Concept Paper on the Inter-American Education Agenda: Building Alliances and advancing towards the Sustainable Development Goals

FULL PAPER

Prepared for the 9th Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education

To be held in Nassau, New Providence Island, The Bahamas, February 9 and 10, 2017

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Acknowledgements
The authors wish to acknowledge the operational and logistical assistance provided by the Government of The Bahamas, local secretariat liaison, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Janice Knowles. Appreciation is also extended to Saint Lucia’s Ambassador Sonia Johnny for her early feedback, clarification of context, and pointing to source documents and other materials of note. Finally, the thoughtful and comprehensive feedback provided by Maria Claudia Camacho, Lead Conference Technical Officer, OAS was key in finalizing the paper and for that we are most appreciative.
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1 Introduction
Significant progress has been made in education in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past several decades in such areas as access and attainment at all levels, but especially at the primary and secondary levels. In the area of teacher education, the percentage of trained teachers has increased to an average 81% at the primary level and 73% at the secondary level (UNESCO, 2015, pp. 29-38). This is a significant achievement since quality teachers are the foundation for delivering quality education. In the education systems of both Canada and the United States good teacher quality is highly valued, and is ensured through rigorous teacher education and training programmes for all educational levels. Yet despite the prioritisation of teacher education as a key policy response some challenges remain. In Canada for example, there is some evidence of a teacher recruitment imbalance overall, “with oversupply in some provinces while other provinces have difficulty recruiting qualified teachers in rural areas and in some specialities (mainly scientific disciplines)” (OECD 2015, p.10).

Overall, as noted at the 8th Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education held February 4th and 5th in Panama City, Panama, the Hemisphere continues to experience severe education challenges, many rooted in chronic socio-economic, development and other disparities, vulnerabilities and risks (OAS, 2015d, pp. 1-5). Across the Hemisphere the multiple disadvantages, which exist with respect to income inequality, rural-urban contexts, technology, divides, gender, age and opportunity, intersect with external forces including economic recession, threatening to forestall and even reverse development. In Latin America and the Caribbean adolescents (ages 10-19) and youth (ages 15-25) who presently number around 106 million are particularly affected by severe challenges in such areas as employment, schooling, health, political and civic engagement, and the chance to progress to responsible adulthood. Approximately 39 percent of youth live in poverty, and about 15 million adolescents live in extreme poverty. Six million children and adolescents experience neglect and abuse and risk factors including teen pregnancy, drug addiction, conflict with the law, and dropping out of school affect 25% to 32% of young people (OAS, 2015a, p. 2).
Despite the impressive accomplishments of the past, education systems across the countries of the Americas continue to struggle with relevance, and in some respect, many are dysfunctional, impervious to change, problem-plagued and severely challenged in meeting the rights of children, and youth to quality education. In some parts of the Hemisphere, education systems continue to use archaic methods, processes and even content when what is required are cutting-edge 21st Century high-level skills, competencies and knowledge, and the development of appropriate thought processes, mindsets and attitudes. The effects of weaknesses or failures of education systems in the Hemisphere impact most severely on those individuals and groups, including children with disabilities, those in rural and remote areas, pregnant teens, dropouts and other out-of-school children, and children of undocumented migrants, who often do not benefit as they should, or are fully excluded from these systems.

Internationally, there is strong consensus that investment in education is particularly important in driving inclusive socio-economic development, reducing inequality, and tackling the broad range of problems that currently affect children and youth across the Hemisphere. 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 are urgently needed to foster education inclusiveness and quality and provide equitable, sustainable development in the Hemisphere. Conceived as a “process for dialogue, cooperation, and regional integration” the purpose of the IEA is to “strengthen inter-American cooperation as well as coordination and linkages of efforts with other international organizations and regional and sub-regional entities to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all” (IEA, Draft Agenda, 2016, p. 5).

In this regard, the identification of the three priority areas, namely: (1) quality, inclusive and equitable education; (2) strengthening of the teaching profession; and (3) comprehensive early childhood care, are of particular importance. These represent the heart of quality education provision and overcoming some of the most severe education deficits in the Hemisphere. In addition, the recognition given to the identification of the three additional cross-cutting themes, specifically, specifically, quality, inclusion and equity, are noteworthy. This means that the IEA and resulting alliances can become important transformative tools for
modernising education provision and systems in the Hemisphere, and for enabling education cooperation, coherence, partnerships and sharing among multi-sectoral partners on an unprecedented scale.

Given the rapid pace of socio-economic and technological change, it is now an even greater imperative today than at any other time in history that education policy makers and stakeholders seek to forge new innovative alliances and compacts in order to cope with the challenges, and capitalise on the opportunities of the 21st century knowledge economy and society. This is so not only in education, but also across virtually every other sector nationally, regionally and globally. In a new environment where it is knowledge that drives and sustains economic competitiveness and social development, it becomes an urgent imperative to create inter-sectoral and innovative multi-stakeholders' alliances that can catalyse and support the required educational transformations. The new information and communication technologies offer unprecedented opportunities as a platform for supporting partnerships and for sharing information on initiatives carried out by multi-stakeholders. They also allow education stakeholders the opportunity to provide quality education to even the most remote and disadvantaged learners anywhere and at any time.

Diagram 1: Basic Typology of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

**SOURCE:** (Peterson et al, 2014, Cited in Hazelwood, 2015, p. 2)
Utilising these technologies as their backbone and networking platform, Multi-stakeholder collaborations of the types depicted in Diagram 1 above, provide a model for mobilising and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies, and financial resources to support the achievement of the IEA, and the broader post-2015 development agenda based on the SDG’s. (See for example, Dodds, 2015.)
2 Framework for building Alliances

2.1 Education Alliances as Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives or Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Development

In many ways, the IEA is reflective of an explicit recognition of the importance of alliances and partnerships. This is especially so for Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSI) or Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) as these are important mechanisms for tackling the growing number of inherently multi-faceted and multi-dimensional global development issues and challenges, of which educational problems are among the most persistent and intractable (see for example, Dodds, 2015; and Maetens, 2007). In its 2006 Strategic Plan the Organization of American States (OAS) advocated strongly for the strengthening of existing partnerships and the creation of new alliances among states aimed at enhancing their capacity to address development challenges such as equity in education, teacher preparation at all levels and areas of education, in the Hemisphere. As such, the IEA itself can be construed and framed as a major development and imperative for the Americas, at this historical juncture.

Alliances conceived within Member States and across the Hemisphere that are multi-stakeholder and sectorial focused have several benefits. In addition to enhancing the potential of cross-sector dialogue, they can be used to engage stakeholders in meaningful ways. According to Hazelwood (2015), Global Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships, if structured well, can 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” (p. 4).

Simultaneously, it must be recognized that such partnerships are not without risks and challenges, and given the diversity of the Hemisphere, care must be paid to variations in needs and cultural differences. Indeed, for such alliances to the successful, there must be a level of flexibility as attention is paid to the “the drivers of systemic change and [the resulting potential] for scaling impact through a more programmatic approach” (Hazelwood, 2015, p. 4). Critically, given the complexity resulting from collaborating across regional, national and local levels, it must be recognised that investment in management structures will ultimately be a determining factor in successful outcomes. This too must be coupled with what Hazelwood (2015) calls “agreed rules and other measures to ensure private sector transparency
and accountability” as well as shared measurement systems to enable monitoring and impact evaluation (p. 5).

2.2 Suggested Objectives of an Education Alliance

The explicit objectives of this type of collaboration in areas like education were clearly articulated in 2015 Panama Resolution of the 8th Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education; the 7th Summit of the Americas, and at least two of the General Assembly Declarations. These objectives highlight the importance of, maximising the use of financial and technical resources, greater integration and leveraging of efforts across actors and institutions, galvanising regional political commitment for education, and ensuring that technical advice, capacity development and financial support provided are based on needs and priorities of member states, as well as comparative advantages built on complementarities.

Specifically, at the Thirty-Sixth Regular Session held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (June 4 – 6, 2006), a call for greater collaboration was echoed through the Declaration that noted the need for “cooperation, collaboration, and coordination with other subregional, regional, and multilateral organizations, support and stimulate strategic alliances among government, the private sector, and civil society, to promote the adoption of ICTs in order to improve and enhance competitiveness in the productive sectors, particularly micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and other units of production” (Organization of American States, 2006, p. 314).

This was followed by the Forty-Fourth Regular Session, held in Asunción, Paraguay (June 3-5, 2014), when the value and benefits of the Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (FEMCIDI) were acknowledged, but a call was made "to restructure it in accordance with the new realities of cooperation in the Hemisphere; to strengthen, in a comprehensive and effective manner, the various cooperation approaches—including triangular and South-South cooperation; and to promote greater alliances to finance cooperation projects and activities, so that it may respond more effectively to the needs of the member states" (OAS, 2014, p. 46). Clear support of multi-sectorial cooperation was once again the focus of deliberations at the Seventh Summit of the Americas held in Panama City, Panama (April 10-11, 2015) as it concluded with the request of the OAS to promote discussion and formulation of public policies through the relevant institutions. Specifically, the
request was made of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), through the creation of an educational research and innovation laboratory for the Americas, ‘to support this initiative, and likewise the World Bank, through the creation of an inter-American education network, to consolidate the various proposals in this area. To that end, the appeal was to establish a working group comprising the OAS, the IADB, the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and the World Bank to, with the active participation of the Hemisphere’s countries, design and integrate these initiatives within an inter-American institutional framework’ (p. 3)

Then, at the Eighth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education held in Panama City, Panama (February 4 and 5, 2015), Ministers once again reaffirmed commitment to “strengthen[ing] dialogue, coordination, and cooperation with other subregional, regional, and international organizations and mechanisms in order to identify, as part of the process of building the Inter-American Education Agenda, synergies and concrete opportunities to complement efforts on strategies for action to help steer inter-American cooperation on education; and to provide information to the CIE to those ends” (p. 3).

