became the attainment and achievement of the EFA II goals, which were originally meant to be achieved by Member States.

2) Strategic objectives development. In fulfilling its mandate, UNESCO periodically reviewed its work in the follow-up of the Dakar commitments and these efforts suggested a reflection on its own role, proposing strategic objectives which required a harmonic

development and reorientation of the strategic objectives of the Organization itself. In fact, the Strategic Review of 2004 helped the creation of UNESCO's EFA Strategy for the period 2005-2015, which outlined UNESCO's seven key functions, as well as four strategic objectives in support of EFA II. These functions included standard setting, laboratory of ideas and knowledge broker functions (value setting activities), which requested UNESCO to refocus these agenda-setting mechanisms in order to serve the international education agenda's purposes. Moreover, the strategic objectives of UNESCO's EFA Strategy for 2005-2015 made an important impact on the work of the Organization itself, which decided to prioritize in its biennial programmes issues of inclusion and quality in education, according to UNESCO's EFA Strategy for 2005-2015.

Furthermore, UNESCO assumed some of the purposes of EFA I structures. In fact, during the processes for establishing the EFA II agenda, the International Consultative Forum (an EFA I structure) was mandated to keep education high in the global agenda, while in the process of post 2015 consultations UNESCO played this global advocacy role, trying to "keep education high" in the post 2015 development agenda and enhancing the "profile of education among competing development priorities" (UNESCO, 2014*b*, p. 42) through several value setting activities.

3) Ambivalence of structures. The dialectic relationship has also been witnessed by the ambivalence of certain structures which were instrumental for both international education agenda and UNESCO. The Organization offered some of its own structures to serve the EFA process, but it also used some of the structures of EFA to serve its purposes. Indeed, on the one hand UNESCO's structures such as the regional platforms on literacy, as well as the CCNGO, were devoted entirely to the work of international agendas, becoming integral elements of the global coordination architecture of the EFA I and II and SDGs. On the other hand, UNESCO performed its agenda-setting activities within and through the existing structures built for EFA and SDGs. In particular, its standard setting work has been performed through the EFA Global Observatory and the GMR (hosted respectively at UIS and UNESCO Headquarters); value setting and global advocacy have been performed during the High Level Group and Working Groups on EFA, as well as during the High Level Forum and GEMs; financial leveraging and capacity building mechanisms were implemented within the framework of the EFA-FTI and GPE. These increased ambivalence and interchanges have been made possible due to

the specific status of UNESCO within the agendas. In fact, in EFA I UNESCO served as the Secretariat for the International Consultative Forum, while in EFA II UNESCO served as the Secretariat for the entire EFA II effort, which meant greater autonomy in deciding the structures that had to be built for EFA II. For example, the various reforms of the coordination structures, and in particular the one of 2010, were conceived in collaboration with partners and informed by the suggestions of the High Level Group and Working Group on EFA, but they were technically developed by UNESCO's EFA Global Partnerships Team and decided by the Director-General of UNESCO.

4) Forging the notion of education. UNESCO's notion of education and of the agendas was closely related and mutually defining. Indeed, UNESCO successfully shaped the agendas' notion of education over time. This was particularly evident during the development processes of the Dakar Framework for Action, as well as the Incheon Declaration and Education 2030 Framework for Action. In fact, the Dakar Framework for Action integrated some of the educational concepts proposed by UNESCO and it incorporated the four pillars of learning: the Framework for Action explicitly said that the basic learning needs in their fullest sense "include learning to know, to do, to live together and to be" (UNESCO, 2000*b*, p. 8). Furthermore, the formulation of the post 2015 education agenda was profoundly shaped by the multiple agenda-setting activities performed by UNESCO. In particular, the Organization led the Global Thematic Consultation on Education; issued the Thematic Think Piece on education and skills; produced UNESCO's principles on post 2015 education agenda as well as UNESCO's position paper on post 2015; urged the GEM to develop the Muscat Agreement; established the Education Research and Foresight Team as a "platform that both mobilizes ideas and knowledge, analyses emerging development trends, anticipates their impact on education, and proposes relevant orientations and recommendations for the future of education" in order to "catalyse critical debate, creative thinking and knowledge-sharing in education" (UNESCO, 2012*b*, pp. 48-49); and drafted the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

Conversely, it is thanks to the reflections suggested by and required within the agendas' structures that UNESCO's notion of education has been forged and improved. For example, UNESCO's notion of quality education has been developed due to the urgency demonstrated in order to achieve it and, consequently, to define it. In fact, the first

reflection on quality education was developed in the publication “Education for All. Status and Trends” which was drawn up to serve as a background document for the Second International Consultative Forum, an agenda-related structure, that contained a dedicated chapter on “the quality puzzle”, defining quality education. Moreover, quality education was integrated into the Dakar Framework For Action as one of the EFA II goals and the expanded commentary provided eight aspects that determined successful education programmes which constituted a measure of quality. Quality was also at the centre of UNESCO’s Ministerial Round Table on quality which was called to reflect upon “the most elusive of the goals” of EFA II (UNESCO, 2004*b*, p. 3) and it was one of the themes of the GMR. Thus, UNESCO’s notion of education was partly shaped by the agendas’ notion of education.

This dialectic relationship has been important, but nonetheless problematic. Indeed, some aspects of particular concern have been identified. One of these aspects is the limitation of UNESCO’s educational scope. With the growing inter-definition of priorities between UNESCO and the agenda, the danger may arise of a narrowing of UNESCO’s educational approach to education solely on the basis of the formulated goals and targets, limiting its actions on the restricted areas defined by the agenda, its targets and goals, rather than its spirit and underlying values and principles. Thus, it could happen that what is not integrated in the agenda is left aside, and particularly the broader aspirations and visions for education that cannot be encapsulated in goals. UNESCO has already recognized this particular challenge in 2004, noting that:

Another challenge has been and remains that of ensuring a balance between the mandated role of UNESCO as the United Nations specialized agency for education (covering the full spectrum of types and levels of education) and the dedicated pursuit of the six EFA goals and related strategies. Of particular concern has been the possible tendency for EFA to marginalize efforts in the area of secondary and higher education. This challenge continues to be addressed in UNESCO’s programmes and budget allocations (UNESCO, 2004*c*, p. 6).

