

Basic Education for all African Children

Modality for Co-operation

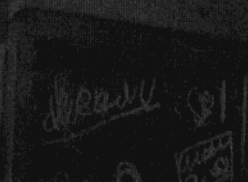


Photo credits: UNESCO

Design: Monika Jost

Printed by Imprimerie de l'Indre

Paris/Argenton-sur-Creuse

Printed in France

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**Basic
Education
for all African
Children**

**Modality
for Co-operation**



United Nations
Educational,
Scientific
and Cultural
Organization

United Nations
System-wide
Special Initiative
on Africa
(UNSI)





Basic Education For All African Children

Modality for Co-operation

UNESCO
Education
Division

Education
Sector

Paris

September 1990

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FOREWORD

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The challenge of providing good quality education for all African children, led to the establishment of the Decade of African Education and the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa – *Basic Education for all African Children*. Both these programmes are designed to channel all possible resources to those areas where they are most needed. This brochure emphasizes the fact that, though much work has already been done, much more still remains to be done if this goal is to be reached. It is essential, however, that a more co-ordinated approach be adopted for the provision of assistance for African education, to ensure that all countries in the region benefit, to the fullest possible extent, from the different resources that are available to them. A more co-ordinated approach in supporting African education systems will allow countries to benefit from the comparative advantages of all the partners. The programmes established should be ultimately sustainable by governments, independently of external assistance,

and should be those which are certain of becoming an essential feature of the country's education system.

This brochure is a token of UNESCO's commitment to the Decade of African Education and to the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa. It is also an appeal to Member States to increase their efforts to provide assistance to the most disadvantaged countries, in accordance with the recognized procedures followed and the resolutions adopted, for collaboration with them. This brochure describes the mandate of UNESCO in this regard and reaffirms its readiness to work in partnership with Member States and with other agencies. The Organization will, in turn, endeavour to use its resources on behalf of its Member States, and to ensure that its experience and information storehouse be fully used in the interests of education for all.

Colin N. Power
Assistant Director General for Education





Education is a basic human right

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIYA) was launched on 15 March 1996, for the main purpose of drawing the attention of the international community to African needs, increasing aid to the continent, and providing more co-ordinated assistance for the establishment of basic education services for all African children. Some progress has been made in bringing about greater collaboration within the UN system, and in encouraging governments to commit themselves to, and to promote, development programmes. The objectives of the UNSIYA programme, particularly with regard to basic education, complement those of the African Decade for Education and the follow-up to The World Declaration on Education for All of 1990.



I. THE AFRICAN BACKGROUND

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1. In order to reach the goal of sustainable development in Africa, both natural and human resources must be developed in such a way that they enable the people of the continent to live and work in dignity. This cannot be done merely by teaching survival and technical skills. Genuine national independence must also be guaranteed, and learning programmes provided which promote individual development. External assistance must, therefore, be offered in a spirit of equality, partnership, mutual understanding and respect.

2. Many African countries have experienced major upheavals which have resulted in political, social and economic changes, which in turn have had important implications for the development of education services. Increased democracy has enabled people to express their hopes and fears more readily, and to take a greater interest in the way in which politicians manage their public and national affairs. These changes have also produced a greater awareness of the importance of the relationship between education and the development of African societies. Governments now recognize the importance of encouraging the active participation of the people themselves in the development of educational services. More and more attention is now given to consensus building, and to the involvement of the potential beneficiaries themselves in the expansion of educational services. However, economic constraints and persistent poverty continue to hamper development efforts.



Education is essential
for human development
and social and
economic progress



3. Although some progress has been made in the provision of basic education in Africa, the major obstacles in the way of the achievement of this goal are:
 - (i) inadequate efforts to implement policies designed to increase access to, and improve the quality of, education
 - (ii) the failure to introduce the necessary reforms
 - (iii) ineffective strategies for the implementation of programmes
 - (iv) inadequate long-term planning
 - (v) the lack of, or inadequacy of, the means of mobilizing national and external resources
 - (vi) poor evaluation of progress

4. As the 21st. century approaches African countries need to build, or re-build, their basic education services so that there is increased access to learning, the quality of education is improved, and facilities are adapted, when necessary, to meet new learning needs. Essential requirements are: competent planning and management, efficient information systems, curriculum reform and development, supervisory services, evaluation and assessment techniques, personnel training programmes and public accountability. Professional associations also need to be strengthened so that they are able to assist in the exchange of information, and in helping personnel to keep abreast of developments in the field of education.