In sum, multi-stakeholder alliances could, as is evidenced in their successful use in other global priority development areas including in health, energy, forestry and water, be efficient mechanisms or tools for implementing the IEA, as a crucial development initiative for the Hemisphere. As highlighted by Dodds (2015), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (the GAVI Alliance), the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEEP), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the UN Global Compact CEO Water Mandate all have common elements which speak to their success and are elements that could play a role when developing criteria for other successful partnerships. Specifically, successes point up the importance of such alliances being broad-based and inclusive with participation from a wide range of education stakeholders, 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.

### 2.3 Suggested Guiding Principles of Education Alliances
Based on a review of operational experiences of multi-stakeholder initiatives, it is possible to suggest that alliances in the Americas might be guided by the following principles as outlined by Stern, Kingston, and Ke (2015). Specifically, alliances should:

- Pay adequate attention to long-term sustainability issues, ensuring that there is not overwhelming or singular focus on particular education challenges, but instead bring about more system-level changes by considering the full education context and impact of all initiatives on the various levels and areas of the education system.
- Consider that multi-stakeholder initiatives have the greatest potential to mobilise the strengths and resources of the various stakeholders when they are fully engaged, as equal partners, from conceptualisation through to implementation and review.
- Always be cognisant of the fact that stakeholder buy-in is best achieved when there is close alignment between the objectives and activities of the respective stakeholders and those of the multi-stakeholder partnership.
- Adopt the position that there is great benefit to be derived from fully engaging local partners such as NGOs, and the local private sector at all stages ensuring their active participation as they bring on board unique capabilities including local knowledge and local networking, which can be critical to the sustainability of projects.
- Adopt the view that the best governance models to adopt are those which maximise impact and outcomes through the streamlining of the decision-making process, and which facilitate funding from multiple sources to be combined and mobilized efficiently and effectively.
- Recognise that multi-stakeholder initiatives can be complex and difficult to design and manage, especially given the differences in development levels, institutional capacities, culture and the general diversity among the countries of the Hemisphere, and therefore it makes good sense to start small and scale up those programmes, which show the greatest promise.
- Harness and encourage the use of innovative ideas, approaches and ICTs emanating from within the partnership or from the external environment to enable the work of the IEA in a transparent and accountable manner.
- Ensure that priorities align closely with the Sustainable Development Goals, and the quest of member countries to achieve these goals.

These overarching principles noted as a backdrop, the complexity of the challenge becomes evident when one reviews the Agenda priorities along with the emerging projects, which are proposed be addressed through alliances.
3 Alliances and the IEA Priorities

3.1 Quality, Inclusive, and Equitable Education

The past decade or more has seen an increasing global emphasis on the provision of quality, inclusive and equitable education, and more importantly, there has been growing consensus that inclusiveness and equity in education are at the heart of quality education provision. As agreed by OAS Member States,

- “Quality is a referential multidimensional framework for setting educational goals that promote human development for civic life in knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and values, necessary to successfully face and maximize the opportunities of the XXI Century.
- Inclusion seeks to eliminate or minimize the barriers that result from discrimination and exclusion, which can affect the student population, from early childhood and covering all education levels, as well as in the areas of teacher training and professional development.
- Equity is helping ensure equal access to education for all children, youth and adults. It refers, inter alia, to the strategic distribution and use of resources in order to help provide individuals, institutions and organizations with equality of opportunity with the hope that they may maximize their potential” (IEA Draft Agenda, 2016, pp. 5-6).

These definitions are consistent with those advanced as well by bodies such as UNESCO which posits that inclusive education is “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children” (p. 13). Thus, any privileging of education in the development process must also prioritize inclusiveness as a central plank of education systems, processes and practices.

Similarly, the United Nations High-Level Panel's report to the Secretary-General on the post-2015 development agenda placed particular attention on the Bali communiqué's focus on social inclusion of all marginalized groups including those with disabilities and other special needs.
These efforts build on the previous initiatives related to the implementation of United Nations and other international instruments including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Likewise, inclusive and equitable education as a right has been central to the development of recent education policies throughout the Hemisphere. This was reaffirmed in Panama by the Minister of Education of Panama and Chair of the 8th Ministerial meeting, Marcela Paredes de Vásquez who cautioned that greater emphasis had to be placed on education not only as an “important variable for achieving human development, and overcoming situations of marginality and vulnerability” but also as a “transformative variable of the paradigms of our societies and an essential element to create and deepen equality between people” (OAS, 2015c). Her views reflected the thrust across the region to articulate and implement a new development paradigm, based on various regional and international policy statements and instruments including the Salamanca Statement (1994), the Social Charter of the Americas in 2012, and its Plan of Action, the Declaration of the OAS General Assembly in 2014, as well as the “Protocol of San Salvador,” and its emphasis on equity and equality through the upholding of economic, social and cultural rights.

3.1.1 Summary of Projects: Priorities Identified
The projects emerging from the consultations of the Working Group on quality, inclusive and equitable education were the most extensive of the three working groups. The consensus coming out of the Preparatory Meeting for the 9th Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education however focused on two objectives and two action lines. Specifically, objective 1 highlighted the need to “[l]earn about and exchange policies, programs and experiences regarding quality, inclusive and equitable education at all levels’, with the action line noted as the target to “[i]dentify, study and promote innovative initiatives - policies, programs and experiences - aimed at improving learning processes and pedagogical mediation in educational centers that promote quality, inclusion and equity” (p. 6). The second objective focused on the intention to “[d]evelop cooperation projects on quality, inclusive and equitable education among member States’, with the resulting target being to “[d]esign dissemination methods that share best practices carried out by member States” (p. 6). This desirability of sharing good practices across the Hemisphere aimed at promoting quality, inclusion and social equity, is fertile ground potentially for alliances. In this regard, activities that would include, but not be limited to, cooperation missions to
explore best practices and lessons learnt from successes of international cooperation organisations, government agencies, the public sector and civil society are noteworthy.

3.1.2 Studies from the Hemisphere
Countries in the hemisphere have made good, but uneven progress in the development of policies, programmes and other measures to strengthen inclusive education in the region, but the task of systematic transformation of education systems for inclusiveness remains a difficult one, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Despite the dissemination of guidelines and routine training and consultations, much work still needs to be done around the issue of building consensus on the principles and meaning of proactive inclusiveness in different contexts, particularly concerning the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Nevertheless, the Working Group 1 has identified some initiatives that can help mainstream inclusiveness in regional education systems. These ought to include the effective utilization of the OAS Virtual Platform for Education Cooperation to promote dialogue and interaction concerning inclusive and equitable education.

This type of initiative can complement others such as the Single Virtual University Space mechanism being used by the University of the West Indies, and the online and outreach activities of the University’s Open Campus, both of which have become powerful tools for taking quality education to marginalized and disadvantaged persons, as well as those in the most remote areas who would not normally have access to tertiary education. These mechanisms have also become important for strengthening quality education provision across the Caribbean using their capacities in teacher education and professional development. In addition, there are initiatives that have focused on enhancing inclusive education through the exchange of specific inter-sectoral collaboration projects being undertaken with the support of regional, sub-regional and international cooperation. In this regard, key regional institutions like the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the various universities ought to be leveraged as key partners in the conceptualization, development and implementation of education programmes and policies aimed at transforming education systems in the region to make them more inclusive. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing the crucial role of hemispheric international development partners such as Global Affairs Canada (formerly DFATD), and USAID in supporting various countries through inclusive education capacity building projects over the last decade or more. For
example, the UWI Open Campus, *Strengthening Distance Education in the Caribbean*, a project funded by the Canadian Government, has resulted, as of March 2016, in:

1. the delivery of 20 new and renewed undergraduate and graduate programmes (24 courses beginning in 2016 to 1134 enrolled students;
2. the approval of 23 programmes (13 undergraduate and 10 graduate) which surpassed the project’s target of a minimum of 15 programs and 75 courses; [and]
3. the design, development and implementation of four Programme Advisory Committees (PACs) including private and public sector representatives, which advised on course design and delivery to ensure the project prepared students who were ready to enter the labour market (http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb%5Ccpo.nsf/projEn/A034764001).

Another such example of a multi-stakeholder partnership is seen in the instance of The Bahamas’ Investing in Students and Programmes for the Innovative Reform of Education (INSPIRE), highlighted in Cases Study 1 below.