Closely related to this challenge, with the limitation of the scope and priorities and the downscaling of the complexity of educational challenges towards a standardized set of goals and targets, might be the problem associated with policy convergence and isomorphism. Indeed, if the educational scope and priorities were reduced to a

standardized, measurable and achievable set of goals and targets, the policy solutions that can be proposed would tend to achieve a common educational model. Moreover, the peculiarity of these international education agendas is that the goals and targets have to be measurable and achievable. However, not all aspects of the UNESCO's mandate can be (or should be) encapsulated in measurable and achievable goals and targets. Thus, the dialectic relationship and mutual definition of priorities might produce a convergent process of policies in countries, as well as a convergence (narrowing) of educational priorities to a set of standardized, measurable and achievable goals. However, this convergence of priorities and the work towards a set of goals seems to be successful in encapsulating UNESCO's broad educational mandate of its Constitution in concrete forms, which always represented a challenging effort for the Organization (Mundy, 1999).

Lastly, as already mentioned, a blurring of boundaries in the ownership of the agenda has been noticed. Indeed, UNESCO has, from time to time, played a rather different role within the agendas. In fact, the Organization was only in charge of ensuring a follow-up to the WCEFA, which was clearly an international commitment. Throughout the 1990s, UNESCO assumed a greater role in shaping the structures of the agenda and subsequently the goals of EFA became goals for UNESCO as well. Thus, it seems that UNESCO owned the agenda inasmuch as countries do. This has also been witnessed by the composition of the EFA Steering Committee on which UNESCO sat together with, and at the same level as its Member States. In the context of the development of the post 2015 agenda, this ambiguity is even more marked. Indeed, on the one hand, UNESCO served as the agent influencing an external agenda, for example by means of the production of UNESCO's principles for the post 2015 agenda, the UNESCO position paper, leading a global consultation with UNICEF, and developing thematic think-pieces. On the other hand, it assumed and incorporated in its works the agendas' goals. This has been demonstrated in the activities advocating the Muscat Agreement (goals decided by an agenda's structure), as well as with the reorientation of its programme in the light of the goals of the SDGs.

Limitations of the study and further research

The findings and achievements of this thesis provide a helpful theoretical and methodological basis for further analyses on several educational policy issues that have

been touched upon, but not completely developed due to the limitation of the scope of the research.

In particular, although this thesis relies on the constructivist assumption that IGOs have developed an autonomous source of power and a distinctive approach to specific matters, the more political side of decision-making within UNESCO, with the sensitivities of countries, as well as the broader “international politics” dimension which ultimately shapes UNESCO’s directions and programmes, has not been fully investigated. The power relations within UNESCO could be further analysed by taking into account countries’ visions of UNESCO’s role in global governance, examining which country contributed the most, and for what particular political reason, towards orienting UNESCO’s priorities in agenda-setting. This study could explore the political agents that effectively contributed towards shaping UNESCO’s work, applying, for example, actor-network theory to the analysis of UNESCO’s decision-making.

Furthermore, a more specific analysis of the evolution of the notion of education could be conducted. This analysis could shed light on the subtle changes within the vision of education, as well as the approaches to it in agenda-setting work. This evolution could lead to a deeper investigation on policy convergence favoured by the activities of IGOs. Moreover, with the convergence of policies and the creation of global education agendas, specific research can be conducted on the issues of de-problematization and the narrowing of approaches to complex educational challenges and to the diversity of local contexts.

This research has focused on the programmatic priorities in agenda-setting, but has not investigated the different concrete impacts of the agenda-setting mechanisms in local contexts, although evidence of their effectiveness has been provided in several passages. For example, an impact analysis of UNESCO’s value setting activities can be further developed looking at countries’ specificity and how the values, concepts and principles promoted have been integrated in and inspired local policies.

The underlying assumptions, the theoretical framework, the methodology, as well as the agenda-setting taxonomy built for this thesis have proven to be useful and effective in analysing UNESCO’s activities in agenda-setting, and, consequently, its role in the global governance of education. Therefore, they could also be used to analyse the work of other IGOs and their role in the global governance of education. The taxonomy could be further

elaborated to address other activities that might be performed by non-IGO actors in global governance. For example, the value setting mechanism can be further developed when analysing the role of transnational advocacy coalitions and networks. Of particular interest would be the analysis of other IGOs which participated in EFA I and II in order to establish a correlation and identify synergies and contrasts. Finally, the agenda-setting has been described as a process of global governance. Additional research would be needed in order to specify other processes of global governance beyond the policy domain.