5. The United Nations Special Initiative on Africa should take into account the variety of situations, backgrounds and conditions to be found in the continent, and should be considered as another means of harnessing both national and international assistance for the purpose of providing education for all. Special emphasis should be given to the Initiative's role as a catalyst in supporting the efforts made by the different countries of the region to implement programmes.

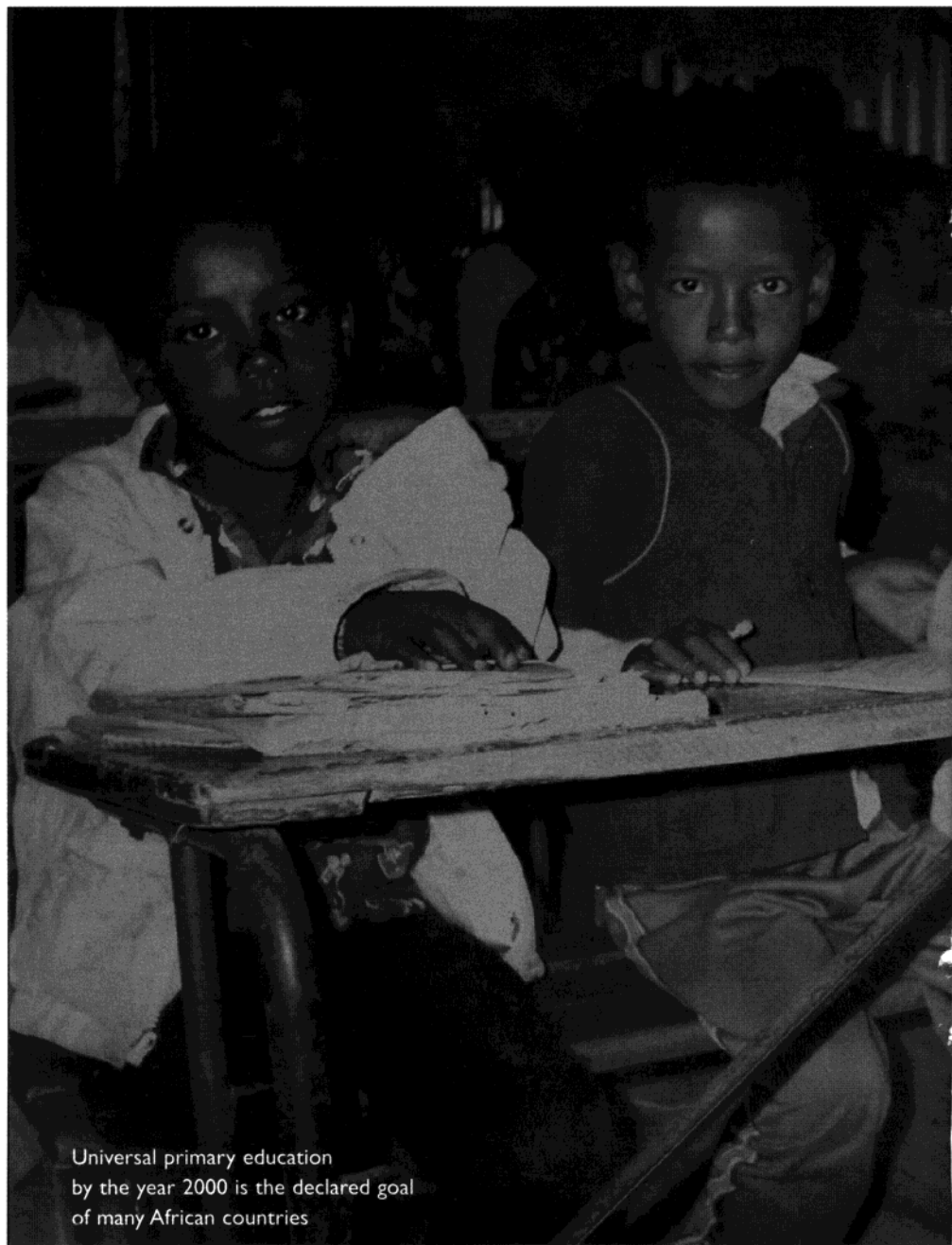
- 6.** UNSIA should, therefore, give priority to the following:
- (i) the re-building of inadequate educational services
 - (ii) the consolidation of existing systems
 - (iii) the collection and dissemination of information regarding effective programmes
 - (iv) the reconstruction of education systems which have been destroyed by conflict
 - (v) the development of scientific and technological skills