**CASE STUDY 1: Multi-Stakeholder Engagement in Inclusive Education (The Bahamas)**

<table>
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<th>The goal of Investing in Students and Programmes for the Innovative Reform of Education (INSPIRE) which was formerly named Support Program for Transforming Education and Training (SPTET) was “to enhance human capital accumulation through the development of a dynamic system of education and training that is aligned with the demands of the economy for skilled human resources” (Mindbloom, 2014, p. 6). To achieve this goal, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank, planned the implementation of three key initiatives or project components</th>
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<td>1. developing technical and vocational education;</td>
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<td>2. improvements in preschool programming and the provision of learning opportunities to an increased number of students through a more inclusive education system; and</td>
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<td>3. capacity building within the Ministry through the establishment of an education management information system, increased leadership capabilities and greater monitoring and evaluation expertise.</td>
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The process to develop legislation related to the second component is noteworthy. Based on broad-based multi-stakeholder consultations, legislation that guides the delivery of Inclusive Education in The Bahamas was drafted and sent to Cabinet for its consideration. Initially the proposed legislation was deemed too narrow in scope and adjustments for a more national perspective were requested. Stakeholders were consulted and a paper-based survey about inclusion was administered. The data were summarized and formed the basis for revisions to the legislation that was approved in the House of Assembly in December of 2013. Personnel from both the Special Needs and ECE Units within the Ministry cited the involvement of broad-based stakeholder
involvement in the reformulation process as key to the legislation development process. Stakeholders included parents, administrators, classroom teachers, support teachers, paraprofessionals, the National Association for Disability, merchants who would take students in for work experience and representatives from other government agencies outside of the Ministry of Education. In addition, town meetings were held in a number of the islands in addition to New Providence.


### 3.1.3 Relevant Hemispheric issues

This growing emphasis on quality inclusive education seeks to address the chronic manifestation of the problem of exclusion at all levels and in all areas of education systems across the countries of the Americas in varying degrees. There is, however, broad consensus among education policymakers that as a concept inclusive education is multi-dimensional and depending on the national and cultural context may mean different things to different people, and hence the solutions to be developed must necessarily be nuanced, culturally sensitive, integrated and multi-dimensional, involving input from various stakeholders.

While it is true that the hemisphere has seen some significant improvements in enrolment rates among both children and adults, as well as in the areas of literacy and numeracy, exclusion and inequality remain persistent features of many education systems. Thousands of children across many of the countries continue to be disconnected from the education systems and face increased prospects of poverty, and disengagement from crucial areas of the society and economy. For example, while there has been a marked increase in primary education coverage and completion and a corresponding improvement in transition rates to secondary school, in large measure, dropout rates have hardly improved.

In fact, one of the significant areas of concern has to do with the large numbers of young people who are out of school. One recent study by the World Bank (2016) revealed that one in five youth in Latin America and Caribbean or more that 20 million persons aged 15-24 were living as a *nini*, a term usually used to refer to youth who are neither working nor in school (p. 1). Significantly, almost 60% of these were from poor or vulnerable households representing the bottom 40% of the income distribution, and 66% of these out of school youth were women (Ibid). The prevalence of out of school children across these countries is not only
a challenge for the education system, but also severely affects the other social and economic sectors since it contributes to the intergenerational persistence of inequality, the high incidence of crime and violence, and undermines productivity and economic growth.

Between 2000 and 2012 drop-out rates declined by a mere 2% from 17.7% to 15.5%, lower secondary completion rates being most evident among those from lower income households, ethnic groups and those from rural areas (OAS, 2015a, pp. 3-4). An even more telling sign of inequalities within the system at the secondary level is reflected in the fact that among "young people who are part of the richest quintile of the population, 78.3% complete secondary school, while only 21.7% of those in the poorest quintile are able to attain this objective" (OAS, 2015a, p. 4). Children of migrants, especially undocumented ones, as well as children with disabilities likewise, face severe challenges with respect to effective participation in the education systems. Clearly, as UNICEF and UIS have emphasized, there is need for more innovative strategies which not only address the need for teachers, classrooms and textbooks, but more important seek to specifically target the hemisphere’s most vulnerable and marginalized children and youth such as those with disabilities, and those from ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities (UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF, 2015).

3.1.1 Global best practices and Policy Guidelines

Given the extensive nature of social exclusion and inequality in the education systems across the Hemisphere the IEA and proposed alliances are well positioned as mechanisms to help governments address this challenge, and enable the spill-off effects in other social and economic sectors. For the education system, inclusiveness, as UNICEF rightly argues, is "central to the achievement of high quality education for all learners and the development of more inclusive societies" (UNICEF, 2015). From a policy perspective, programmes to address the problem must, therefore, go well beyond the advances being made in increasing education access and improving teacher quality at all levels, often utilizing the new range of education ICTs. It must also focus more intently on access plus learning, and adopt strategies aimed at causing a change in underlying values, attitudes and beliefs that lay at the root of practices that perpetuate exclusion and inequality within school systems. According to UNICEF (2015, Inclusive Education), such strategies should include the following:
• Government wide measures to establish the necessary infrastructure:
  o political will and good governance
  o government structures
  o ending institutionalization
  o financing
  o guarantee the right to non-discrimination
  o strengthening information systems
  o learning from what works
  o partnerships and participation
  o capacity building and awareness raising
• Specific targeted measures to promote the right of access and full participation in quality education:
  o removing the barriers to inclusive education
  o working and supporting parents
  o early childhood and care services
  o ensuring access and availability of inclusive education
  o creating inclusive learning environments
  o securing appropriate individualized support for children with disabilities
  o developing inclusive curricula, teaching and learning methods
  o introduction of rights based and inclusive student assessments
  o investment in teacher training
  o support within schools for teachers
  o establishing resources to provide specialist support
  o a child-centered, safe and healthy environment
  o providing social protection to help people build resilience.
• Respect for rights within learning environments
  o right to respect for identity, culture and language
  o respect for children’s participation rights
  o right to respect for personal and physical integrity

The implementation of all of these strategies requires policy that recognizes and reflects the fact that meaningful inclusion needs system-wide changes, the active involvement of all key
stakeholders including parents and children, changing school environments, culture and ethos, greater emphasis on networking and collaboration, as well as more and better-targeted funding. The IEA and alliances are therefore well positioned to promote inclusive education by articulating education goals, which focus on the most excluded groups, and by ensuring effective monitoring of progress towards these goals.

The IEA and alliances build on a solid history of initiatives and policies aimed at promoting quality inclusive education. As the technical secretariat for the Protocol of San Salvador the OAS, and its Working Group of experts from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Uruguay, as well as members of Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), play a vital role in furthering the mission to mainstream social inclusion across education systems in the region. In Latin America and the Caribbean, only 20% to 30% of children with disabilities can attend school due to, among other factors, severe lack of adequate transportation, teacher training, equipment, furniture, learning materials, and access to school infrastructure. As well, there are other impediments rooted in negative attitudes and misplaced beliefs, which result in severe disadvantage for the disabled. In Suriname, for example, about 90 percent of disabled children who are enrolled in schools attend special segregated schools, and in Brazil only 20%, and in Mexico 10% of the regular schools are accessible to disabled children (World Bank, 2014).

Significantly, while meaningful access is a greater reality in both Canada and the United States, the 2012 Supreme Court of Canada ruling on learning disabilities illustrates the need for continuous monitoring and new understandings of the issues, even in those countries with well-developed inclusive education policies, systems and funding supports, ensuring that children with disabilities are provided with adequate help to be able to achieve their potential (Philpott & Fiedorowicz, 2012). Also, important for inclusive education policy and practice across the hemisphere is the Canadian Supreme Court’s “distinction that what is effective classroom placement for one group of students with disabilities may not be effective for another group of students with disabilities” (Towle, 2015, p. 9). This caveat notwithstanding, Statistics Canada conducted its Canadian Survey on Disability (Csd), which looked at Canadians aged 15 and over, reporting that “about 3.8 million (13.7%) of Canadians in this age group have disabilities…”[and
that] the rate of the disability among the 15–24 age group was 4.4%, with mental/psychological, pain, and learning disabilities as the most reported” (Towle, 2015, p. 12).

3.2 Strengthening of Teacher Education Profession

3.2.1 Summary of Projects: Priorities Identified

The projects emerging from the consultations of the Working Group on strengthening of the teaching profession focus on the development of policies related to the teaching profession and teacher preparation; and mechanisms for the validation and recognition of continuing and professional development short courses for teachers. The majority of the countries engaged in consultations on these projects viewed the projects focusing on policies, and continuing education and professional development as most relevant (Argentina, The Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the USA were the countries that consulted on this Working Group). Priority was given to the development of public policies to guide the teaching professions and teacher preparation. Indeed, all but one country participating in this consultation indicated that such policies compared to the other two projects – promoting opportunities for teacher professional development and promoting courses of inter-American relevance – would be a priority.

Of the themes prioritized by Member States at the OAS, Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Education, Strategic Planning Session 2016, Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (January 2016), the most pertinent one related to this project is the ‘State of the Art on Initial Preparation and Professional Development for Teachers.’ Toward this end the proposed action, preparing a study of current public policies on the teaching profession and teacher training as a first step, is reasonable. Such an action plan should be multifaceted and interface with multiple sectors, including as highlighted by The Bahamas, “tertiary institutions, representatives from public and private schools, industry, public and private partnerships, NGO’s, unions, inter-sectoral agencies, and civil society” (p. 4). Additionally, the idea advanced by Brazil challenges countries to engage innovative collaborative models such as the “support for short-term (internships) and medium-term regional teacher exchange and mobility programs and for development of virtual content for teacher training” (p. 5). Similarly, Colombia suggests the “development of communities of expertise in in-service training” while St Vincent and the
Grenadines advances the use of technologies and the “inclusion of practicum/practical sessions which allow the participants real life experiences while in training” (p. 5).