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APPENDIX

Global Challenges coding scheme

35 C/5 Global challenges					
N.	Code Macro Category	Code	Directly seen	Indirectly Inferred	Occurrence
1	Sustainable development	Climate change	NO	UNESCO will perform a number of activities to address climate change	1011
2			YES		1014
3			YES		1046
4		Sustainable development	YES		1009
5			YES		1014
6			YES		1040
7			YES		1045
8		Sustainability of the planet	NO	Education for sustainable development (ESD) therefore concerns all levels, settings and types of education. It prepares people from all walks of life to plan for, cope with and find solutions for issues that threaten the sustainability of our planet	1014
9		Poverty reduction	YES		1014
10		Human rights	YES		1014
11		Indigenous cultures	YES		1014
12		Global sustainability challenges	NO	UNESCO will work on the development of global policy frameworks and guidelines for curriculum and programme development in areas of concern for ESD such as education on global sustainability challenges (climate change, food, natural resources) or citizenship education	1014
13		Ethical and social challenges to development	YES		1014
14		External debts	NO	Debt swaps for education activities	1018
15		Human development	YES		1019
16		Social and economic	YES		1019

		sustainability			
17		HIV/AIDS	NO	UNESCO, in its role as a UNAIDS cosponsoring agency and as lead agency in the UNAIDS division of labour for HIV prevention with young people in educational institutions, will strengthen and expand country capacities to prepare policies and plans in response to HIV and AIDS through EDUCAIDS	1048
18			YES		1005
19		Economic crisis	YES		1049
20		Environmental disaster	YES		1049
21	Peace	Peace	NO	Contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace	1011
22			YES		1014
23			YES		1018
24			YES		1019
25		Social unrest and conflicts	YES		1049
26	Inequalities	Gender equality	NO	Opportunities for girls and women to participate in formal and non-formal learning have improved in many countries	1002
27			YES		1014
28			NO	GEAP in two ways: first, by mainstreaming gender into all its activities; and second, by undertaking specific activities aimed at addressing gender inequalities	1016
29		Gender disparity	NO	Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States have still not succeeded in eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education	1003
30			NO	Girls and women continue to lag behind in educational access and achievements	1009
31		Gender parity	NO	Worldwide, almost two thirds of countries with data had not achieved parity in secondary education by 2005	1016
32		Inequalities between and within	NO	Uneven distribution of resources remains one of the greatest barriers to widespread success in school; great gaps can be observed not only in levels of student achievement between rich and poor	1004

				countries, but also between rich and poor students within countries	
33		Countries lagging behind	NO	...Targeting some countries. by earmarking US \$6 million to provide assistance to 20 “target” countries that are at greatest risk of not meeting the EFA goals by 2015.	1005
34		Africa	NO	Reinforcing the focus on Africa as the priority region for implementation of Major Programme I in 2010-2011 (see paragraph 01015). Direct funding to activities in the region will be increased. In addition, the financial allocation to the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA) will be increased by 20%. More than half of extrabudgetary funding from CapEFA will also go to Africa	1005
35			NO	Priority action: Africa	1015
36		Marginalized groups	NO	Targeting marginalized groups such as rural inhabitants and indigenous peoples	1020
37			NO	...Marginalized groups such as the poor, rural and urban slum inhabitants, indigenous peoples and child workers.	1033
38	Quality Basic Education for All	EFA goals unreachd	NO	Large number of countries are far from achieving Education for All (EFA)	1003
39		Adult functional illiteracy	NO	Conservative estimates suggest that 16% of the world’s adult population, most of whom (64%) are women, are still functionally illiterate.	1003
40		Education quality	NO	Quality is low in many developing countries for those children who are in school	1003
41		Relevance	NO	Much of the learning that takes place in schools around the world does not prepare students to build better societies for our common future	1004
42		Functional literacy	NO	Functional literacy rate to be improved	1009
43		Adult illiteracy	NO	776 million youth and adults lack basic literacy skills.	1019
44		Illiteracy	NO	UNESCO will help Member States to boost their literacy rates	1022
45		Secondary education	NO	Huge political pressure to expand both general and technical and vocational secondary education	1027
46		Quality basic education	NO	Although significant progress has been made, many children, often girls, still do not have access to good quality basic education	1035
47		Relevance and	NO	To ensure that education is relevant and effective, UNESCO will therefore assist	1037

		effectiveness of education		its Member States in renewing their secondary education systems in line with these new challenges and in ensuring close linkages between general secondary and technical vocational secondary education, while addressing gender disparity issues	
48		Right to education	NO	The goal to be achieved	1056
49	Education Systems	Access to education	NO	Increases in primary school enrolment and significant expansions of secondary education, particularly at the lower secondary level	1002
50			NO	Millions of children will be denied access to primary education	1003
51		Teacher shortage	NO	Addressing teacher shortages and providing better training to future and current teachers for both formal and non-formal education is therefore a pressing concern	1004
52			NO	Having enough good teachers is critical to raising education levels and not having enough remains a major barrier to reaching EFA in many countries – an estimated 18 million more primary school teachers will be needed by 2015.	1019
53			NO	Furthermore, it will support and house the secretariat of the Task Force on “Teachers for EFA”, a voluntary global alliance of EFA partners working together to address the “teacher gap” and facilitate South-South and North-South-South collaboration on teacher issues.	1025
54		Education systems	NO	Effective policies and systems for training and retaining enough teachers to meet current and future demand	1009
55			NO	Preparing, renewing and managing the implementation of national sector-wide plans and inclusive policies in education using cutting-edge tools	1009
56		Multilingualism	YES		1011
57		Effective delivery of education programmes	NO	The second aim will be to help countries to better plan for, implement, monitor and evaluate the effective delivery of formal and non-formal education programmes in the priority areas	1020
58		Status of teachers	NO	UNESCO will develop national capacities to design and implement viable policies concerning teacher education and training, recruitment, retention and issues of status and working conditions in line	1025

				with the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997), including the impact of HIV and AIDS on teachers.	
59		ICT and teacher	NO	ICT for education will focus particularly on teacher training	1025
60		Governance of basic education	YES		1035
61		Funding gap for EFA	NO	In Dakar, governments pledged to ensure that no country seriously committed to basic education would be thwarted in achieving the EFA goals due to lack of resources; yet a funding gap of at least US \$7 billion per year remains	1051
62		Quality assurance in higher education	NO	At the country level, particularly in Africa, the Organization will assist targeted Member States in reforming their higher education systems and addressing specific areas of concern, such as the growth of the private sector, financing, quality assurance, the brain drain, entrepreneurship and the links between higher education and sustainable development	1038
63		Brain drain	NO	At the country level, particularly in Africa, the Organization will assist targeted Member States in reforming their higher education systems and addressing specific areas of concern, such as the growth of the private sector, financing, quality assurance, the brain drain, entrepreneurship and the links between higher education and sustainable development	1038
64		Lack of institutional capacity	NO	Number of countries are facing major difficulties in achieving the EFA goals. For the most part, this is because they lack institutional capacity in key areas: for preparing robust and credible education sector plans, programmes and projects; for managing financial, human and information resources; and for monitoring developments	1039
65		Institutional capacity in preparing plans	NO	In particular, support will be provided in the area of sector analysis and the preparation of credible strategic and operational plans through the use of tools	1041