In the implementation of African programmes which have priority UNSIA should support programmes which:

- (i) find alternative means of providing formal education and training for marginal groups
- (ii) provide lifelong learning opportunities, in a variety of fields, for boys, girls, men and women
- (iii) provide links between different levels of education including early childhood care and subsequent levels of education
- (iv) establish links between non-formal and formal education in the interest of education for all

- 7.** The Special Initiative can assist in the promotion of a favourable learning environment in which there is a culture of reading, and where the young are encouraged to learn and fully develop their capabilities.
- 8.** UNSIA must support action-oriented programmes, stress the need for evaluation and avoid any tendency to impose modern approaches on systems which are ill-equipped to adopt them.





Universal primary education
by the year 2000 is the declared goal
of many African countries

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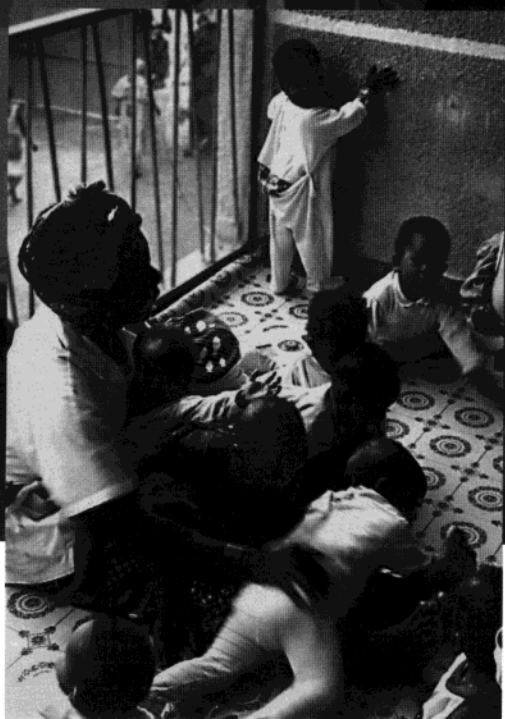
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Daycare facilities free many girls from child-minding duties and enable them to go to school



II. STRATEGIES

Countries' Eligibility

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9. All African countries are eligible for UNESCO assistance, which is provided in accordance with their needs and the availability of resources. Priority, however, is given to the following:
- (i) the least developed countries in Africa, and particularly those with primary school enrolment and literacy rates of less than 50 per cent
 - (ii) countries recovering from war
 - (iii) rural areas and disadvantaged communities
 - (iv) women and girls, the disabled and the disadvantaged (e.g. victims of extreme poverty, street children, displaced and minority groups)

The main consideration, however, is that a specific request be made to UNESCO for assistance.

Modalities of Action

10. The work of the Initiative is both complex and challenging, since it attempts to succeed where there has been consistent failure in the past. Mid-term and long-term planning are, therefore, indispensable requirements, and phased activities must be foreseen in the implementation of programmes. Close co-ordination within the UN system, with the national authorities and with all partners engaged in the building of a national capacity to develop a system of education, is an essential pre-requisite for success.



11. Although temporary solutions have been found, and a number of successful projects have been implemented, long-term planning is a priority for the provision of good quality education in Africa. Development programmes must, therefore, be established within time-frames appropriate for governments, and which they have the resources subsequently to maintain. All too often short-term aid programmes with, for example, considerable outside financial assistance, international consultants, and imported textbooks for use in schools, do little to increase the national capacity to sustain them once outside help comes to an end.