3.2.2 Benchmark Studies from the Hemisphere

In this vein, we would be remiss if we did not direct attention to a benchmark study recently published by UNESCO (2015) on teacher policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. This publication documents extensive efforts mounted to contribute to the development of a regional strategy on teacher policies by the Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago). The approach taken included four phases:

- 2011-2012 – Production of a state-of-the-art study on teacher policies in the region and a series of criteria and guidelines for policymaking
- 2012-2013 – Exploration of specific relevant themes in each of the four key areas, initial education; service training and professional development; teaching career and working conditions; and institutions and processes of teacher policies.
- 6 and 7 June 2013 – Consultations with experts from ministries of education, academics and teaching union representatives from 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries at a Regional Technical Meeting convened by UNESCO/OREALC in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- Finally, six Latin American experts commented on the draft documents.

One of the key analyses of this work and instructive for the purposes of the establishing an alliance for the implementation of a ‘state of the art plan for the initial preparation and professional development for teachers’ in the Region is the profile of the existing teachers and the status of the career. The chart below captures the major findings.

**TABLE 1: Regional Teacher Profession Characteristics of Note**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Profile</td>
<td>Predominantly women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle-class or lower middle-class background; a higher education training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low salaries, in comparison with similar professions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Few opportunities for professional development and promotions within the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classroom teaching sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ organizations and labor unions, and links to public policies through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dialogue, negotiations, or confrontation with central and local education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>authorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Initial Teacher Training | Carried out at the higher or tertiary education levels  
Duration fluctuates between 3-5 years  
In some countries, supply of teachers is higher than current needs while in others there is a scarcity, particularly in rural areas and in the scientific field. Significant weaknesses in basic skills among students who enter pedagogical careers and weaknesses also noted in the quality of teacher training  
Regulations for university level training are weak or non–existent, although recent efforts in some countries to implement accreditation systems, graduation and licensing tests, and standards are noted |
| Teaching Career | Difficulty in attracting and retaining good students  
Lack of acknowledgement of different stages of teaching  
Dissociation between the career and professional development  
Tension between common salary scales and differentiated remunerations  
Difficulty in generating consensus for performance evaluations |
| Institutions and Processes of Teachers’ Policies | Teachers’ policies are not at the center of government action  
Lack of coordination or consistency, and policy instability due to the lack of coordination and of harmony among responsible agencies  
Lack of a long-term approach in teachers’ policies, detailed assessments, diagnoses, or studies to back the new initiatives |

**SOURCE:** UNESCO (2012)

### 3.2.3 Teacher Policies: Relevant Hemispheric Issues

The resulting analyses based on the profile captured above (UNESCO, 2012), highlighting key issues, are instructive to the core of the matter at hand, and a major pillar of the current concept paper – Strengthening of the Teacher Profession. Specifically, attention is drawn to the following shortlist of issues as they provide an excellent framework to inform an implementation plan:

1. Systematized information on initial teacher education, types of institutional organization and the challenges of coordinating subject-matter education with pedagogical and professional education
2. National definitions of teacher education standards – in terms of those entering the training, the training content and process or those who have completed training.
3. Ongoing training processes
4. Assessing teachers’ work
5. Politics of Teacher Policies
6. Economic Aspects of Public Policy-making for the Teaching Sector

**SOURCE:** [http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002436/243639e.pdf](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002436/243639e.pdf)
While OREALC/UNESCO Santiago (2015) readily admits that the above analyses referenced are not complete, they are surely an excellent, well-documented beginning point, suggesting that there is no need to recreate the process. As noted, “there is clearly a need to expand research and reflections by incorporating different visions into decision-making on public policies capable of tackling the huge challenges of achieving quality education for all” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 6). Notwithstanding, unless there are “well-trained, socially recognized teachers committed to their profession” little progress will be achieved on the quality front (UNESCO, 2015, p. 6).

Such findings are consistent with those found in the Canadian context as Kutsyuruba Godden and Tregun (2013) highlight through their research of teacher induction and mentorship programmes. Arguing that ‘the provision of induction and high-quality teacher mentoring programmes for new and beginning teachers correlates to increased teacher effectiveness, higher satisfaction, commitment, and early-career retention of novice teachers, as well as improved classroom instruction and student achievement’ the authors note two broad implications in this regard, (1) the importance of administrators’ roles and commitments to mentoring programmes for new teachers as this can either support or undermine the success of induction and mentorship for new and beginning teachers; and (2) the need for a consistent approach to the support of new and beginning teachers in the pan-Canadian context (p. 51).

### 3.2.4 Global Trends and Best Practices

Similarly, global calls in this respect are informative. Oon Seng (2015) highlights the importance of teacher polices to improving teacher quality, which in turn influences student outcomes. The issues of recruitment, teacher preparation, performance management, teacher development and empowerment are noted as key policy considerations in this regard. Based on his examination of global trends, he identifies ten categories of note that ought to be factored into development of policies to guide the teaching professions and teacher preparation:
• Recruitment of Quality Candidates
Tools found in use in high performing systems usually involve several in a complementary fashion, and include: (a) academic performance and/or an entrance proficiency test, (b) classroom simulations, (c) interviews with experienced panels, (d) prior teaching experience and/or (e) vocational fit assessments.

• Compensation and Incentives
Competitive salaries are typically built into policy guidelines while encompassing merit increments for top performers. A range of incentives such as performance and retention bonuses, additional pay for extra duties taken, and leave for professional and personal growth are also evident, suggesting that policies guidelines should account for such possibilities.

• Initial Teacher Preparation and Accreditation Standards
Global trends reveal that the best Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes are holistic, incorporating “both general and specialized content knowledge training, with a substantial focus on research-informed pedagogy” (p. 2). Significantly, theory and practice are effectively integrated, and there is a focus on the establishment and nurturing of strong learning communities. The incorporation of mentoring programs and means through which teachers learn continually are valued. Finally, alignment with national professional standards and rigorous accreditation is ensured.

Zeichner and Hollar (2016), highlighting the challenges of ITE in the US, likewise suggest that fast-track programmes be replaced with programmes that focus instead on “a deeper and broader view of human capital, which moves beyond undergraduate grade point averages and the selectivity-rankings of undergraduate institutions to ensure that teachers not only have deep knowledge of their content area, but also understand the social, historical, and cultural contexts of education, have strong pedagogical content knowledge, and are able to adapt their teaching to the diverse learners in their classrooms” (p. 120). The recent release of the US Department
of Education’s Notice of Final Rulemaking (NFR) for the Teacher Preparation Regulations also point up the importance of ensuring that ‘every student is taught by a great educator’ (http://www.ed.gov/teacherprep). Key provisions of the final regulations include ‘providing transparency around the effectiveness of all preparation programs (traditional, alternative routes, and distance) by requiring states to report annually – at the program level – on such indicators as placement and retention rates of graduates; student learning outcomes; teacher evaluation results; and assurances that the program has specialized accreditation or graduates candidates with content and pedagogical knowledge, and quality clinical preparation, who have met rigorous exit requirements’ (Ibid). In addition to allowing states flexibility in whether to report on additional measures, and assessment processes, states are required to provide assistance to low-performing programs. Finally, prospective teachers in high-need fields and/or who agree to work in a low-income school are eligible for TEACH Grants.

**TABLE 2: Characteristics of exemplary leadership programmes**

Commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, a study by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute examined eight exemplary pre-service and in-service programme models that develop strong educational leaders. All of the programmes of initial preparation that were characterised as exemplary shared the following characteristics:

- a comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with professional standards
- a philosophy and curriculum that explicitly focus on instructional leadership and school improvement
- student-centred instruction that integrates theory and practice and stimulates reflection
- faculty knowledgeable about their subject areas and experienced in school administration
- social and professional support in the form of a cohort structure and formalised mentoring and advising by expert principals
- vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out expert teachers with leadership potential
- well-designed and supervised administrative internships under the guidance of expert veterans.


- Career Development Structures
  
Policies also support the creation of career tracks for teachers, providing opportunities for career advancement and best use of talent in and across systems, from the classroom, curriculum specialists, to school leadership, and beyond.
- Professional Development and Continuous Learning
  Optimal professional development opportunities in best practice environments do not simply mean to promote workshops and courses, but “include school-embedded professional development, sophisticated induction and mentoring, collaborative teacher networks and project- based research-cum-inquiry approaches to improving teaching practices and learning outcomes: (p. 2).

- Accountability, Performance Management and Evaluation
  Teacher development and accountability are at the core of teacher assessment models that result in higher performing systems and involve a multi-faceted approach. Classroom observations by peers and senior teachers, interviews/dialogue sessions, portfolios, individual goal-setting and self-evaluation, and documentation of student learning and development and commonly found assessment tools.

- School Leadership
  As leadership is key in the implementation of policies, best practices advanced by top performing systems include focused attention on the selection and development of leadership capacity, as well as succession planning. Evidence of programs developed to promote research- based and instructional leadership practices is also found, as effective leaders “nurture professional involvement and development, and practice effective public engagement” (p. 3).

