Eastern and Southern Africa
Out-of-School Regional Workshop
Summary of key discussion and action points
Nairobi, 6 – 8 October 2015

1. Context

Globally, there are approximately 59 million children of primary school age and 65 million adolescents out-of-school. In the Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR), those figures are 12 million children of primary school age and 10 million of lower secondary school age out-of-school. To stimulate a substantial and sustainable reduction in the number of children out of school, UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics launched the global initiative on Out-of-School Children in 2011.

Globally, there has been a fast increase in enrolment in the beginning of the century but it stagnated since 2007 due to conflicts and reduction in aid. A faster growth in school enrolment is needed if we want all children in school. Even though the current initiatives have managed to get the majority of children in school, reaching the most marginalized children needs targeted interventions.

According to UNICEF's Africa Generation 2030 report, the child population will grow by over 60% over the next 35 years to 383 million children. At that time (2050), 37% of the world's children will be in Africa.

This demographic surge has huge implications for the education sector: ESAR will have 70 million additional children by 2030, which will overwhelm current levels of infrastructure, and could cause challenges to maintain peace and stability. The current investment in education is not commensurate with needs, and as public and private domestic resources will be the largest funding source for education, it is vital to mobilize those resources immediately to prepare for the future.
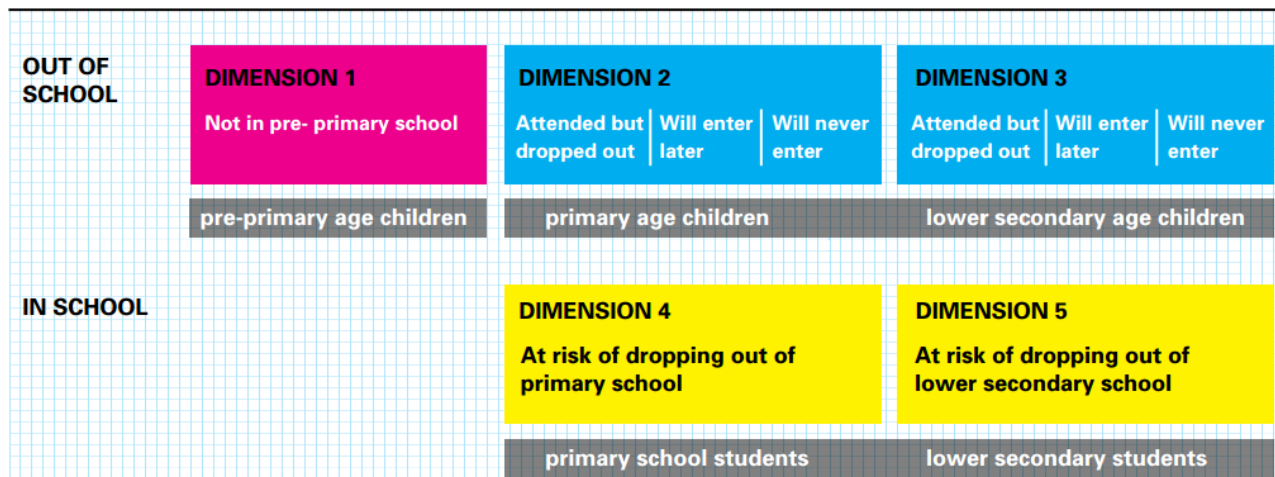
2. Out-of-School Children Initiative