UNESCO Competence in Education and Related Fields

12. UNESCO's mandate covers education, science, culture, technology, communications and the social sciences, and the agency has the capacity to promote a more integrated approach to educational reform and development.



UNESCO collaborates with governments and professional associations in the implementation of programmes

13. UNESCO can provide assistance to Member States in the following areas:

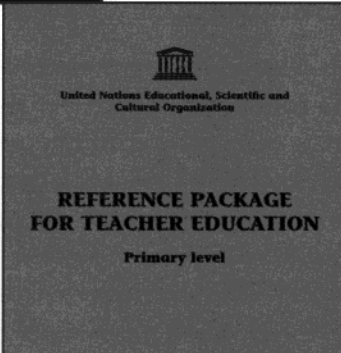
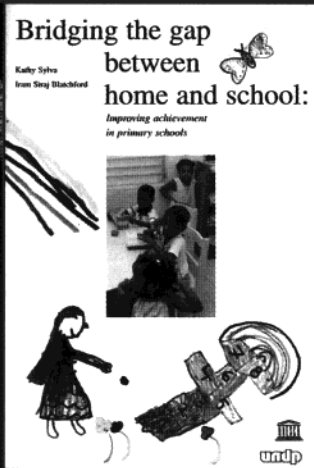
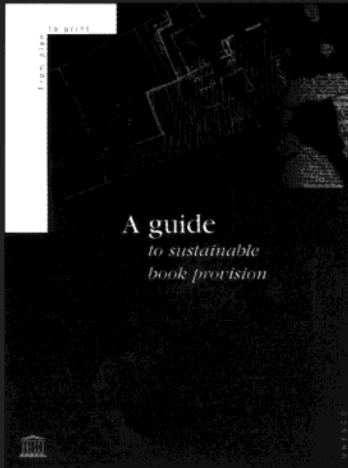
Policy

14. UNESCO organizes frequent meetings with ministers of education through its general conferences, regional, sub-regional and Executive Board meetings, and by means of the official visits of the UNESCO Director General to member states. In this way the agency is able to promote appropriate educational policies and national strategies.

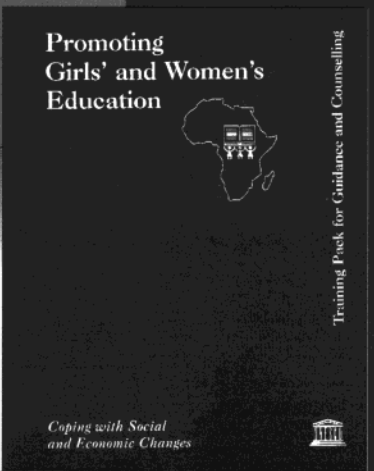
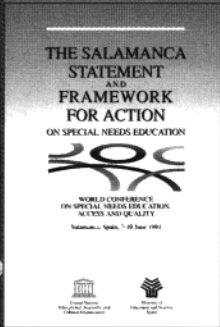
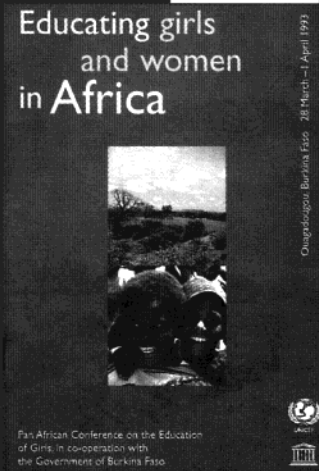


Technical Assistance

15. UNESCO has had considerable experience in the field of education, over a period of many years, in research programmes, technical meetings, field missions, and in project identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation, which have been funded both by the organization itself and by outside donors. UNESCO has provided advisory services to Member States, and made recommendations on how relationships among the educational sub-sectors can be consolidated. UNESCO has been able to identify the difference between the symptoms and causes of educational inadequacies, and has suggested how this problem could be addressed. It has promoted low-cost approaches to the provision of good quality and sustainable educational services, and recognized the need for a self-reliant national capacity to develop educational services. Mechanisms have been developed for the large-scale training of educational personnel and for the production of training materials.