- Teacher Symbolism
  Key policy factors in enhancing teacher symbolism direct attention to ensuring the respect, trust and recognition of teachers and the profession. Such ends must be supported by “quality-driven recruitment, selection criteria and training” (p. 3). Policies must also address the general work conditions and environments of teachers.

- Policy Integration, Alignment and Coherence
  Evident in highly effective systems, globally, is the focus on what Oon Seng (2015) calls a “big- picture” perspective that is supported by policies with longer-term impact. “Key policy strategies include (i) governance structures that ensure congruence of goals, alignment of activities and optimisation of resources, (ii) ensuring collaboration among all
stakeholders, and (iii) the presence of mediating layers and networks for facilitating implementation” (p. 3).

- Future Orientations: Teaching Roles in the Twenty-first Century
  As Oon Seng (2015) rightly summarises, the implications for teacher preparation and policies related to teacher preparation are no more evident that when one considers the changing global landscape, the nature of knowledge, learning and the environments in which learning now takes place. Teachers then have seen their roles transformed, no longer as purveyors of knowledge, but as facilitators and designers of learning and the learning environments. Teachers must be willing to embrace and leveraged the many new and innovative pedagogies and practices to account for diverse and ever-changing learner profiles, while in cultivating twenty-first-century competencies such as problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and interpersonal skills.

3.2.5 Policy Guidelines
The action lines defined by IEA on strengthening of the teacher profession clearly cluster around issues that are at the core of many debates globally. Strengthening initial teacher preparation is a multi-faceted task and any implementation plan that draws upon collaborative networks across the countries of the Americas must consider several inter-related components. The review and development of teacher training standards, the monitoring of such through quality assurance mechanisms, local and regional, are key considerations and ought to be carefully collated and understood across sectors engaged in and across Member States. As well, 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. Given the understanding that ongoing 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.
3.3 Comprehensive Early Childhood Care & Education

3.3.1 Summary of Projects: Priorities Identified

The projects emerging from the consultations of the Working Group on Comprehensive Early Childhood Care (ECC) focus on three main objectives – (1) learning about and exchanging policies, programs and experiences in relation to comprehensive early childhood care in institutional, community, and family modalities; (2) strengthening training of teachers and of other agents and actors associated with comprehensive early childhood care; and (3) exchanging experiences and information on standards and curricula for comprehensive early childhood care (IEA Draft Agenda, 2016, pp. 7-8). Specifically, the resulting action lines that emerged at the same Preparatory Meeting in Washington, DC (October 26-28, 2016) highlighted the need to:

- Identify and exchange baselines on the existence and approach of public policies on comprehensive early childhood care in each of the member States;
- Identify baselines of existing centers for comprehensive early childhood care in each Member State;
- Exchange experiences on comprehensive early childhood care in institutional, community, and family care modalities, and include those carried out by international organizations and non-governmental institutions;
- Coordinate efforts with the Working Group on Strengthening of the Teaching Profession, in order to identify online continuous training options that address the general components of comprehensive early childhood care;
- Recognize the role of education ministries in training programs for teachers who provide comprehensive early childhood care; and
- Gather and socialize, directly, experiences from countries in the region, with the purpose of analyzing them and creating a document that includes recommendations on development of standards and curricula in this topic.

Of the themes prioritised by Member States at the OAS, Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Education, Strategic Planning Session 2016, Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (January 2016), the most pertinent one related to the development of policies are ‘State of the art inter-sectoral articulation models of intervention in ECC, and the development of curricula and standards for ECC’. Both themes are complementary and
potentially serve as parts of a holistic approach to address challenges regarding ECC in the Hemisphere.

Countries highlighted the importance of taking the diversity across countries into account as well as the importance of training in assessment procedures, highlighting best practice models already operational in countries of the Americas, including “the Regional Early Childhood Development Agenda being promoted by the Maria Cecilia Souto Vidigal Foundation, Inter-American Dialogue, and Todos Pela Educação” and the need to leverage virtual portals to share ideas (p. 4). Such an action plan should be multifaceted and interface with multiple sectors, including, “tertiary institutions, representatives from public and private schools, industry, public and private partnerships, NGO’s, unions, inter-sectoral agencies, and civil society” (p. 4). Additionally, the idea of engaging innovative collaborative models such as the “support for short-term (internships) and medium-term regional teacher exchange and mobility programs and for development of virtual content for teacher training” is noteworthy as is the “development of communities of expertise in in-service training” along with use of technologies and the “inclusion of practicum/practical sessions which allow the participants real life experiences while in training” (p. 5).

There are clear calls throughout the comments of Members States for cooperative activities, given the high priority placed on the need to establish a comprehensive early childhood care strategy. In fact, several focus on the importance not only of Ministries of Education, but educational providers in an effort to enhance teacher preparation, funding for in-service programs for teachers, engagement of other public and private sector entities, all auguring positively toward the establishment of a multi-sectorial strategy to address this critical area across the Hemisphere.

3.3.2 Sample Studies from the Hemisphere

The Lima Declaration (2014) was a defining point in many ways that established a clear point at which the Americas rallied with other global voices in recognition of the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). This recognition, as articulated in the Declaration, resulted in the recommendation of “the provision of at least 12 years of free,
compulsory and quality formal education for all by 2030 that includes at least one year of pre-primary education. Every effort should be made to ensure access to quality learning opportunities through community-based and parenting programmes, in school and education centers” (Lima Declaration, 2014, p. 2)

Leading up to this point, snapshots of Hemispheric progress in the area have revealed mixed results. The diversity of contexts and experiences make it difficult to provide a one size fits all solution, although according to UNESCO (2014) “internal inequalities are extremely acute in almost all the region’s countries, with social class, poverty status and place of residence being the most common manifestations of such inequality” (p. 17). Finally, the point is made that expansion of education should not be equated, necessarily, to quality. Indeed, progress in this area as should obtain more broadly across the sector, must “increasingly be judged according to new criteria relating to quality…that includes not only achievements but also conditions and processes, and not only academic aspects but also psychosocial and citizenship aspects…the dimension in which the region is lagging chronically behind” (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, 2014, p. 17). It is placed against this backdrop then that selected models provided through various studies of the Hemisphere must be reviewed.

In an IADB commissioned study of Early Childhood Development Services in Latin America and the Caribbean, Araujo, López-Boo and Puyana (2013) report findings according to 5 major themes: coverage, modality of care, benefits package or components offered by programs, available funding, and educational profile and compensation for the staff administering various programs. Large-scale programs coexist with smaller ones with the childcare services model being the most predominate in the urban areas. Araujo, López-Boo and Puyana (2013) highlight the growing shift from the community modality toward the institutional, suggesting that this is a major thrust to improve the quality of childcare provision.

Rural areas according to the authors utilize parenting programs, in contrast, faced with the challenge of access, given the geographical areas to be covered, the frequency of interaction with parents/caregivers, as well as the staff training and professional development required. Related challenges, and resulting policy implication pointed out by the authors focusses on the fact that
there has been a tendency to focus on funding for programs in the urban areas where the majority of working women are found, to the neglect of the rural and most vulnerable groups, found in the rural areas. As well, best practices indicate that child development programs should engage a comprehensive approach including multi-sector partnerships and needs in education, health and nutrition, once again highlighting the critical nature of highly trained adequately compensated staff and multi-sectoral commitment to coordinating implementation plans.

CASE STUDY 1: Todos Pela Educação (Brazil)

Founded in 2006, the All for Education is a movement of Brazilian society whose mission is to engage the government and Brazilian society in the commitment to ensuring the right of children and young people to a basic education of quality. Nonpartisan and plural, brings together representatives of different sectors of society, as public officials, educators, parents, students, researchers, media professionals, entrepreneurs and individuals or social organizations that are committed to ensuring the right to a quality education. The aim of the movement is to help provide the conditions of access, literacy and school success, the expansion of resources invested in basic education and improved management of these resources.

SOURCE: [http://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/](http://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/)

Additionally, there is a need for a quality assurance mechanism, throughout the Region, for “defining, monitoring, and meeting quality standards on the part of providers responsible for the operation of centers providing child development services...[This is] essential, both in cases where the provision of publicly funded services depends on third parties and in those where the program itself is in charge” (Araujo, López-Boo and Puyana 2013, p. 10). Finally, the level of funding required for high-quality comprehensive early childhood care and education is considerable. Current levels vary across Latin America and the Caribbean, with an average annual cost per child of US$1,239.90 for childcare services and US$247.20 for parenting programs. This, according to assessment completed by Araujo, López-Boo and Puyana (2013) would require a ‘significant budget commitment’ for without it is “impossible to think about real improvement in the quality of these services in the region” (pp. 71-72). In Canada, according to the Early Childhood Education Report 2014 published by Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/ University of Toronto, “the single most noteworthy [trend] is the decision of policy-makers to at least maintain, if not grow, funding to early learning and care. Another $3 billion has been added to provincial/territorial early childhood budgets since 2011 represent[ing] .6 percent of GDP. Still short of the 1.1 percent of GDP, representing the average for OECD spending on early education” (p. 15).
CASE STUDY 2: Sample Legislation (Jamaica)

The Early Childhood Commission under the Ministry of Education has 35 inspectors and 5 senior inspectors who are responsible for supervising 2,700 early childhood education institutions (only 131 of them public). With regard to their professional qualifications, inspectors must have at least one degree in early childhood education (and senior inspectors, two). There are also 70 officials and development supervisors who monitor centres monthly through observation visits and training sessions for teachers. They monitor quality standards in the following 12 dimensions:

1. Staff
2. Programs
3. Behaviour and interaction/relationship with children
4. Physical environment
5. Equipment and furnishings
6. Health
7. Nutrition
8. Safety
9. Children’s rights and protection and equity
10. Interaction with parents and community members
11. Administration
12. Finance

After this monitoring, inspectors produce a report that they share with the centre and publish on the Commission’s website (http://www.ecc.gov.jm/ecc/ECIReports/). In this process, some lessons have been learned. First, it remains a challenge to have sufficient funds to carry out the monitoring and development program (for example, mobilization, training costs, etc.). Second, the registration process of the centres is difficult and there are delays in receiving documents or certificates that must be issued by the police and fire departments because they themselves do not have enough staff or budget to visit the centres and verify compliance with the minimum conditions.