The OOSCI study looks at three components: (1) who are the children out of school and where are they – *profiling*, (2) why are these children out of school – *barriers*, (3) how can they be brought to school and stay there and learn – *policies*.
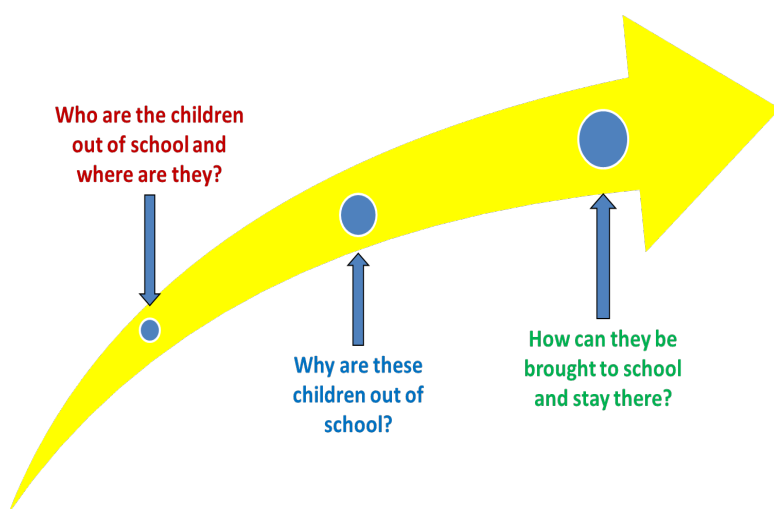
The out-of-school children are categorized in five dimensions of exclusion, looking at all ages of children from pre-primary age, primary age and lower secondary age. Dimensions 1, 2 and 3 categorize the children who are out of school, and dimensions 4 and 5 look at the children in school who are at risk of dropping out.

THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF EXCLUSION

OUT OF SCHOOL	**DIMENSION 1** Not in pre- primary school			**DIMENSION 2** Attended but dropped out / Will enter later / Will never enter			**DIMENSION 3** Attended but dropped out / Will enter later / Will never enter		
	pre-primary age children			primary age children			lower secondary age children		
IN SCHOOL				**DIMENSION 4** At risk of dropping out of primary school			**DIMENSION 5** At risk of dropping out of lower secondary school		
				primary school students			lower secondary students		

Conducting an OOSC study requires administrative data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS), census and household survey data to ensure most children are captured and that there are enough variables for disaggregating the data and creating profiles. The study also looks at how to improve the data systems and make the out-of-school children more visible. The categorization of children as being at risk of dropping out of school is not straightforward. It can be approached by identifying factors that are linked to drop-out through household surveys and EMIS data.

Once the data is disaggregated and the profiles of children out of school or at risk of dropping out are created, the profiles are linked to barriers and in their turn the barriers to policies. The effectiveness of policies in addressing the barriers is analyzed and policy gaps identified resulting in policy recommendations.

3. Monitoring

Strategies and interventions that have worked successfully to reduce the number of out-of-school children in the region are:

• Technical and Financial support, logistics, and supply of school materials. • Development and production of teaching and learning materials. • Development and printing of modules for students. • Development of ABE standard and manual. • Development of mobile school guidelines.	• Costed strategy of Out-of-School Children. • Development of pastoralist education strategy. • Partnership, coordination, supervision and monitoring with Government partners (MoE and culture, Health, Public Works, Women and Social Communication, MoPD). • Support to NGO-Government forums for experience sharing in the pastoralist regions.	• Support training activities (teachers, districts officials, facilitators). • Conferences, annual reviews and capacity building. • South 2 South exchange.

ALL IN SCHOOL
Out-of-School
Children Initiative
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• Resource mobilization in a continuous manner to prepare for expanding coverage. • Funding and technical assistance.	Commissioning and leading out-of-school children study. Technical support and expertise for pilot phase.	• Establishment of Alternative Basic Education Centres (ABE), classrooms and toilet construction.

These strategies and interventions cover all determinants of the MoRES framework – enabling environment, supply, demand and quality.

In ESAR, as is true in most regions, the availability and quality of data is challenging which makes the monitoring of the programmes and the children out-of-school challenging. However UNICEF supported programmes have relevant output and outcome indicators, which are the basis of a robust monitoring framework. At the workshop, it was agreed that there is no need for new and additional indicators. The current indicators can be used to set up monitoring systems that make periodical reporting easier.

A proposed way forward is to refine output indicators, clarify means of verification and sources of data, prioritize indicators for more regular reporting, determine appropriate technology to support innovative reporting and set up mechanisms for joint monitoring and periodic review to ensure use of data and encourage implementation of corrective measures. The selected outcome indicators should come from exiting systems such as EMIS whenever possible.