UNESCO is a
storehouse
of information
on education

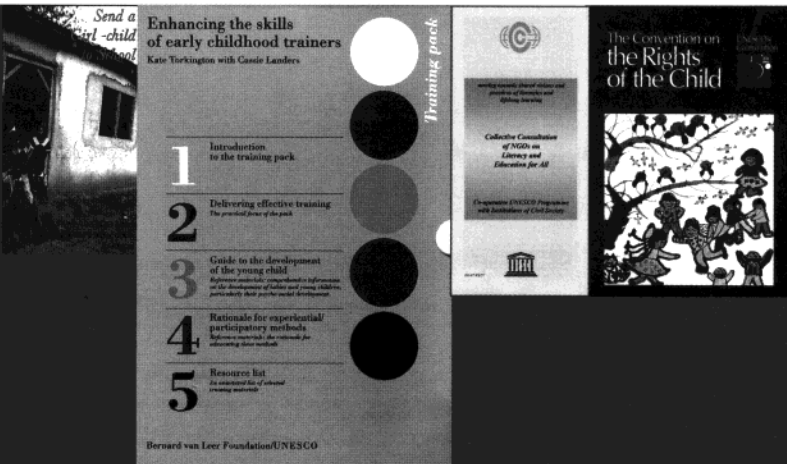



16. UNESCO can assist in the following areas:

- (i) learning techniques and classroom management (teaching materials, the training of teacher trainers, curriculum reform and development, improved learning and training methods)
- (ii) the formulation of national education plans and strategies
- (iii) the role of education in poverty alleviation
- (iv) capacity building (the training of educational personnel in planning, administration and management)
- (v) the mobilization of both internal and external resources
- (vi) the evaluation of programmes

Information: Its Collection, Analysis and Dissemination

17. UNESCO is the main international storehouse of information regarding education. Its bi-annual Statistics Report and World Report on Education are the organization's two basic documents. There is a mine of information to be found in research documents, reports of meetings, occasional papers, books, position papers, country reports, newsletters, brochures and pamphlets. This information is now made available by means of the latest world-wide information technology, and is also to be found in the organization's regional offices, in the offices of UNESCO National Commissions, and in public, university and institutional libraries.





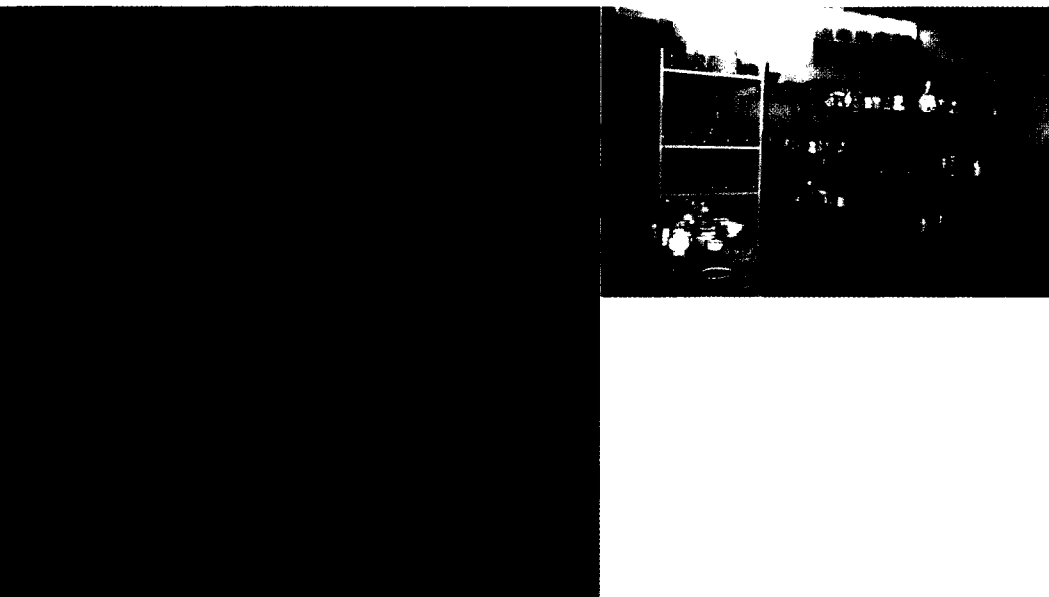
The teaching of
practical skills
prepares children
to earn a living

Education Assessment and Evaluation

18. UNESCO has competence in the assessment and evaluation of educational plans and programmes. It can give advice on classroom management, child development and behaviour, and matters relating to the production of relevant educational materials, which take into account the environment in which children learn and national development objectives.

