



## **A holistic approach of education**

### **Position paper of the NGO Platform on the Right to Education on the UNESCO POST-2015 Education Indicators**

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Joint position paper submitted by OIDEL, Apprentissages Sans Frontières, BICE, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, IFUW, IIMA, New Humanity, OCAPROCE, Soka Gakkai International, VIDES members of NGO Platform for the Right to Education. Collège Universitaire Henry Dunant, Chair UNESCO of the University of Bergamo, Chair UNESCO of the University of la Rioja also share the views expressed in these commentaries.

Concerning the Post-2015 Education Indicators proposed by the TAG (Technical Advisory Group) of UNESCO we, the NGO Platform on the Right to Education, would like to make the following remarks.

**General Comments:** Concerning the indicators used for the Post-2015 Education Indicators, we think a Human Rights based approach is essential, as development cannot be disconnected from human rights. In other terms, Education cannot just be seen as a tool for Sustainable Development, but as a right. The fact that education is a right has some consequences such as their protection by the rule of law, as the preamble of the Universal Declaration states, allowing citizens to claim it in case of unfulfillment. The importance of a Human Rights - based approach is widely recognized as the most pertinent way to monitor implementation of education as a fundamental component of development. We would have been glad to see reflected the work done so far by OHCHR on Indicators on Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and the “The Right to Education: Law and Policy Review Guidelines”<sup>2</sup> recently published by UNESCO. The only mention of legislation is within the indicator 26 concerning the real existence of nine years of free and compulsory basic education.

We would like to make two concrete suggestions concerning this approach:

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<sup>1</sup> OHCHR (2012) Indicators on Human Rights New York – Geneva  
[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Human\\_rights\\_indicators\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Human_rights_indicators_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Right to Education: Law and Policy Review Guidelines  
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002284/228491e.pdf> )

Firstly, we propose the inclusion of **structural** indicators as in page 26 of the UNESCO document “The Right to Education: Law and Policy Review Guidelines” cited above. One example is the Constitutional Guarantees for Universal Primary Education.

Secondly, we propose the inclusion of three indicators taken from the OHCHR document, which particularly makes reference to civil society’s role:

*-Date of entry into force and coverage of domestic law on the freedom of the individuals and groups (including minorities) to establish and direct educational institutions*

*-Number of registered and/or active NGOs (per 100000 persons) involved in the promotion and protection of the right to education.*

*-Number of institutions of ethnic, linguistic minority and religious population groups recognized or given public support.<sup>3</sup>*

**5.1 – Early Childhood:** We think that without any indicator of measurement it is impossible to assess implementation. If some indicators cannot be included we would then suggest removing this part in order to focus more intensely on primary and secondary education.

**5.2 – Primary and Secondary Education.** We are concerned that the proposed indicators may minimize the essential content of quality education to only Mathematics and Reading. As stated by the Special Rapporteur of the Right to Education, Mr. Singh, a holistic approach of the right to education is broader than the narrow approach of performance evaluation of only mathematical, literacy and language skills and it broadens the assessment of the educational attainments of students to include all obligations relating to the right to education under international human rights law. We consider that the content of the article 29.1 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the content of article 13.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should be included in Quality Education assessment.

The indicators 10, 11, 12 and 13 concern the results in different countries on reading and mathematics. However there is a reasonable doubt that these indicators are pertinent and comparable. In fact, it is not possible to use a comparison between the performance of countries with different languages tested.

We would like to highlight some issues concerning the comparability between countries:

*-EGRA seems to compare easily the States tested in the same language, however there are some difficulties on doing this comparison due to the different uses of language (vocabulary and dialects that can differ).*

*-SACMEQ, TIMSS, PRILS, PISA and LLECE consider the international comparison as their main objective. However, there is a difference between the international and the regional surveys; while the first ones (TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA) show ranking of countries from the first pages, the second ones (SACMEQ, LLECE) have a less direct optic and are more focused on other factors.*

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<sup>3</sup> OHCHR, p.105

-Finally, TIMSS, PIRLS and PISA do not permit to compare among situations where the language of learning is not the same one as the one used in the current activities.

The indicators concerning Primary and secondary education analyze the real application of the Education for All Steering Committee Target 2; which is “ *By 2030, all girls and boys complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least 9 years*”. An indicator on the subject could be build from Article 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This article – signed by virtually all States- warns that each State “*at the time of becoming a Party that has not been able to secure in its metropolitan territory or other territories under its jurisdiction compulsory primary education, free of charge, undertakes, within two years, to work out and adopt a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation, within a reasonable number of years, to be fixed in the plan, of the principle of compulsory education free of charge for all*”. The adoption of this plan of action in order to establish a compulsory primary education system free of charge is a good way to analyze the commitment of the States regarding the right to education under the terms of the EFA SC Target 2. Thus, we would like to see in the Post-2015 Education Indicators some concerning the implementation and existence of such plans in the different States Parties.

We would like to remark that beyond the inputs and outputs, it seems important to also have success indicators on the seven points of quality education as defined by the Learning Metrics Task Force.

**5.3 - Skills:** Concerning skills on the Post-2015 Indicators we do not think that they are limited to Technical and Vocational Education and Higher Education but are also relevant to early childhood, primary and secondary education. Actually, the Special Rapporteur of the Right to Education, Mr Singh, in his report entitled “*Assessment of the educational attainment of students and the implementation of the right to education*” (A/HRC/26/27) emphasizes this idea. Mr. Singh underlines the importance of skills development as an integral part of basic education and as a cornerstone particularly for developing countries to raise the aspirations of youth. Some Indicators on skills should then be included for primary and secondary education.

Furthermore indicators of Technical and Vocational Education and Higher Education should not only be focused on skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship. They also should take into consideration the humanistic vision of education. As stated by the Special Rapporteur in the report A/67/310: “*technical and vocational education and training is an integral part of the right to basic education*”. In fact, TVET cannot be constrained to only higher education. Thereby, we would like to see indicators of Technical and Vocational Education and Higher Education in the Post-2015 Education Indicators concerning issues such as access, quality and the attainment rate.

**5.4 – Equity:** We are happy that the necessity of collecting disaggregated data (separated by gender) in the post 2015 targets on education is reflected in these indicators.

**5.6 – Global Citizenship and Sustainability.** Regarding the content of Human Rights Education, or so called in this document *Global citizenship and sustainability*, indicators should be included to better reflect the commitments of the States. HRE 2020<sup>4</sup> for example developed an Indicators Framework to analyse whether and how HRE is implemented in different domains such as: Legislation and policy, Curriculum, Teaching and learning materials, Learner assessment and evaluation program and Teachers training.

We feel that Global Citizenship is a fundamental element of Human Rights Education and we would encourage implementation of both the UN Declaration of Human Rights Education and Training as well as the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

**5.7 – School Environment:** The need to secure the routes to school and the schools themselves, improve infrastructure and recruit well-qualified female teachers is also of importance in that while governments are facilitating adapted infrastructure development and national educational planning, girls benefit. Because of that we would like to see some indicators concerning these issues.

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<sup>4</sup>[http://www.hre2020.org/sites/default/files/HRET%20Indicators\\_long%20form%20Dec%202014.pdf](http://www.hre2020.org/sites/default/files/HRET%20Indicators_long%20form%20Dec%202014.pdf)