EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS
UNICEF EAP Strategic Framework
Education for Adolescents
UNICEF EAP Strategic Framework

Cover photographs (left to right):

(1) © UNICEF/NYHQ2006-1434/Ninfa Bito
On 26 August 2006 in the Philippines, (left-right) Cora Buala, 19, assists a girl, who is presenting a drawing she made of an abusive situation she witnessed at school, during a violence-awareness workshop at the Katin-Aran Children's Center in Roxas City, capital of the central Capiz Province.

(2) Top: © Overclockzone
Students from Suthiwararam School visit Overclockzone Exhibition on Science Day, 18 August 2005

(3) Bottom: © UNICEF/NYHQ2006-2573/Giacomo Pirozzi
A group of adolescents pore over HIV/AIDS-related reading material at Solomon Islands Parenting Association Centre in Honaira, the capital, on Guadalcanal Island.

(4) © UNICEF/NYHQ2009-1834/Susan Markisz
An adolescent girl flips through her science notebook during an assembly at La Unión Educational Institute Secondary School in the northern municipality of Lorica in Córdoba Department.

© UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 2010

Any part of this document may be freely reproduced with the appropriate acknowledgement.

Design and layout: Keen Media (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

Printed in Thailand

UNICEF EAPRO
19 Phra Atit Road
Bangkok 10200 Thailand
Tel: (66 2) 356 9499
Fax: (66 2) 280 7056
E-mail: eapro@unicef.org
Website: www.unicef.org/eapro
## CONTENTS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
iv  

I. **INTRODUCTION**  
1  

II. **RATIONALE**  
3  

III. **STATUS OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE REGION**  
6  

IV. **TARGET GROUPS AND OPPORTUNITY**  
9  
   i. Principles of the Strategic Framework  
   7  
   ii. Positive pathways  
   11  
      • Building Strong Foundation  
      11  
      • Being a Resource  
      12  
      • Making It Work  
      13  
      • Stepping to Success  
      14  
   iii. Typologies of countries in the region  
   15  

V. **PRIORITY AREAS OF INTERVENTION**  
19  
   i. Identifying education disparities and filling knowledge gaps  
   21  
   ii. Improving quality: Building on the existing experience in primary (CFS)  
   22  
   iii. Exploring alternative approaches and non-formal models of learning  
   25  
   iv. Promoting adolescent participation and active citizenry  
   27  
   v. Education for well-being and behaviour change  
   28  
   vi. Areas not recommended for UNICEF support  
   28  

VI. **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**  
31  
   i. UNICEF’s upstream focus  
   31  
   ii. Link with other MTSP priorities  
   31  
   iii. One UN and sector wide approaches  
   31  
   iv. Partnerships  
   32  
   v. Gender  
   33  
   vi. Migration  
   34  

VII. **USING THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**  
36  

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**  
37
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADAP</td>
<td>Adolescent Development and Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AED</td>
<td>Academy for Education Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>Common Country Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTs</td>
<td>Conditional cash transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>Child-friendly school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>Demographic Health Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster risk reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EALAS</td>
<td>East Asia Learning Achievement Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMR</td>
<td>Global Monitoring Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAWGCP</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Working Group on Children’s Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Learning achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDA</td>
<td>Mid Decade Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTSP</td>
<td>Mid-term Strategic Priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NER</td>
<td>Net enrolment rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFE</td>
<td>Non-formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAMEO</td>
<td>Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL</td>
<td>Social and emotional learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIPs</td>
<td>School improvement plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLO</td>
<td>Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA</td>
<td>School self assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Sub-Regional Synthesis Reports (UNESCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIMMS</td>
<td>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDAF</td>
<td>UN Development Assistance Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGEI</td>
<td>United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Strategic Framework is intended to help UNICEF country offices in East Asia and the Pacific determine what their focus and priorities will be in addressing adolescent education, an area that merits a whole new level of attention. It offers a road map for engagement, clustering adolescents into four major groups according to educational status, and singling out potential actions that can empower and encourage these groups to keep learning. While providing detailed direction, the new strategy stresses the need for countries to make their decisions – where to put limited money and manpower – based on carefully compiled evidence, analysis and discourse.

The Framework is not about requesting additional funds or creating new programmes. Rather, it encourages the use of existing resources, networks, partnerships and projects to ensure that adolescents not only receive an education, but a quality education – one which nurtures their overall development and prepares them with advanced literacy and life skills for better lifestyle and future livelihoods in a global economy.