3.3.3 Developing ECCD Policies: Relevant Hemispheric Issues

A recent IADB publication, The Early Years Child Well-Being and the Role of Public Policy (2015), provides an overview of the status of policy and issues influencing the early childhood sector in the selected countries in the Hemisphere. Focussing on the approximately 50 million children in under the age of five, the authors sketch a framework that takes into account several factors that ought to inform policy. Based on the finding that ‘no single actor owns the issue of early childhood’, they call for a “coherent policy for development...[that] is more than a collection of programs – even if these programs are, by themselves, effective. To coordinate these efforts, an institutional architecture must support them. A consolidated governance structure should clearly define roles, planning, quality standards, monitoring, data systems, and
coordination across sectors and levels. Accountability is key. Adequate and sustainable funding is needed. In addition, the institutional architecture must place great emphasis on monitoring and rigorous evaluation. Countries have to develop the capacity to experiment, learn from evaluations, and adapt methods and modes of delivery. Most of all, there needs to be a clear policy to develop human capacity to provide high-quality services” (IDB, 2015, p. 209).

**TABLE 3: Funding across Levels of Education System: A Regional View**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP in $ per capita</th>
<th>Expenditure in $ per child</th>
<th>Expenditure as percent of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ages 0–5 Ages 6–12</td>
<td>Ages 0–5 Ages 6–12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>15,732 882 2,608</td>
<td>0.5 1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>11,208 641 2,179</td>
<td>0.5 2.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>10,307 488 1,041</td>
<td>0.6 1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>7,826 402 844</td>
<td>0.6 1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>6,660 253 464</td>
<td>0.4 0.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>5,826 58 451</td>
<td>0.1 1.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>5,290 127 848</td>
<td>0.3 2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>3,478 83 305</td>
<td>0.4 1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>1,851 21 226</td>
<td>0.2 2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>7,575 328 996</td>
<td>0.4 1.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: Data on expenditure and GDP are in current dollars for 2012 except for Colombia, which are for 2011. Source: Author’s elaboration based on Akázar and Sánchez (2014), World Development Indicators, and ECLAC.

**SOURCE: Cited in IADB (2015), p. 150**

The need for increased funding for the early years notwithstanding, as the chart above highlights, increased funding alone will not result necessarily in enhanced services, as the qualitative characteristics of the program are what must be addressed. Specifically, the above analysis directs attention to the return on investment that various programs – preschool and home visits versus day care – produce. Indeed, data produced by Araujo, López-Boo and Puyana (2013) in the same review, suggest that the preschool and home visit models produce higher returns on investment.
Yet, while the Hemisphere has witnessed an expansion in preschool services, investment in home visits has been low. However, a note of caution made as the authors recommend that increases in investment should be preceded by pilot projects before major expansions are launched. In addition, recognizing the demand for day care programs, particularly for working women, greater attention must be paid to enhancing the quality of existing day care programs if there are to be retained.

**CASE STUDY 3: Crece Contigo (Chile)**

Chile Grows with You, a comprehensive child protection system, is designed to assist and protect all Chilean children, with the goal of supporting them in their development from birth until they enter the school system as pre-kindergarteners. Chile Grows with You delivers access to services that address children's needs and aims to provide help in development at every stage of growth. Additionally, the programme supports families and communities by working on provision of appropriate conditions for child growth and development.

The programme consists of intersectoral coordination of initiatives, services, and programmes for children, so that it creates a support network for the development of children up to 4 or 5 years old (early childhood). Support for each child is provided simultaneously in different areas that unite in their development: health, preschool, family conditions, and conditions of their neighbourhood and community, among others.

1. **Mass Educational Programme**: Aimed at the entire population (children in early childhood and their families) through awareness, advocacy, information, and education on appropriate care and stimulation of children, the programme seeks to generate a social environment involving family and community to contribute to the maximum developmental potential of children at this stage of life.

2. **Biopsychosocial Development Support Programme**: This is the access programme for the Chile Grows with You programme, developed by the public healthcare network, open to all children who receive services through the public health system. Run from the Ministry of Health through its 29 health service offices, it is the gateway to Chile Grows with You. It consists of the offer of intensive support for check-ups, surveillance, and health promotion for children in early childhood (birth - 4 years of age).

3. **Support for Newborns Programme**: This programme's objectives aim to complement the "Integral Protection System for Early Childhood", ensuring more equitable paths and equalising development opportunities of children, as well as supporting families encountered in childbirth facilities belonging to the Assistance Network of Health Services and in maternity hospitals, through the delivery of a set called "Basic Tools for Newborns" and educational materials.

**SOURCE:** [http://www.comminit.com/global/content/chile-crece-contigo-chile-grows-you](http://www.comminit.com/global/content/chile-crece-contigo-chile-grows-you)
CASE STUDY 4: De cero a siempre (Colombia)

With support from the Bank PKS program, Colombia developed and launched a national Early Childhood Development (ECD) Strategy, *De Cero a Siempre*, which aims to cut across sectors and provide all young children, particularly the poorest, with access to high quality ECD services spanning nutrition, education, health, and protection. The Program strengthened a newly created ECD Commission by helping it develop the tools needed to oversee the Strategy and make sure that integrated and high quality services reach Colombia’s youngest children. With the support of the Program, the multi-sectoral Strategy was finalized, supported by practical tools including manuals, guidelines and information systems, and implemented in 6 municipalities. Comprehensive ECD services reached 750,000 children under 5 years old during the first phase, with 1,200,000 targeted moving forward.

**SOURCE:** World Bank (2013)

### 3.3.4 Global Trends and Best Practices

Neuroscience literature provides growing evidence that human brains are more malleable in the first years of life than at any other stage. In addition, research supports the assertion that hormones activated during intense and/or prolonged periods of stress can harm the physical structure and future functioning of the developing brain. Thus, the focus on conception to birth – nutrition, maternal health, infant mortality and fertility rates, and prevention against diseases – has been a major consideration and thus has greatly influenced approaches to early childhood care and education globally.

Within the context of access to the pre-primary level, ensuring secure housing, balanced nutrition and access to health care are essential if children are to go to school ready to learn, in what should be developmentally appropriate and supportive early learning environments. Fundamentally, ensuring that children have access to early childhood education can also improve life chances and promote better student outcomes overall (OECD 2012).

Yet, as reported by UNESCO (2014), there are shortfalls in the achievement of this goal, as the global statistics on early childhood development (ECD) in many contexts evidence that the poorest and most vulnerable children are still falling far behind. Global trends suggest countries that have legislation and policies that enforce or make pre-primary education compulsory can also increase enrolment, assuming that there is an expansion in the number of early childhood spaces available. However, according to the 2006 Global Monitoring Report, there are only 30 countries with some form of compulsory pre-primary education.
Since 2006, available data indicates that only five more countries have taken the initiative: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and one Commonwealth country, Ghana (UNESCO-IBE, 2011). This stated there are still noteworthy initiatives being mounted in the early childhood sector that are instructive and should be leveraged to encourage greater gains in the Hemisphere.

*Nurturing Leaders*
In 2004, the World Forum Foundation launched an initiative, the World Global Leaders for Young Children, to the goal of which is nurture emerging early childhood professionals around the world. Since its inception, this leadership program has gathered and trained approximately 200 advocates, representing over 60 countries. Participants in the two-year program focus on three major areas, including “gain[ing] a deeper understanding of current issues affecting early childhood development globally, which will strengthen their awareness of and connection to the broader early childhood community; enhance[ing] their leadership and advocacy skills, and put[ting] new learnings into practice through implementation of their own action-oriented projects; training and a two year license to access resources from the Science of ECD curriculum from the consortium led by Red River College” (World Forum, 2016).

The premise of the program is that through the identification and nurturing of country and regional-level expertise, stronger networks will emerge. In turn, “strong networks provide a forum to share best practice, collaborate on initiatives, and strengthen professional development” (Bernard van Leer Foundation, n.d.). The training modality employed includes face-to-face training in regional settings, along with pre-conference sessions at the World Forum; monthly calls/webinars; listserv distributions and resources on topics of relevance to their work in the sector; and deliberate and international integration into regional networks.