UNESCO Partnerships

19. The principal partners of UNESCO are its Member States. It also co-operates daily with institutions and other international agencies and with individual experts in the field of education, professional associations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations at both the national and international level.



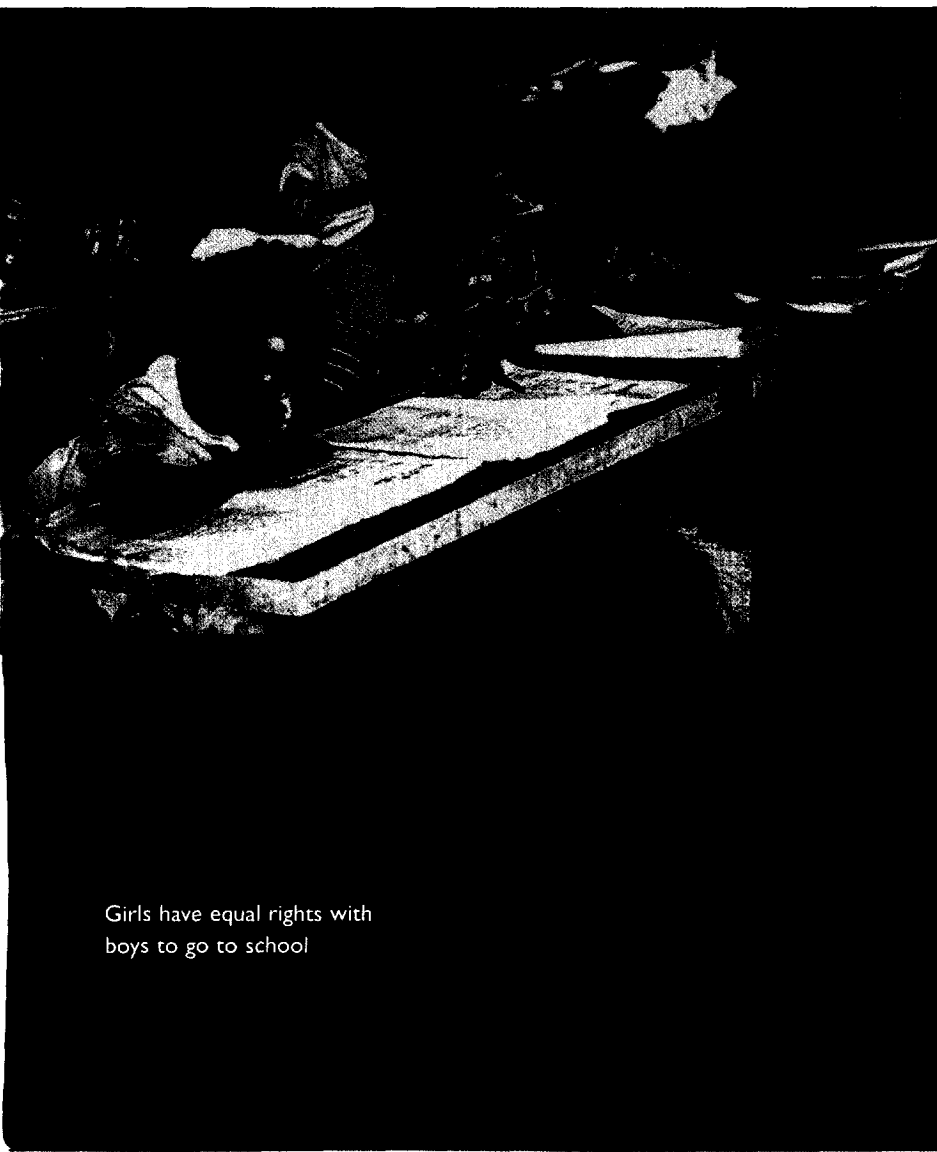
III. IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION MODALITY