The use of appropriate technology is key to monitor results on a timely manner. UNICEF is promoting real-time monitoring (RTM) to improve the quality and timing of relevant data to inform decision-making in schools and education systems. Relevant education data that RTM systems can target is data on school resources, learning conditions, learning outcomes and community involvement. RTM uses technology that connects to the Internet, via mobile phones and through tablets and computers. The data captured can easily be visualized and displayed on a dashboard and fed back into the community or school. Visualisation and dissemination of data is crucial for its accuracy, quality and usage, and to monitor results for children. In the long run, RTM systems are often cheaper than paper based systems and they can also be used in a timely fashion for emergency response.

4. Major themes

Quality education

The MDGs targeted universal primary education with the underlying assumption that when a child is in school, s/he will learn. However, evidence has demonstrated that learning and schooling are not the same. Schooling goals meet education goals only if students stay in school and the learning trajectory is steep. Access to school needs to be linked to quality education and improved learning outcomes.

In general, learning profiles in the region are flat: in other words, students are not really learning. Research has shown the link between attendance and quality education. If a child doesn't learn, the likelihood of drop-out increases. Additionally, learning quality and economic growth go hand in hand. The GDP goes up with increasing scores on learning outcomes.

ALL IN SCHOOL
Out-of-School
Children Initiative
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To meet the challenges of the 21st century, the world needs a balance between core knowledge (maths, science and reading) and portable skills (critical thinking, making connections between ideas and knowing how to continue learning).

Children with disabilities

Most children with disabilities are out of school, and if they do go to school, the likelihood of dropping out is high. Some of the reasons for high dropout and low learning outcomes are lack of assistive devices, inflexible curriculum and assessment, awareness, poverty, accessibility, poor data and teacher capacity. Disaggregated data on disabilities is crucial to inform policies to promote inclusive equitable quality education for all. Promotion through identifying and removing specific barriers, including universal design in procurement, reasonable accommodation, affirmative action, and awareness raising on disability, is key to address inclusive education. Technology is opening up many opportunities for inclusive education, including cost effective content.

Early childhood development (ECD)

Early childhood development covers the period in a child's life from before birth up to age 8. The returns on investment in ECD are higher than in the other levels of education. Whether or not a child attends pre-school makes a difference on enrolment and attendance later in their school career. The likelihood of enrolling in primary school increases by 18% if the child has pre-school experience. The skills taught in pre-school are crucial for the child's development. Unfortunately, less experienced teachers are often selected to teach in pre-primary, and grade 1 and 2, instead of teaching in higher grades. Besides pre-school, stimulation in the home is important for a child to survive and thrive. Parenting training pays off in the long run.

Resilience

75% of out-of-school children in ESAR live in countries affected by conflicts or natural hazards. A sustainable approach to reduce the impact of emergencies on the education sector is to build capacities within Ministries of Education to integrate conflict and disaster risk reduction into education sector planning. It has been shown that promoting safety, resilience and social cohesion in education planning contributes to making the education sector risk-informed and conflict-sensitive.

Country plans and way forward

The main key actions to take forward identified by the participating countries to reduce the number of children out of school, and keep children in school, are the following:

- Early childhood development programmes developed and implemented;
- School feeding programmes well targeted and implemented;
- Programme progress and level of learning monitored regularly, improving the quality of education and learning to attract children to come to school, keep them in school and ensure their learning;
- Data collection and analysis strengthened to understand who the most disadvantaged children are and ensure targeted interventions;
- Mapping of Out-of-School Children programmes implemented by all stakeholders captured and updated;
- Education management information systems (EMIS) strengthened to capture OOSC data;

- Disaggregated data collection and analysis on children with disabilities OOSC captured and analysed to inform policies and programming;
- Alternative or accelerated learning approaches addressing specific need of most marginalized children OOSC developed and implemented.

UNICEF ESARO BEGE will continue to support the countries on implementing key targeted policies and interventions in their programming to reduce the number of out-of-school children in Eastern and Southern Africa region.