				such as policy simulation and education management information systems (EMIS)	
66		Resource management	NO	Efficient use of resources is a major criteria for good management of education systems	1042
67	Other	Corporate responsibility	YES		1014
68		Knowledge economy	NO	This will help a global higher education and research space to emerge, thus ensuring that the sub-sector contributes fully to building knowledge economies	1038
69		Private sector engagement	NO	At the country level, particularly in Africa, the Organization will assist targeted Member States in reforming their higher education systems and addressing specific areas of concern, such as the growth of the private sector, financing, quality assurance, the brain drain, entrepreneurship and the links between higher education and sustainable development	1038

Notion of education coding scheme

35 C/5 Notion of Education					
N.	Values, concepts and principle	Codes	Directly promoted	Indirectly Inferred	Occurrence
1	Humanistic vision of education	Education for sustainable development	NO	Better education aimed at creating the conditions for sustainable development in planning and policy	1004
2			NO	Four major education conferences organized in 2008-2009 on inclusive education, ESD, adult education and higher education	1008
3			NO	It will further help them to integrate the principles of education for sustainable development and address transversal issues that impact on the whole education sector such as HIV and AIDS	1009
4			YES		1014
5			NO	Establishment in New Delhi, India, of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) as a category 1 institute	1018
6			NO	The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) affirms the need to integrate sustainable development into education systems at all levels in order for education to be a key agent for change	1045
7		ESD in teaching process	YES		1014
8		Universal values	NO	Societies built on understanding and tolerance, mutual assistance and cooperation, and respect for our planet	1004
9		Holistic view of education	NO	At the same time, it will continue to address education in a holistic manner, by promoting a vision of inclusive lifelong learning that spans each of the different levels of education and considers both formal and non-formal approaches	1005

10		Preventive education	NO	It will further help them to integrate the principles of education for sustainable development and address transversal issues that impact on the whole education sector such as HIV and AIDS	1009
11			NO	This includes the integration of learning on HIV prevention into basic education curricula.	1036
12			NO	UNESCO, in its role as a UNAIDS cosponsoring agency and as lead agency in the UNAIDS division of labour for HIV prevention with young people in educational institutions, will strengthen and expand country capacities to prepare policies and plans in response to HIV and AIDS through EDUCAIDS	1048
13		Education for peace	NO	Education that does not integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development will ultimately fall short of its goal to prepare individuals and communities for a secure and peaceful future.	1014
14			NO	Establishment in New Delhi, India, of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) as a category 1 institute	1018
15		Citizenship education	NO	UNESCO will work on the development of global policy frameworks and guidelines for curriculum and programme development in areas of concern for ESD such as education on global sustainability challenges (climate change, food, natural resources) or citizenship education	1014
16		Holistic vision in planning education	NO	When designing their national education system, governments must therefore adopt a holistic vision that provides for learning throughout life, by taking into account each of the different stages of education and supporting a human rights-based approach	1032

17		Life skills	YES		1036
18		Environmental education	NO	These will be developed in critical fields such as science education, environmental education, human rights education and HIV and AIDS education, among others	1037
19		Human rights education	NO	These will be developed in critical fields such as science education, environmental education, human rights education and HIV and AIDS education, among others	1037
20		Problem solving	NO	At all times, UNESCO will promote the acquisition of generic competencies such as problem-solving skills, creativity and interpersonal aptitudes as well as values such as peace, tolerance and responsibility	1037
21		Creativity education	NO	At all times, UNESCO will promote the acquisition of generic competencies such as problem-solving skills, creativity and interpersonal aptitudes as well as values such as peace, tolerance and responsibility	1037
22		Personal attitudes	NO	At all times, UNESCO will promote the acquisition of generic competencies such as problem-solving skills, creativity and interpersonal aptitudes as well as values such as peace, tolerance and responsibility	1037
23	Literacy and Lifelong Learning	Functional literacy	YES		1003
24			NO	A challenge to be faced	1009
25		Literacy	NO	Literacy, teachers and skills development for the world of work. These priority areas have been identified as the building blocks for achieving EFA and the education-related MDGs most needed by UNESCO's Member States. They will be grouped into a single main line of action (MLA) with three expected results and receive approximately 37% of the total activity budget ¹ for the programme	1005
26		Literacy and LLL	NO	Work in the field of literacy will form an important part of the Organization's contribution to strengthening adult education	1022

				within a lifelong learning perspective at the country level	
27		Lifelong learning	NO	At the same time, it will continue to address education in a holistic manner, by promoting a vision of inclusive lifelong learning that spans each of the different levels of education and considers both formal and non-formal approaches	1005
28			YES		1009
29			NO	Learning is a continuous process that begins at birth and continues until old age. Each step has important repercussions on the lives of individuals and societies. Not only does each stage lead learners to acquire new skills and knowledge, but the availability of education at a more advanced level is a significant factor motivating students to complete the level of education in which they are enrolled	1032
30		Inclusive lifelong learning	NO	At the same time, it will continue to address education in a holistic manner, by promoting a vision of inclusive lifelong learning that spans each of the different levels of education and considers both formal and non-formal approaches	1005
31		Quality LLL	NO	Particular emphasis will continue to be placed on access, quality and equity.	1009
32		Equity in LLL	NO	Particular emphasis will continue to be placed on access, quality and equity.	1009
33		Adult education	NO	four major education conferences organized in 2008-2009 on inclusive education, ESD, adult education and higher education	1008
34		Higher education importance	NO	four major education conferences organized in 2008-2009 on inclusive education, ESD, adult education and higher education	1008
35		Literacy and non formal education	NO	in mapping, monitoring and evaluating literacy and non-formal education at national level through UNESCO's Non-formal Education Management Information System (NFE-MIS)	1024

