

## **Executive Summary**

Year after year, since 2002 all the aspects of the WGFE operations have dramatically improved as well as the quality of its deliverables across Africa. This ranges from the way the WGFE annual work plan is designed to the various activities undertaken across the continent. If the year 2003 was characterized by an impressive renaissance of the working group, 2004 was the year of the strengthening of the results obtained in 2003 and the launch of several innovative activities, and 2005 the year of further strengthening the intervention capability of the WGFE. In fact, the 2005 work plan, like the previous years' action plans, was built around four (4) strategic areas that are central to the interventions of the WGFE across the continent: capacity building, research, policy dialogue/interface, and networking.

First of all, the implementation of the WGFE capacity building activities was articulated around two major activities that were the culmination of the revision of the WGFE old training manual: the socialization of the new Anglophone and Francophone trainers into their new roles coupled with the experimentation of the new manual through the national training seminars on the costs, financing, planning and budgeting of education intended for high-ranking officials in Ministries of Education, Finance, Local Government and Information and Communication to enhance their skills and competencies. Two such seminars one intended for Anglophone Africa and the other for Francophone Africa were held in Windhoek, Namibia and in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR) respectively. The main purpose of the training seminars was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the new training tool of the WGFE.

Second, the research activity component of the WGFE 2005 work plan devoted to the new case studies on the financing of education in a sector wide approach (SWAp) did not get off the ground mainly because of the financial constraints the WGFE experienced. The methodological workshop that kicks off the new case studies could not therefore be undertaken.

Third, the policy dialogue and interface component of the program was quite successful. The policy dialogue conference was held in Kampala, Uganda. Its topic was Financing and Planning of Education in East Africa: From Government Intervention to Community Involvement. Furthermore, as is traditionally the case, the WGFE took part in all the ADEA statutory and other important meetings during the period. Finally, 2005 experienced the beginning of fruitful synergistic actions between the WGFE and other ADEA WGs, mainly the WGHE and the WGECD.

Fourth, the WGFE continued to build new networks and partnerships. The WGFE linked up with several African and non-African institutions with a view of establishing strategic partnerships and alliances to plan activities collaboratively on the continent such as InWent (German International Capacity Building Institution, etc.) through Managing Educational Costs, Financing and Budgeting (MECOFIBU) project in Southern Africa.

## **1. Capacity Building through National and Cascade Training Seminars**

Over the years, the WGFE has gained experience in the area of capacity building through training seminars and has demonstrated an outstanding track record in this endeavour. The WGFE continues to predominantly capitalize on the program components in which it has always had a comparative advantage. In this regard, the WGFE is accomplishing more capacity building activities in Africa at a lesser cost. This is an example of the optimal utilization of the resources allocated to the WGFE.

The year 2005 started with the national training seminar of Malawi (Lilongwe) on the costs, financing, and budgetary procedures in education that brought together thirty high ranking officials from the Ministries of Education and Sports, Finance, Higher Education, Local Government, and Communication/Information. Furthermore, the revision of the old manual, the training tool of the WGFE, was completed. The old manual was revamped in terms of substance and format. Regarding the substance, the greatest change is the addition of a new module on educational planning and the extensive revision of the three old modules. Concerning the format, the modules are more structured and there has been a reorganization of their contents into units. To facilitate the training seminars across the continent, ten new trainers (four Anglophone, four Francophone and two Lusophone) from all the geographical regions and linguistic families of Africa were recruited. Finally, an orientation session for the induction of the new trainers and the experimentation of the new manual occurred in two separate national training seminars (Windhoek, Namibia, August 4-13, 2005 for the Anglophone trainers and Bangui, Central African Republic, September 30-October 08 for the Francophone trainers). Nearly one hundred officials were trained in the three countries through the three training sessions combined.

## **2. Research component: National Case - Studies**

The methodological workshop that would have kicked off the launch of the new case-studies of Guinea-Conakry on the financial management of education in a decentralized and devolved setting, of Mali and Uganda on the financing of education in a sector wide approach (SWAp) context, and of Burkina Faso on the financing of non formal education, could not occur in 2005 because of a severe shortage of funds the WGFE was confronted with. The case study in energy with the Working Group on Early Childhood Development (WGECD) on the costs of ECD programs in selected countries across the continent could not either get off the ground in 2005. The year 2006 will be critical in the continuation of the new case studies.