**TABLE 4: Strategies for Success: Lessons from the Global Leaders for Young Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons learned from the Global Leaders for Young Children programme point to successful strategies and principles that build local and global leadership capacity to help implement critical early childhood development efforts. Some key strategies include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>Step Up and Out.</strong> Give someone an important title, like ‘Global Leader’, and ask them to step out of their comfort zone and step up to do important work. Leaders rise to the occasion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>Diversity Builds Capacity.</strong> Provide a structure for people to listen and learn from each other, especially when they come from different countries and cultures. It breaks down barriers and expands vision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Think Globally, Act Locally. Encourage people to read and learn about global issues, and then think globally as they work locally to implement new policy and practice. Their local work takes on new meaning.

Networks Build Momentum. Create communities that share ideas, build each other up and collaborate. One person can make an incredible difference, but when they are aligned with like-minded individuals, they can become a powerful force for good.

SOURCE: Bernard van Leer Foundation, n.d.

Developing Culturally Relevant Programs

The well-established US non-profit organization, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), founded in 1926 is dedicated to the promotion of high-quality education for children from birth to age eight. Through the connection of practice, policy and research, the organization advances best practices in the field. As such, its core statement supports the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) in early childhood programs serving children from birth through eight. This approach, grounded in research, has been borne out through studies conducted globally.

Modica, Ajmera, and Dunning (2010) highlight case studies from Tanzania, Guatemala, and Thailand. In Tanzania, the power of integrating traditional practices establishes a foundation and creates a readiness to learn, while in Guatemala through the encouragement of linguistic and ethnic diversity gains are evidenced and learning enhanced; and in Thailand making the most of community resources addresses the challenge of ensuring that children receive nutritious meals and therefore are better prepared for learning.
**CASE STUDY 5: Guatemala: Encouraging linguistic and ethnic diversity**

Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral y Multidisciplinario (Association for Comprehensive and Multidisciplinary Development), known as APPEDIBIMI, was founded in 1996. It provides bilingual early childhood education in the Ixil and Spanish languages to more than twenty-five hundred indigenous children in 21 remote villages.

APPEDIBIMI is a leader in the development of bilingual education in Guatemala. The bilingual approach makes education more accessible for children and their parents. Most parents do not speak Spanish, and many cannot read or write in their native language. An early focus on Ixil highlights the families’ indigenous status as a point of pride and importance, while Spanish instruction prepares children for the requirements of primary school and beyond.

APPEDIBIMI’s bilingual model and culturally appropriate curriculum emphasize health, structured play, and intercultural education. The curriculum goals include developing children’s social, motor, and reasoning skills; musical and artistic expression; and language and communication ability. Initially, children are taught only in their native language. Spanish is introduced gradually as children make progress....children learn first in their native language so they can develop their identity, self-esteem, and basic communication skills. By gradually introducing Spanish, APPEDIBIMI aims to awaken in children an interest in learning the language. This approach also helps the children learn Spanish without fear or shame about their indigenous status.

APPEDIBIMI strongly emphasizes the involvement of parents, teachers, local and national officials, and other community members in the children’s education. Teachers, parent groups, and village education committees collaborate to run the centers. Community acceptance is critical in any program, but even more so when working with populations that have been isolated from the rest of society due to ethnic discrimination and conflict.

**SOURCE:** Modica, Ajmera, and Dunning (2010), pp. 22-23.

### 3.3.5 Policy Guidelines

The case for ECD Interventions is clear. Policies in the Hemisphere are in need of review and can positively be informed by best practices and successes experienced globally as noted above. Investments by Member States are in need of review with the premise that higher investments will produce higher yield and outcomes through the education systems, within and across the Hemisphere as a whole.

An assessment of programs, including preschool, home visits, day care, nutritional and parenting components must be integrated, requiring multi-sectorial cooperation. Maternal and child health programs cannot be seen as standalone initiatives, divorced from the ECCD fabric. Integrated multiservice programs must be the mantra of all sectors. Given the steady growth and need for
women in the workforce, programs that support the re-entry of mothers into multi-sectors. This is a call for a comprehensive approach and the establishment of ECCD policies that undergird such initiatives.
4. Implementation Considerations

At the October 26-28, 2016 Preparatory Meeting of the 9th Ministerial countries finalized the draft IEA. Promotion of the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); use of information and communication technologies (ICTs); and promotion of gender mainstreaming there was agreement that the IEA would be implemented for a period of 5 years, commencing 2017, after which it would be revisited by the Members States.

The tools to strengthen inter-American cooperation on education were highlighted as follow:

- On-line databases that systematize policies, programs and experiences.
- Hemispheric workshops, seminars and webinars that allow for the exchange of initiatives, the discussion of lessons learned and the identification of policy recommendations.
- Cooperation missions or study tours that facilitate direct exchange and hands-on experience, and are tailored to the needs and strengths of participating entities.
- Technical Studies that complement direct exchanges by offering useful and more thorough insight on the issues, as well as the possibility of analyzing successful policies, programs and alternatives for coordinating efforts with other international, regional and sub-regional entities.
- On-line fora where public officials and staff can consult and contribute to the discussion of relevant issues, and that provide an ongoing and direct channel of communication between stakeholders.
- On-line or in-person courses developed specifically to train public officials and staff and allow them to gain in-depth knowledge and have access to tools that contribute to the advancement of education in the region. (pp. 8-9)

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.

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.

4.1 Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)
The European Commission global tool for creating the enabling environments and policy processes, the Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), provides an excellent model for the collaborative approach envisioned. Through this tool, efforts are made to ‘minimise contradictions while building synergies between different EU policies to benefit developing countries and increase the effectiveness of development cooperation’ (European Commission, 2016). Based upon agreed objectives, the Approach was subsequently integrated into law, and an EU policy framework agreed. Its mechanisms and instruments include Commission Impact Assessment Guidelines, the Better Regulation Guidelines (European Commission, 2015). Members States ensure policy coherence within their national contexts while at the EU level there are various coordination mechanisms. Bi-annual meetings are held with liaisons from the Members States as a monitoring tool and access point for sharing of best practices. There are also intersections with partner countries and international organisations, such as the OECD. (See, http://www.oecd.org/pcd/). A key strategy of note is that there is a dedicated team at the EU with responsibility for coordinating this work across areas. Finally, the PAD is a regular agenda item on the Working Party on Development Cooperation (CODE), the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CORE PER) and the Foreign Affairs Council in Development Formation.

Given the commonalties of purpose, the lessons to be drawn from this example are obvious. Aligned with comments emerging from the consultations conducted by each of the Working Groups, alliances should seek to establish such multi-sectorial mechanisms. Such mechanisms would build, as seamlessly as possible, a means through which the education, labour, universities, youth, and business sectors would connect with and inform the establishment of regional, international, and civil society organisations toward common ends. Specifically, building upon
studies already conducted on each of the pillars and data readily available, gaps should be ascertained and addressed and action steps incorporate the drafting of relevant policies. This work could be best organised making good use of existing networks to exchange information and share expertise. Given the diversity across the Hemisphere, it is advisable too, to group countries based on commonality of issue and stage of development, while allowing for clusters of countries to access best practices across groups. Best practice models discussed above direct attention to the use of the various tools of cooperation identified by the IEA, such as hemispheric workshops, cooperation missions or study tours or on-line fora, among others.

**CASE STUDY 6: The Caribbean-Pacific Island Mobility Scheme (CARPIMS)**

| The University of the West Indies (UWI) is the coordinating institution for the Caribbean-Pacific Island Mobility Scheme (CARPIMS), managing the largest South-South academic mobility programme ever funded by the European Commission. CARPIMS came to fruition in 2011 when the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) called for Caribbean and Pacific academic mobility projects. The UWI was successful in its proposal and in 2012 the inaugural CARPIMS consortium convened. This consortium includes several Caribbean and Pacific Partner Universities, including the University of the South Pacific, University of Papua New Guinea, National University of Samoa, Universidade da Paz Timor Leste, University of Guyana, University of Belize and Universite D’Etat D’Haiti. CARPIMS also benefits from a Technical Partnership with the University of Porto (Uporto), and an Associate Partnership with the Association of Universities and Research Institutions of the Caribbean (UNICA).

The CARPIMS programme was born from the realization that increased cooperation between Caribbean and South Pacific higher education institutions could lead to the resolution of common developmental issues faced by Small Island Developing States. CARPIMS has now created an invaluable platform for advancing institutional capacity, with 41 postgraduate and 16 staff mobilities being awarded in its first cohort. The programme is spearheaded by the OIAI at St. Augustine, which is an amalgamation of the International Office, the Alumni Affairs and Fundraising Office and two new departments, Commercialisation and Institutional Development Projects.

The partnership between UWI and UPorto (Coordinators of the Mundus ACP programme) has ensured the success of CARPIMS through the sharing of best practices and technical training. The consortium ensures the sustainability of CARPIMS via measures such as the creation of guidelines for mobility management, institutional research and development collaborations, the creation of an online CARPIMS course, and promotion at international conferences.