36		Formal and non formal	NO	These should be consistent with national priorities, ensure the necessary links between formal and non-formal education, and place an accent on the outcomes of learning for individuals, society and the economy	1036
37		Holistic vision in planning education	NO	When designing their national education system, governments must therefore adopt a holistic vision that provides for learning throughout life, by taking into account each of the different stages of education and supporting a human rights-based approach	1032
38			NO	This holistic vision of educational planning will help donors to adopt common approaches to programme support under the leadership of the national government and engage all stakeholders around the education plan.	1040
39		Education continuum	NO	Building up the different levels of formal learning spanning from infancy to tertiary education	1032
40			NO	Four broad education levels have been identified for support: early childhood care and education (ECCE); basic education, mainly in Africa, which encompasses but goes beyond primary schooling; secondary education; and higher education.	1033
41		ECCE and learning	NO	Early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes can support health and nutrition, improve cognitive development and provide children with the basic tools they need to learn	1034
42		ECCE and equity	NO	They are also a key to equity: although vulnerable children from poor and rural households stand to benefit the most, evidence suggests however that they are the least likely to participate in ECCE. UNESCO will therefore assist targeted countries to strengthen their capacities to plan, implement and manage early	1034

				childhood care and education programmes		
43	QUALITY	Quality education	NO	A challenge to be faced	1003	
44		Relevance	NO	Moreover, much of the learning that takes place in schools around the world does not prepare students to build better societies for our common future	1004	
45		Quality LLL	NO	Particular emphasis will continue to be placed on access, quality and equity.	1009	
46		Teachers and quality	NO	It will highlight the crucial role of teachers in providing quality education through events such as World Teachers' Day	1025	
47			NO	Having enough good teachers is critical to raising education levels and not having enough remains a major barrier to reaching EFA in many countries – an estimated 18 million more primary school teachers will be needed by 2015.	1019	
48			YES		1031	
49		Quality basic education	NO	Although significant progress has been made, many children, often girls, still do not have access to good quality basic education	1035	
50		Quality higher education	NO	Quality assurance in the cross-border provision of higher education as well as dialogue between exporting and importing countries will continue to be promoted with the help of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education.	1038	
51		EQUITY	Equity in education	YES		1004
52				NO	Equity in learning for children, youth and adults of both sexes	1009
53	NO			Marginalized groups such as rural inhabitants and indigenous peoples	1020	
54	inclusive education		NO	Inclusive education which is an approach responding to the diversity of learners and their needs	1004	
55			NO	Four major education conferences organized in 2008-2009 on inclusive education, ESD, adult education and higher education	1008	

56			NO	Inclusive education as a key approach	1009
57			YES		1036
58		inclusive policies	YES		1044
59		inclusive LLL	NO	At the same time, it will continue to address education in a holistic manner, by promoting a vision of inclusive lifelong learning that spans each of the different levels of education and considers both formal and non-formal approaches	1005
60		Equity in LLL	NO	Particular emphasis will continue to be placed on access, quality and equity.	1009
61		Gender equality	NO	Gender equality considerations at the centre of its actions in education and developed for the Organization as a whole the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) for 2008-2013	1016
62			NO	GEAP in two ways: first, by mainstreaming gender into all its activities; and second, by undertaking specific activities aimed at addressing gender inequalities	1016
63			NO	Development of gender-responsive policies, plans and strategies	1024
64		Mother tongue teaching	NO	It will do so by motivating governments and civil society to pay more attention to literacy by assisting countries in formulating solid and evidence-informed policies, and by developing their capacity to deliver programmes of good quality, including through local languages	1022
65			YES		1034
66			NO	Language issues in basic education, particularly because of the proven correlation between the use of mother tongue and learning achievement during the first years of education	1035
67		Human rights based approach to LLL	NO	When designing their national education system, governments must therefore adopt a holistic vision that provides for learning throughout life, by taking into	1032

				account each of the different stages of education and supporting a human rights-based approach	
68		Human rights-based approach in education plans	YES		1044
69		Education as a human right	YES		1056
70		Effective and inclusive education	YES		1033
71		Equality of opportunity for all	NO	UNESCO will therefore advocate and provide policy advice for equality of educational opportunities for all and increased inclusion in education through access, retention and performance, targeting in particular children and youth from under-served regions or populations	1035
72		Merit & equity in higher educ.	YES		1038
73	Enabling function of education	Skills development for the world of work	NO	Literacy, teachers and skills development for the world of work. These priority areas have been identified as the building blocks for achieving EFA and the education-related MDGs most needed by UNESCO's Member States. They will be grouped into a single main line of action (MLA) with three expected results and receive approximately 37% of the total activity budget ¹ for the programme	1005
74			YES		1027
75			NO	Skills are increasingly seen as critical to labour market productivity and economic growth across the world. Skills development for the world of work has therefore become one of the four top priority areas in UNESCO's education programme	1027
76			NO	Good quality opportunities for acquiring skills for the world of	1009
			Education and work		

				work are made available to youth and adults	
77		Entrepreneurship skills	YES		1028
78		TVET and gender	NO	Thematic reviews on specific issues of major interest in the field of TVET, such as TVET and gender or TVET and sustainable development, will also be conducted.	1031
79		TVET and sustainable development	NO	Thematic reviews on specific issues of major interest in the field of TVET, such as TVET and gender or TVET and sustainable development, will also be conducted.	1031
80		Education at the heart of development	NO	Education is at the centre of the development process	1049
81	Other	Importance of teachers	NO	Literacy, teachers and skills development for the world of work. These priority areas have been identified as the building blocks for achieving EFA and the education-related MDGs most needed by UNESCO's Member States. They will be grouped into a single main line of action (MLA) with three expected results and receive approximately 37% of the total activity budget ¹ for the programme	1005
82		Effective sector-wide policies	YES		1005
83		ICT learning	NO	Fostering ICT-enhanced learning	1011
84		Multilingualism	YES		1011
85		Science education	NO	These will be developed in critical fields such as science education, environmental education, human rights education and HIV and AIDS education, among others	1037