**Rationale**

The need for a well-defined education strategy for adolescents arises in part from the success achieved in boosting primary net enrolment rates in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) – where a greater number of children than ever before are entering and completing primary school. Governments in the region are now requesting that UNICEF allocate more resources to secondary education, where capacity lags, and on educating out-of-school youth, where disparities are greatest.

Human rights are a key motivating factor for the strategy. Simply put, adolescents have a fundamental right to an education. This tenet also lies at the core of UNICEF’s new Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) strategy, currently being finalized. ADAP highlights education and greater learning opportunities for adolescents as a prime area for UNICEF, reinforcing how essential it is for education programmes to be clear on the principles and priorities for adolescent populations in our programmes.

The critical times to refer to the Framework is at the beginning of preparations for a new Country Programme, or when planning for a Mid-Term Review, when evaluations and assessments are undertaken to inform these processes.
Status of adolescents in the region
Educating adolescents is a must for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular Goal 3: Promoting Gender Equality. In 2005, 11 of 15 programme countries in the region failed to reach this milestone and intense efforts will be needed to ensure a successful turnaround by 2015. While the MDGs focus on access, the issue of quality, or the lack of it, in both primary and secondary schools, is of increasing concern. The private sector and higher education institutions have complained about the weak literacy and numeracy skills of secondary school graduates, making it hard for them to find jobs. While some country offices have shown innovation and creativity in their response, their efforts have not necessarily been cohesive or strategic.

Another urgent reason for UNICEF to invest in the education of adolescents centres on the demographics of the region and the rapidly shrinking youth bulge. East Asia’s abundant supply of young people helped fuel its impressive economic growth spanning over two decades. But the fall in birth rates is reducing this ‘demographic bonus’, leading to a smaller labour force where fewer workers are supporting an ever-expanding population of elders. Over the coming years, the quality of the workforce – its productivity and efficiency – must therefore take centre stage over quantity. Achieving this shift will be contingent on producing well-educated graduates (and research points out that the longer one stays in school, the greater the return in terms of income).

The strategy is built around the crucial role that quality education – both formal and informal - plays in opening up positive pathways, or opportunities for advancement, for young people.

The Framework differs from traditional adolescent education programmes that are based on a ‘deficit model’, that is, they stress the failures to be addressed (i.e. non-formal education for dropouts).

Target groups and opportunities
Under the Framework, adolescents in this region are split into four target groups based on educational status. Each group, through education, can have improved opportunities, or positive pathways, for the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET GROUPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents who never enrolled or dropped out before completing primary school (estimated to number 70 million).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents enrolled in primary school who are overage, attending irregularly and not learning (estimated to number 33 million).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents who are out of school, who dropped out of lower secondary after completing primary (estimated to number 90 million).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents enrolled in lower secondary school who are overage, attending irregularly and not learning (estimated to number 36 million).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In East Asia and the Pacific there are approximately 345 million adolescents (defined as age 10-19) – a pool that constitutes the next generation of workers and parents. It is these future drivers of economic growth and national development that the new regional education strategy aims to reach.

Using these target group definitions, programme countries are categorized according to the size of their adolescent population in each group or cluster (based on Education for All and other national estimates). In China, for example, a larger proportion of its adolescents are in lower secondary school but at risk of dropping out, while in Lao PDR a critical mass of youth are those adolescents who are enrolled in primary school, but who are overage, underperforming and at risk of dropping out. Countries are urged to focus on only two groups for interventions, as opposed to dabbling in all four, with a clear rationale for these choices based on evidence and discussion with partners.

To get a better understanding of the scope, size and composition of each group, country offices are encouraged to conduct surveys, situational analyses, other research and, ideally, to drill down for disaggregated data (by gender, urban/rural, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc). The more facts they have at hand, the better-positioned country offices (and ultimately partners and governments) will be to fine tune their response and pick the most appropriate course of action to create the desired positive pathways.

Priority Areas of intervention
As a means of guiding country offices in choosing an appropriate course of action, or interventions, for these different target groups, five Priority Areas have been identified:

1. Identifying education disparities and filling knowledge gaps
2. Improving quality in formal schools, building on experiences with Child-Friendly Schools (CFS)
3. Supporting alternative approaches and non-school models of learning
4. Promoting adolescent participation and active citizenry
5. Education for well-being and behaviour change.

