Building Alliances and Advancing Towards the Sustainable Development Goals: A Concept Paper

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Linda A Davis
Glenford D Howe

Educational Challenge Faced by the Countries of the Americas

- Education systems across the countries of the Americas continue to struggle with relevance and are severely challenged in meeting the rights of children, and youth

- Particularly children with disabilities, in rural and remote areas, pregnant teens, dropouts, and children of undocumented migrants

- Requirements
  - Cutting-edge 21st Century high-level skills
  - Competencies and knowledge, and
  - Development of appropriate thought processes, mind-sets and attitudes

Growing International Consensus and the Emergence of Inter-American Education Agenda (IEA)

- Investment in education – to drive inclusive socio-economic development, reducing inequality, and tackling the broad range of problems

- The construction of an Inter-American Education Agenda (IEA) is reflective of the recognition that a new dispensation based upon shared commitment to meaningful collaboration to foster education inclusiveness and quality and provide equitable, sustainable development

- Conceived as a "process for dialogue, cooperation, and regional integration" (IEA, Draft Agenda, 2016).

Purpose of the IEA

- An explicit recognition of the importance of alliances and partnerships – especially Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSI) or Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP)

- Alliances so conceived have several benefits
  - Cross-sector dialogue
  - Assist in moving the collaboration to planning, investment and implementation, "linking action across multiple scales from global to local and local to global…facilitating rapid learning and efficient knowledge transfer, both horizontally and vertically" (Hazelwood, 2015).

Purpose of the IEA: Risks and Challenges

- Care must be paid to variations in needs and cultural differences
- Attention must paid to the "the drivers of systemic change and [the resulting potential] for scaling impact through a more programmatic approach" (Hazelwood, 2015).
- "[A]greed rules and other measures to ensure private sector transparency and accountability" as well as shared measurement systems to enable monitoring and impact evaluation (Hazelwood, 2015).

Purpose of the IEA: Opportunities

- Importance of such alliances being broad-based and inclusive with participation from a wide range of education stakeholders, and including business, non-governmental organizations, governments, as well as regional and international development education partners

- As some partners in the hemisphere have been engaged in multi-stakeholder initiatives over the past few decades, their experiences and the lessons learned can provide added value and guidance to the process of creating and sustaining possible alliances

Three Priority Areas & Cross-Cutting Themes

(1) quality, inclusive and equitable education;

(2) strengthening of the teaching profession; and

(3) comprehensive early childhood care

Cross-cutting themes: Quality, Inclusion and Equity

The IEA and quality, inclusive and equitable education: Selected Strategies

- Ending institutionalization
- Financing
- Guarantee the right to non-discrimination
- Partnerships and participation
- Capacity-building and awareness raising
- Working and supporting parents
- Early childhood and care services
- Securing appropriate individualized support for children with disabilities
- Investment in teacher training
- Establishing resources to provide specialist support
- Respect for rights within learning environments

The IEA & Strengthening the Teacher Profession

- Strengthening initial teacher preparation is a multi-faceted task
  - Review and development of teacher training standards,
  - Monitoring of such through quality assurance mechanisms, local and regional,
  - Strategies to attract and retain teacher educators and teacher trainees must be agreed as the quality of the services provided at each level and in each sector depends on such.
  - On-going professional development and support of in-service teachers will enhance delivery, ways to integrate these opportunities and experiences using innovative approaches and technologies will be important.

IEA and ECCD Intervention

- Policies in the Hemisphere are in need of review and can positively be informed by best practices and successes experienced globally -- premise = strategic investments will produce higher yield and outcomes

- An assessment of programmes, including preschool, home visits, day care, nutritional and parenting components must be integrated/multi-sectorial

- Maternal and child health programmes cannot be seen as standalone initiatives, divorced from the ECCD fabric

Draft IEA: The Focus

- Promotion of the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); use of information and communication technologies (ICTs); and promotion of gender mainstreaming

- IEA would be implemented for a period of 5 years, commencing 2017, after which it would be revisited by the Members States.

- Tools highlighted: On-line databases; Hemispheric workshops, seminars and webinars; Cooperation missions or study tours; Technical Studies; On-line or in-person courses developed specifically to train public officials and staff

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Draft IEA: The Focus

- Specific attention was drawn to the desire to incorporate existing OAS initiatives including, but not limited to the OAS Scholarships and Training Program, the Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN), the Development Cooperation Fund. The need to review and strengthen the Virtual Platform for Education Cooperation as an important component of IEA was also supported.

(October 26-28, 2016 Preparatory Meeting of the 9th Ministerial)

Draft IEA: The Focus

- This clear and deliberate focus on institutional strengthening and public policy development directs attention to specific areas within each of the pillars – Quality, Inclusive and Equitable Education; Strengthening of the Teaching Profession; and Comprehensive Early Childhood Care, with a focus on the cross-cutting themes, as agreed ad referendum of the Delegation of Paraguay – 10/28/2016, to include promotion of the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); use of information and communication technologies (ICTs); and promotion of gender mainstreaming (IEA, 2016, p. 10). Toward this end, several models, adapted accordingly, for cooperation through alliances are useful considerations.

(October 26-28, 2016 Preparatory Meeting of the 9th Ministerial)

IEA Funding and Sustainability: Questions

- What will be the major cost components?
- What factors will drive or constrain the costs associated with the implementation?
- What are the traditional and non-traditional potential sources of funding available for and to the IEA; and what strategies may be developed to be able to access these alternative sources in the future?
- What strategies and guiding principles will be implemented to enhance the financial efficiency and overall cost effectiveness of the implementation of the IEA?
- How is the current and future state of the global economy likely to impact the IEA's sustainability?

Conclusions

- The building of the Inter-American Education Agenda has been an initiative long in the making.

- Given the current reality of the Hemisphere, strategic investments and drawing upon Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships will be key

- Respectful of the diversity across the countries of the Americas, must reflect an understanding that the approaches taken, depending on the project and context, may need to take different forms and shapes at different times and junctures

Conclusions

- Sound monitoring and evaluation principles
- Governance structure that has a multi-layered 'backbone'
- Such an approach can potentially lead to aligning priorities that will assist in building national and local ownership of initiatives and ultimately build capacity to implement the three identified priorities:
  - (a) quality, inclusive and equitable education;
  - (b) strengthening of the teaching profession; and
  - (c) comprehensive early childhood care.