Agenda-setting coding scheme

35 C/5 Agenda-setting Mechanisms				
N.	Mechanisms code	Sub mechanisms code	Activities	Occurrence
1	Value setting	Promoting and disseminating values, principles and concepts	Providing global and regional leadership in education, including through the implementation of recommendations of major international education conferences	1006
2			EFA Global Monitoring Report	1008
3			Four major education conferences organized in 2008-2009 on inclusive education, ESD, adult education and higher education	1008
4			It will further help them to integrate the principles of education for sustainable development and address transversal issues that impact on the whole education sector such as HIV and AIDS	1009
5			In order to ensure that policy decisions are based on solid research findings, the Organization will provide governments and the international community with reports on trends that include evidence on the status of legislation, policies, systems and participation in education	1009
6			UNESCO will build an education knowledge management system for staff and Member States alike, with evaluated experiences summarized and available on the Internet in multiple language versions	1010
7			A strong communication and advocacy strategy will underpin the knowledge management strategy and strengthen visibility of outputs	1010
8			It will strengthen international coordination and partnerships in support of the Decade, in particular by advocating for ESD among policy-makers, civil society and the private sector, including the media	1014
9			In all these areas and others, UNESCO will help reorient education programmes and improve the wider public's understanding and awareness of these issues so as to contribute to a better, safer and more sustainable world	1014
10			Promote evidence-based policy dialogue and recommendations	1015
11			The promotion of gender sensitivity in the planning, management and implementation	1016

			of literacy programmes under the programme of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), including the development of gender-responsive literacy policies and programmes, is a case in point	
12			The first will be to strengthen national capacities to develop and renew cohesive policies based on cutting-edge research in the three priority areas	1020
13			This will be achieved at the global level through the preparation of studies and policy briefs, among other activities	1020
14			It will do so by motivating governments and civil society to pay more attention to literacy by assisting countries in formulating solid and evidence-informed policies, and by developing their capacity to deliver programmes of good quality, including through local languages	1022
15			Advocacy for literacy will target the entire range of stakeholders, particularly those outside the education community. Particular emphasis will therefore be placed on highlighting the importance of literacy at non-education events.	1022
16			Governments and the wider public will be encouraged to support and promote and invest in literacy through media-friendly actions such as the yearly UNESCO Literacy Prizes and International Literacy Day, contributions to Global Action Week and the interventions of well-known personalities such as the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors.	1022
17			It will highlight the crucial role of teachers in providing quality education through events such as World Teachers' Day	1025
18			The Organization will also develop guidelines to assist teacher education institutions in mainstreaming education for sustainable development (ESD) as well as HIV and AIDS in teacher training programmes	1025
19			Guided by the newly developed Strategy for TVET, UNESCO, as the only United Nations agency whose mandate covers the development of the whole education sector, will promote TVET and skills development for the world of work, including the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills, within a broader framework of lifelong learning	1028

20			Clarification of the concept of skills development and improvement of monitoring, and (3) clearing house-related actions and informing the global TVET debate	1028
21			Technical advisory mechanism involving key partners to clarify the definition of “skills”, leading towards the identification of indicators for measuring progress	1030
22			The global level, it will do so by continuing to provide ECCE professionals and decision-makers with detailed analyses of policy options and reforms through the UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood series	1034
23			More broadly, it will support dialogue and advocacy, in particular by contributing to the organization of the International Conference on ECCE to be held in Moscow, Russian Federation, in 2010	1034
24			UNESCO will therefore advocate and provide policy advice for equality of educational opportunities for all and increased inclusion in education through access, retention and performance, targeting in particular children and youth from under-served regions or populations	1035
25			UNESCO will also promote action-oriented research on issues related to the access to, and quality and governance of basic education around the world	1035
26			This will be carried out in line with the Kigali Call for Action (August 2007), which initiated the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP). BEAP is a strategy to enhance policy dialogue for reform of education in Africa for a minimum of nine years including one to two years of pre-school.	1036
27			At the global level, it will do so by carrying out research and developing frameworks, policy papers, curricula guidelines and prototype learning content that fully integrate and promote the principles of sustainable development within the framework of the UNDES	1037
28			In particular, it will support countries to promote research and development, facilitate synergies between universities and other institutions of higher learning, and encourage knowledge-sharing across borders, including through support to the	1038

			holding of the Seventh International Congress on Higher Education, “University 2010”.	
29			Through the second set of actions under MLA 3 (expected results 9 and 10), UNESCO will help countries to revise their education policies and plans by integrating within them responses to cross-cutting issues that impact on the entire education sector and contribute to sustainable development	1040
30			UNESCO will also play an active role in promoting national education priorities within the Common Country Assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAF) and United Nations reform processes.	1042
31			At the global level, guidelines, toolkits and practical instruments will be prepared to facilitate country-based support for national educational planning and sector management	1043
32			One of the key tasks of UNESCO in its role as lead agency for the UNDESD is to strengthen capacities of stakeholders and to provide Member States with recommendations to enable them to promote and improve the integration of the principles, values and skills of sustainable development into their educational policies, plans and programmes	1046
33			Thus, UNESCO will promote education for sustainable development as an integral part of national education plans and provide global policy frameworks and content guidelines in areas of concern to education for sustainable development, including awareness raising on climate change and the reinforcement of policies and programmes in teacher education	1046
34			MLA 4 will therefore bring together actions undertaken at a global or regional level to coordinate education processes. Broadly, this will involve taking stock of political commitments and legal obligations, appraising progress against the targets set through solid research, advocating where necessary among a range of different stakeholders for a redoubling of efforts to achieve them, and helping relevant partners to put the necessary measures and structures in place to meet them.	1050