## **3. Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

Concerning the policy dialogue component, the WGFE held a conference September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, in Kampala, Uganda whose topic was: *Educational Financing and Planning in East Africa: From Government Intervention to Community Involvement*. The policy dialogue constitutes a dynamic forum where high ranking representatives of African Ministries of Education, donor agencies, academia, research institutions, trade unions, parents' associations, civil society organizations, students' unions, the ADEA

Secretariat, the UNESCO-IIEP and other educational stakeholders meet to discuss funding issues confronting the educational systems of African countries. This policy dialogue conference, the third of its kind, organized by the WGFE over the past two years, was attended by 23 participants (of which 10 were women) from seven African countries and France. A total of ten papers were given on the main topic and related sub-topics. The general discussions that followed the presentations were quite enlightening. The proceedings will be published in 2006 in the CODESRIA monograph series.

Two important lessons were learned from this 2005 policy dialogue series of the WGFE. First of all, the policy dialogue conference underscored the significance of the usefulness of the activity as an instrumental forum for exchange and interaction between various stakeholders' groups having a vested interest in education and its funding across Africa. Second, the activity also highlighted the importance of establishing the dialogue between all the education stakeholders in order to have a meaningful discussion on all the funding and resources allocation and reallocation issues the Ministries of Education across Africa are confronted with. The policy dialogue series rotates between the linguistic and geographical areas of Africa and a broader constituency should be invited to get involved.

#### **4. Networking**

One of the major strengths of the WGFE is its ability to network within and outside the continent. The WGFE continued to reinforce its network of education and finance experts in 2005 and this network of experts and specialists is increasingly expanding in Africa. The network database is gradually increasing over the years. This gives the WGFE more leverage in improving its capacity building and research capabilities on the continent. Without the power of networking, it would not have been possible for the WGFE to implement several of its activities across Africa. In this process, the WGFE always capitalizes on resource sharing for the synergy of joint coordinated activities of some ADEA Working Groups and several institutions on and outside the African continent.

Regarding the ADEA Working Groups, the groundwork is gradually being laid out for synergistic actions and sustained collaboration. This initiative started in 2003, gathered momentum in 2004 and continued to expand, diversify and gear up in 2005.

- The contact was established with the Working Group on Non Formal Education (WGNFE). This will lead to the realization by the WGFE of a case-study on the financing of non formal education in Burkina Faso in 2006.
- Preliminary contact is established with the Working Group on Early Childhood Development for the accomplishment of a case-study featuring the costing of Early Childhood Development programs in selected African countries in 2006.
- The Coordinator took part in the WGHE 2005 Steering Committee meeting in Cape Town (South Africa) as well as the General Assembly of the WGHE coordinating agency (the Association of African Universities AAU). The practical aspect of the collaboration with the WGESA and the WGES will hopefully get under way in 2006 with an activity on the financing aspect of the African Peer Review mechanism planned in 2006 and the construction of the

WGFE Education Resources and Information Center at CODESRIA (CODERIC) also known as the Observatory on Education.

The WGFE also linked up with several capacity building organizations in and outside Africa to set up collaborative programs intended for building the capacity of several Education African institutions:

- The WGFE and the German International Institute for Capacity Building (InWent) collaboratively developed a multistage, multilevel course entitled “Managing Educational Costs, Financing and Budgeting” (MECOFIBU). This project implemented in three phases is intended for senior officials in the Ministries of Education and Finance of Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and South Africa. MECOFIBU is a collaborative program involving the IIEP-WGFE-InWent-Wits University. The last phase of the project (Phase III) is scheduled in late February 2006 in Windhoek. This experience of synergy will be showcased at the ADEA upcoming Biennale in Libreville, Gabon, in March 2006.

## **5. Other Activities**

### **WGFE Steering Committee Meeting**

The WGFE held its 12<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee (StCom) Meeting in Kampala,, Uganda, in September 2005. The meeting debated and unanimously adopted the WG’s 2006 budget. The session was well attended by the representatives of African Ministries of Education, whereas development agencies could not attend because of scheduling conflicts.

### **ADEA Steering Committee Meeting**

In 2005, the Coordinator attended all the ADEA statutory meetings, namely, the two Steering Committee and Leaders and Coordinators’ Meetings held in Paris.

### **Other Meetings**

Other Meetings the Coordinator attended in 2005 include:

- The Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development sponsored by the WGECD and UNICEF Regional Office Feb. 28 -March 05, 2005 in Dakar.
- The Regional Steering Committee Meeting of Educational Research Network of West and Central Africa (ERNWACA) held in Dakar, March 7-9, 2005.
- The Third Follow up Meeting for QualiLearning/CoseLearn a Swiss assistance project in E-learning for Francophone Ministries of Education of West and Central Africa and Maghreb as well as the Rector of the University of Dakar and a leading Swiss University held in Dakar, March 12-13, 2005.
- The sub-regional seminar on the Dynamics and Constraints of Sectoral Educational Strategies in West African Economies sponsored by the Pole de Dakar and held in Bamako, April 12-18, 2005.