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20. The duration of the UNSIA programme is for a period of ten years. The implementation of the programme will be adapted, as and when necessary, in accordance with educational development needs and personnel requirements in the country concerned.
21. UNESCO assistance to UNSIA is provided through its administrative structure. The Division of Basic Education is responsible for technical co-ordination and the management of the international programme. This is done in consultation with the Africa Department and the International Institute for Educational Planning, and in close co-operation with the Global Action Programme on Education for All, the Division of Educational Reconstruction and Development (ERD), and the field offices in Africa, and, in particular, The UNESCO Regional Office (BREDA) in Dakar, Senegal.
22. At the national level, co-ordination of the programme is undertaken by the Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the United Nations co-ordinated system and bilateral agencies, local institutions, non-governmental agencies (NGOs), IGOs, and other recognized agencies and associations which assist basic education programmes.

23. UNESCO organizes consultations, seminars, etc., at the regional and sub-regional levels which review the problems met and develop new strategies for solving or alleviating them. These meetings also result in the production of appropriate manuals and handbooks, and in training courses for trainers. The experience gained at the regional and sub-regional levels then enables programmes to be developed which meet the needs of individual countries in the area.



Girls have equal rights with
boys to go to school





Teachers must bridge the gap
between what children
learn at home and at school

IV RESOURCE MOBILIZATION, FUNDING AND CO-OPERATION

24. If UNSIA's goal of providing *Basic Education for All African Children* is to be achieved, then more intensive effort is needed to harness the necessary resources and to raise funds. Real partnerships must also be forged at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.
25. At the national level the mobilization of all available social and financial resources (including contributions in kind, etc.), must be encouraged. All segments of society should be involved in the programme - e.g. governmental, parastatal and non-governmental organizations; religious and voluntary organizations; individual benefactors, families and communities; business enterprises, trade unions, the media and political parties. UNESCO will also strengthen its efforts to identify and co-operate with African educators and specialists in the implementation of the programme.
26. External assistance should be sought from both bilateral and multi-lateral sources for African countries, whether they are involved, or not, in the Sector Investment Programme, (SIP).
27. In certain countries UNESCO has collaborated with other agencies such as The World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. However, as far as the Special Initiative Programme is concerned, the means of co-operation must be carefully defined, with regard to both policy and the type of activities undertaken, in order to ensure that countries benefit fully from the different kinds of services provided by the various agencies.





- 28.** Co-operation with other agencies must be reviewed in the light of UNESCO's Regular, Participation and Extra-budgetary Programmes. The priorities for the Regular Programme are determined by the Member States. UNESCO and other agencies may, however, decide to co-operate on development programmes in a selected number of countries. In this regard UNESCO would then meet the cost of its participation in missions associated with the identification, preparation, supervision and evaluation of projects, with funds from its Regular Programme budget.
- 29.** UNESCO and a Member State may agree to collaborate in educational development with other international agencies and partners. If the Member State is in agreement then UNESCO participation could be funded from the Participation Programme budget.
- 30.** With regard to the Extra-budgetary Programme, UNESCO and The World Bank could reach an agreement annually on specific activities to be entrusted to UNESCO. Similarly UNESCO could strengthen its collaboration with regional banks such as The African Development Bank, and with other agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP and bilateral agencies. The agency would also continue to provide assistance through Funds-in-Trust agreements.


Specific requests
can be made
by governments
for UNESCO
assistance

V. EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

31. Follow-up will be provided in accordance with existing national and international systems. Periodic, mid-term and final evaluations will also be conducted. UNESCO will continue to improve its own monitoring procedures for educational projects, and to assist Member States in the development of their own facilities for providing accurate information and the assessment of progress. Special consideration will be given to the procurement of the necessary feedback, in order to increase access to learning and improvement in the quality of the education provided.

32. It is hoped that the African Decade of Education and the UN Special Initiative, which is a part of it, will succeed in increasing access to learning opportunities and better quality instruction. Ultimate success, however, will depend not only on the efficient use of available resources, but also on the strength of commitment and dedication shown by both all those involved in the development and delivery of educational services and by those who benefit from the learning opportunities they provide.





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