35			This will be achieved by mobilizing the EFA High-Level Group and the EFA Working Group to respond to the evidence presented by UNESCO in research publications and world education reports and by others. In particular, they will maintain EFA on the international and national agendas	1051
36			This latter will inform the EFA Working Group and EFA High Level Group and serve as evidence for the development of coordinated international action, while also informing policy-makers at the national level	1052
37	Capacity building	Promoting best practices and information sharing	UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks will help identify and facilitate the exchange of good practices in ESD at the higher education level	1014
38			Other actions include facilitating the sharing of practices to address violence against women and girls in educational settings.	1016
39			This will be achieved by facilitating exchanges between developing countries and, where relevant, by helping Member States to adapt examples of good practices gleaned from others.	1017
40			UNESCO will revitalize the global UNEVOC Networks to improve information sharing and cooperation.	1031
41			Global actions will include primarily the tracking of trends and the publication of good practices and guidelines in policy and learning content in order to provide Member States with cutting-edge knowledge on what works.	1033
42			In this regard, the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) will function as a useful laboratory for the development of good practices	1035
43			In this regard, the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) will help in identifying examples of good practice and promoting them. At the same time, the Organization will strengthen the capacity of selected countries to revise their secondary education plans and policies and collaborate closely with other agencies such as the World Bank, particularly on education financing	1037
44			UNESCO will continue to play a leading role in the reflection on its role and impact	1038

			on development by tracking trends and identifying good practices	
45			Activities will draw on established best practice and will further dialogue and understanding around the role of education in national AIDS responses by generating documents, experiences and research which can be shared among Member States	1048
46			in line with the Accra Agenda for Action, promote efficient spending by harmonizing aid and facilitating the exchange of good practices in policy and programmes at the highest decision-making levels	1051
47		Technical guidance, assistance, judgement	Capacity development for EFA (CapEFA) programme	1005
48			Teacher Training Initiative in sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA)	1005
49			by concentrating on “upstream” work such as standard setting and policy and planning advice in order to achieve impact with its limited resources	1005
50			In addition, the Organization will further the participatory global monitoring and evaluation process for the Decade in order to provide evidence to guide policy-making, programme design, the assessment of progress and the defining of future orientations	1014
51			UNESCO will provide technical assistance and capacity-building to Member States to improve the integration of ESD into tools for sector-wide planning and management	1014
52			Examples of the type of activities that could be carried out include assistance to countries to develop gender-sensitive teaching and learning materials that promote the equal participation of women and men in society and at work.	1016
53			The first will be to strengthen national capacities to develop and renew cohesive policies based on cutting-edge research in the three priority areas	1020
54			Targeted capacity-building of national staff for collecting data, conducting needs analyses and developing policies that take into account international norms and standards as well as recent findings	1020
55			Provision of upstream policy advice and related capacity development	1028
56			It will involve assisting countries in developing sector plans and policies that bring together the different levels and types	1039

			of learning into a coherent whole, ensuring greater efficiency and better links between programmes	
57			The first set of actions under this MLA will therefore aim to support some 20 countries to strengthen their institutional capacity for education sector management at the central and local levels, including for post-conflict and post-disaster situations, in line with UNESCO's capacity development strategy paper.	1041
58			One of the key tasks of UNESCO in its role as lead agency for the UNDESD is to strengthen capacities of stakeholders and to provide Member States with recommendations to enable them to promote and improve the integration of the principles, values and skills of sustainable development into their educational policies, plans and programmes	1046
59			In particular, UNESCO will test and enhance the "Education for Sustainable Development Lens" that it has prepared to support policy-makers and practitioners in Member States to initiate the process of reorienting education, particularly formal education, towards sustainability	1047
60	Goal Setting	Establishing an internationally agreed set of goals and support for regional and international plans and strategies	Coordinate the EFA movement globally and at the country level	1004
61			With EFA as its main priority	1005
62			Significantly strengthening UNESCO's coordination role for EFA at the country level,	1005
63			Supporting the achievement of Education for All (EFA)	1006
64			UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS) documents	1008
65			UNESCO will coordinate international EFA partners in order to bring governments together to take decisions on major international policy issues in education and raise awareness on educational priorities defined by the United Nations	1009
66			United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development	1009
67			Contribution to Mauritius Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	1010
68			Lead the global process to reorient education in support of sustainable development. It will strengthen international coordination and partnerships	1014

			in support of the Decade, in particular by advocating for ESD among policy-makers, civil society and the private sector, including the media	
69			Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015)	1015
70			South-South and triangular North-South-South cooperation are increasingly recognized as effective means of accelerating progress towards EFA and the MDGs	1017
71			Within the framework of the E-9 Initiative, increased interest in using SSC as a means to achieve progress towards EFA goals is illustrated by the Bali Declaration, adopted at the Seventh E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting of March 2008, in which the education ministers of the E-9 countries agreed to step up their collaboration in various education subject areas	1017
72			Within the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), and through UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE),	1022
73			Furthermore, it will support and house the secretariat of the Task Force on "Teachers for EFA", a voluntary global alliance of EFA partners working together to address the "teacher gap" and facilitate South-South and North-South-South collaboration on teacher issues.	1025
74			At the same time, UNESCO will promote harmonization of partners' interventions by systematically cooperating with relevant United Nations agencies such as the International Labour Organization, the World Bank and other partners, and by assisting Member States in coordinating all in-country partners.	1029
75			This will be carried out in line with the Kigali Call for Action (August 2007), which initiated the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP). BEAP is a strategy to enhance policy dialogue for reform of education in Africa for a minimum of nine years including one to two years of pre-school.	1036
76			At the global level, it will do so by carrying out research and developing frameworks, policy papers, curricula guidelines and prototype learning content that fully integrate and promote the principles of	1037