In addition, also as articulated in the Draft Agenda coming out of the Preparatory Meeting for the 9th Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education (October 26-28, 2016) the
“CIE will be responsible for the oversight of the IEA as well as well as for making strategic
decisions and providing recommendations on its implementation. The CIE Working Groups will
provide technical inputs and guide specific activities and projects on an on-going basis” (p. 10). Toward this end there may be lessons learnt from Public-Private Partnership (PPPs) frameworks.

### 4.2 Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) Framework

There is no standard global definition of the term Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as it takes a
variety of forms. The World Bank Group (2016) defines a PPP as a “long-term contractual
arrangement between a public entity or authority and a private entity for providing a public asset
or service in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility.” It is
important to note, still that despite this broad definition, governments use different names for
various forms of PPPs.

**Diagram 2: Models of Public-Private Partnerships**

Notwithstanding the variation conceptually, according to the World Bank, if ‘well-designed and
implemented in a balanced regulatory environment, PPPs can bring greater efficiency and
sustainability to the provision of such public services as water, sanitation, energy, transport,
telecommunications, health care and education’ (World Bank, 2016).

This approach points up Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in ways that have proven
successful within the context of the Education for All (EFA) post-2015. Various organisations
of the civil society, at a regional and global level, have developed wide processes of reflection
and consultation regarding the agenda of education for all post-2015. As the Latin American Regional Review Report on EFA (2015) recommends, such an approach is not only desirable but “vital for the implementation of policies and actions. Inter-ministerial are necessary, especially for programs dealing with topics from different areas….Working with NGOs can be prolific because of their grassroots knowledge of our societies and their expertise in specific topics. Alliances with academic institutions are also important, especially regarding acquiring data and information and their analysis. Associations with the International Cooperation are also fundamental for financing as well as for attaining technical input in the execution of educational projects” (UNESCO, 2014, p. 24).

CASE STUDY 7: Focus on Youth (The Bahamas)

The Focus on Youth (FOY) research programme consists of five research projects whose objective is to evaluate the efficacy and sustainability of the impact of Focus on Youth Caribbean (FOYC) curriculum. FOYC is an evidence-based education methodology that emphasizes life skills training, and uses interactive exercises to teach and reinforce behaviours which reduce risks for HIV/STI transmission and teen pregnancy. In Project 2, conducted from 2004-2009, The Bahamas Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Wayne State University partnered to conduct the research project, “Adolescent Health Risk Reduction in The Bahamas: Values, Peers and Parents”. The goal was to assess the efficacy of FOYC when paired with the parent training program, Caribbean Inform Parent and Child Together (CImPACT). Fifteen primary schools from the island of New Providence comprised the study schools, (9 schools represented Wave I in the 2004/5 school year; 6 schools represented Wave II in the 2005/6 school year). Five schools were randomized to the student control Program (Wondrous Wetlands Curriculum) while ten schools were randomized to the student intervention (FOYC Curriculum). In the Parent Training component of the research, 10 schools were randomized to the parent control program (Goal For It) while 5 schools were randomized to the parent intervention program (CImPACT). The research tracked grade six students and their parents over a four-year period. The results, at 24-month post intervention, demonstrated a sustained positive effect in increasing HIV knowledge, perception of the effectiveness of condoms and abstinence as well as condom use intentions among the intervention group.

- **Participants:** 1,360 students assented and received consents from parents; 1,193 parents participated in the parents training. 60 grade 6 teachers were trained as facilitators and monitored.

- **Participating Institutions:** 15 Ministry of Education primary schools on the island of New Providence

- **Key Partners:** Health and Family Life Education Unit, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Lisa Sorenson and the Bahamas National Trust (Lyn Gape)

- **Funded:** National Institutes of Health (NIH)

**SOURCE:** Office of Focus on Youth Research Project, HIV and AIDS Centre, The Bahamas Ministry of Health

As noted previously, recent efforts such as those mounted through the Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN) must also be leveraged. This entity along with the collaborative
framework launched to address the new Global Education Agenda, Education 2030 including the Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago), along with the Organization of American States are existing channels through which Members States are realizing and better tracking efforts. The INNOVEMOS Network is an additional means through which best practices in the Region can be identified and shared. According to Jorge Sequeira, Director of OREALC/UNESCO Santiago, such strategic alliances can “through the dissemination of practices…contribute to improving education, particularly those that promote innovative education” (UNESCO, 2016).

CASE STUDY 8: Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD)

The Institute for Sustainable Development (ISD) was established by the University of the West Indies (UWI) in 2006 to assist Caribbean countries address issues of sustainable development and to promote, foster, reinforce, and facilitate efforts to achieve sustainable development in the Caribbean region for the benefit of present and future generations. The mandate of the ISD is to play a leadership role in capacity building, and improving the coordination of environmental and sustainable development activities in the region.

The ISD comprises the Centre for Policy Studies in Sustainable Development; the Centre for Environmental Management; the Disaster Risk Reduction Centre and the Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Unit. The ISD also hosts the Caribbean Sustainable Development Solutions Network (CSDSN); the International Secretariat of the University Consortium for Small Island States, (the UCSIS) and the Violence Prevention Alliance. The work of these entities focus on development research in select areas and dialogue with stakeholders (including policymakers and key decision makers) with a view to foster the incorporation of sustainability and resilience actions into national, sub-national and sectoral strategies, plans, policies and programmes. The entities under the ISD have near-complete autonomy in their operations. The ISD facilitates collaborative research, teaching and outreach activities among its entities.

The ISD supports and is affiliated to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA); engages and networks with key multilateral stakeholders including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other UN agencies; the CARICOM Secretariat; the Association of Caribbean States, and a range of other regional and sub-regional organizations. It attempts to service and facilitate governments, academia, NGO’s, civil society, professional organizations as well as the private sector. The ISD also develops, implements and participates in externally-funded projects. It disseminates the results of its work by publication in print, on the Internet as well as by face-to-face or group communication and the use of other media.

The Institute aims to evolve into a regional “portal” on Sustainability and Resilience and seeks to add value to the wide range of relevant knowledge, capacity and competence in human resources to sustain the Caribbean region. The Institute’s orientation is towards the community outside the walls of academia with the development needs of the CARICOM community as a first priority. The development of the capacity and competence of Caribbean people and institutions to manage the environment is a high priority. Its work is multidisciplinary and collaborative in nature and
requires the input, collaboration and cooperation of experts drawn from several disciplines within the UWI as well as collaborators and partners from similar institutions.

5. **IEA Funding and Sustainability**

Given the current financial and economic environment across the Hemisphere as well as internationally, the articulation of a financial sustainability framework and plan become urgent imperatives if the IEA is to be successful. Such a plan should be closely aligned to the development of a strategic plan for the IEA, and should clearly indicate how partnerships will be mobilised to ensure that there is financial capacity to adequately implement the IEA. Importantly, the plan should adequately deal with the perennial problem many education and other development projects encounter, that of being trapped at the stage of being prototypes or pilot projects, and then eventually dying due to lack of funds. The following section offers some ideas for the combined and integrated funding of any proposed alliance(s) and the IEA as a single enterprise.

While international donors have traditionally spent significant amounts of funds on these types of pilot projects, their impact on improving the development challenge they were intended to address is questionable. Attention needs to be paid to the sourcing and provision of adequate financing for the scaling-up of those programmes, which show great promise and need to be expanded nationally and/or across the hemisphere. To overcome these financing challenges, it will be vital that the financial sustainability plan is based upon the view that alternative innovative models and approaches that creatively and efficiently combine domestic and international financing are required to support the implementation of the Agenda.

Additionally, there is merit, as highlighted in the Draft IEA (October 27-28, 2016) in the suggestion that “Members States will explore the possibility of creating a seed fund in which they could make voluntary contributions based on their national capacities” (p. 11). Successful alliances of the kinds envisioned will depend upon innovative funding models. According to Hazelwood (2015), although global success stories are found primarily in the health sector, ‘pooled funding arrangements’ that result in mobilizing, combining and allocating diverse sources of international and domestic public and private finance, have played a central role in global MSPs (p. 4). As well, blended finance approaches can “increase the effectiveness and impact of grant money and can maximize the development impact of private investments” (Hazelwood, 2015, p. 4).
Among the questions, which will need to be addressed in transparent and honest manner, are the following:

- What will be the largest/major cost components in implementing the IEA and by extension building alliances?
- What factors will drive or constrain the costs associated with the implementation of the Agenda?
- What are the traditional and non-traditional potential sources of funding available for and to the IEA locally, regionally and internationally; and what strategies may be developed to be able to access these alternative sources at both the national and international levels 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 on the IEA’s sustainability?

Clearly, the issue of funding of the IEA and it resulting sustainability are matters that must be addressed is the ambitious agenda has laid out is to be achieved.
6. Conclusion
The building of the Inter-American Education Agenda, to be approved by the 9th Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education in Nassau, Bahamas in February 2017, has been an initiative long in the making. Given the current reality of the Hemisphere, it is an imperative that given the commitment of the Member States it will be realized, through strategic investments drawing upon Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships. Respectful of the diversity across the countries of the Americas as well as the various stages of goals’ advancement, the implementation of the IEA, supported by a network of strong alliances, 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. Best practice models direct attention to sound monitoring and evaluation principles as well as a governance structure that has a multi-layered ‘backbone’ required to manage the complexities of regional, national and local contexts simultaneously, and an integrated and results-driven framework, with a commitment to pursuing a programmatic approach. 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.
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