			sustainable development within the framework of the UNDESD	
77			EFA-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), the Accra Agenda for Action	1040
78			UNESCO will also play an active role in promoting national education priorities within the Common Country Assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAF) and United Nations reform processes.	1042
79			In this way, it will help to focus and coordinate aid interventions at the country level, in particular through strengthened coordinated action among the five EFA convening agencies within the framework of the GAP	1042
80			UNESCO, in its role as a UNAIDS cosponsoring agency and as lead agency in the UNAIDS division of labour for HIV prevention with young people in educational institutions, will strengthen and expand country capacities to prepare policies and plans in response to HIV and AIDS through EDUCAIDS	1048
81			MLA 4 will therefore bring together actions undertaken at a global or regional level to coordinate education processes. Broadly, this will involve taking stock of political commitments and legal obligations, appraising progress against the targets set through solid research, advocating where necessary among a range of different stakeholders for a redoubling of efforts to achieve them, and helping relevant partners to put the necessary measures and structures in place to meet them.	1050
82			In this regard, emphasis will be placed on EFA, the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) and UNESCO's normative and standard-setting instruments in the field of education	1050
83			Cooperation will also be strengthened with regional groupings that serve as policy platforms, such as the African Union (AU), the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as other groupings of countries such as the E-9, to catalyse cooperation towards achieving the EFA	1051

			goals. It will also develop better links between the global coordination role and the important EFA coordination taking place at the country level under MLA 3 (expected result 8), as well as better linkages between the GAP and OECD/DAC processes	
84			UNDESD International Implementation Scheme, the UNESCO Action Plan for UNDESD and the recommendations from the Bonn World Conference on the Mid-term Review of ESD, the Organization will play a catalytic role in building dialogue and consensus to facilitate the work of the Decade, in order to significantly enhance its impact and focus	1056
85	Standard setting	Normative actions - Creating treaties	This will include the continued promotion and monitoring of existing normative and standard-setting instruments in the field of education	1009
86			Revision of the 1981 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States and the 1983 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific	1018
87			UNESCO will develop national capacities to design and implement viable policies concerning teacher education and training, recruitment, retention and issues of status and working conditions in line with the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997), including the impact of HIV and AIDS on teachers.	1025
88			The impact of the Organization's normative instruments in the field of TVET – the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989) and the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001) – will also be reviewed	1030
89			In this regard, emphasis will be placed on EFA, the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) and UNESCO's normative and standard-setting instruments in the field of education	1050

90			Collaboration with United Nations treaty bodies, in particular the work of the Joint Expert Group, will be strengthened and monitoring mechanisms reinforced along with a ratification campaign	1056
91			1993 Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (in 2010); the 1966 Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (in 2011); and the 1997 Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (in 2011). The draft texts for the revision of the 1981 Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the African States and the 1983 Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific developed by the Drafting Groups of the Regional Committees of these Conventions will also be submitted for consideration and adoption by intergovernmental conferences convened by UNESCO during the biennium	1056
92			The Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989); and the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001).	1056
93		Producing benchmarks, data, standards, rankings and assessments	EFA Development Index (EDI)	1005
94			By concentrating on “upstream” work such as standard setting and policy and planning advice in order to achieve impact with its limited resources	1005
95			Research activities...in particular concerning progress, against internationally agreed development goals (IADGs).	1009
96			In addition, the Organization will further the participatory global monitoring and evaluation process for the Decade in order to provide evidence to guide policy-making, programme design, the assessment of progress and the defining of future orientations	1014
97			This includes the development of relevant ESD indicators and incorporation of ESD-relevant data into education management information systems for policy-makers	1014
98			National literacy policies will be improved primarily by bringing solid technical assistance to countries in assessing and monitoring national literacy levels,	1024

			particularly through the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP);	
99			Technical advisory mechanism involving key partners to clarify the definition of “skills”, leading towards the identification of indicators for measuring progress	1030
100			In order for Member States to carry out well-designed monitoring, particularly of the quality aspects of their expanded secondary education systems, UNESCO will assist in developing national capacities in monitoring learning achievement	1037
101			Monitoring the state of education worldwide and guiding the international community’s response to it by harnessing partnerships and improving support mechanisms	1049
102			UNESCO will continue to track global and regional trends in education, in particular through the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR).	1052
103	Financial leveraging	Financial leveraging	In order to maximize the impact of the above-mentioned specific activities under each of the priority areas, their implementation will be complemented with a second set of activities to be funded by the South-South Cooperation Fund in Education established in 2007 and carried out in close coordination with the Group of 77 and China	1017
104			Debt swaps for education	1018
105			These activities will be complemented by specific actions to increase investment in literacy, in particular promotion of the UNLD Fund to Advance Global Literacy and support to research on the costs of illiteracy and the funding gap	1023
106			Support will therefore be provided to government counterparts on donor coordination and fundraising, including within the EFA-FTI.	1042
107			The Organization will therefore mobilize the political and financial commitment to achieve the EFA goals through strengthened coordination of partners	1051
108			Furthermore, UNESCO will increase its role in global processes and donor coordination frameworks including the EFA-FTI, paying special attention to new and emerging donors in support of EFA	1051