The core principles of youth participation and holistic development (emphasizing social and emotional learning) underpin the choice of these areas, which could be used in specific ways based on the target group being addressed. The other factors playing a decisive role in selecting interventions are: the use of both formal and non-formal education approaches; innovative technologies, and a greater emphasis on the quality of upper primary school and/or lower secondary school over access. The strategy notably counsels country offices against traditional vocational education centres, large-scale construction of secondary schools, curriculum revision, conditional cash transfers and incentives, and upper secondary and higher education.

Issues for consideration
Careful attention has been given to incorporating key cross-cutting issues, including gender, education in emergencies and migration. In terms of MTSP Focus Area 5, the Framework gives pride of place to building a strong evidence-base through research, a cutting-edge asset that can help leverage resources from partners, provide a sophisticated platform for advocacy and ultimately, influence policy and planning.

The need to link adolescent education with other MTSP priorities (such as health and HIV and AIDS) to maximize results is fully embraced. To guard against the risk of different programme sectors working with the same adolescent groups in disparate and unsustainable projects, the strategy emphasizes the need for close coordination and where necessary, joint planning.

As regards UN and sector-wide approaches, there is plenty of scope for cross-fertilization. Work done by UNICEF in adolescent education can benefit countries for whom youth are a priority target group while the culling of disaggregated data on secondary, non-formal
and out-of-school populations should be a quid pro quo for Situation Analyses and the Common Country Assessment for UNDAF. The Framework also recognizes the pivotal roles played by many different partners and partnerships at national, regional and local levels – roles that will help determine UNICEF’s comparative advantage in deciding where to best put its strategic focus.

Success of the new strategy will be measured by how, and to what extent, countries in this region make use of it. The Framework provides a blueprint for structured and cohesive action. It leans heavily on research and analysis to pinpoint priorities and targets. Ultimately, its raison-d’etre is to encourage the development of innovative quality education for adolescents whose untapped potential is one of our region’s greatest assets.
Adolescence
Adolescence is defined by the UN as the period of life ranging from 10-19 years of age (including the first year of adulthood). Education for adolescents, however, does not necessarily entail post-primary interventions. Many adolescents in the region have never been enrolled in school or have dropped out after sporadic attendance in poor-quality primary schools for several years. Such adolescents possess only rudimentary literacy and numeracy skills and require specially designed opportunities to learn.

Adolescents currently enrolled in the formal school system can be found anywhere from Grades 1 and 2 through to upper secondary schools, universities and vocational education centres. Non-formal and non-academic channels of study, including government and non-governmental (NGO) education courses, private schools, government extension courses, web-based and distance learning, on-the-job training, professional networks and informal learning clubs, and intern volunteer arrangements, are all being supported throughout the region. Such ‘non-formal’ courses and private sector-organized study are usually carried out without registration, quality assurance or coordination with government authorities.

From a sociological perspective, the period of adolescence is viewed as a time of transition and risk. All teenagers experience growth spurts and hormonal surges that potentially contribute to erratic and impulsive behaviour. Accidents and injuries, often quite avoidable, are the major cause of death in the region for adolescents. While certain types of risk-taking are encouraged as part of active learning in the classroom, risky behaviours during adolescence, such as smoking and drug abuse, can have life-long and negative consequences, including unplanned pregnancy and infection with HIV/AIDS.

This note proposes a Strategic Framework for UNICEF’s engagement with adolescent education in the East Asia and Pacific region. This Framework was first introduced as a Concept Note in late 2007, with several desk reviews and research papers commissioned and regional meetings organized as part of the process. The Strategic Framework does not attempt to categorize countries according to economic, geographic and socio-cultural typologies. Rather, countries are clustered based upon an analysis of the educational status of their adolescents. Four main target groups and five prioritized areas of action are detailed below to guide country offices in defining their national approach to adolescent education.
Concern over family economics and the futility of graduating from school with no prospects of employment also weighs heavily on today’s young people (UNICEF, 2008). Pervasive media and electronic communication has compounded the rise of commercialism, building a global youth culture based on consumerism and MTV that values creates tensions between adolescents and their families and with the traditional values of society as a whole (UNICEF EAPRO, 2005).

Adolescents are in a period of life also marked by positive energy, idealism and a belief in the possibility of changing the world. Any strategy to develop young people must build on these positive capacities and adolescents’ ability to engage as active partners in their own development (IAWGCP, 2008).

Principles of the Framework
As a key principle, the Framework is in harmony with the UNICEF global ADAP Strategy and the three E’s: Education with quality and relevance; Enabling and protective environments; and Engagement through participation and civic action (UNICEF ADAP, 2009). More specific to the new regional strategy are the following four principles:

1. The essential nature of participation, and the foundational role this right plays in maximizing the quality and effectiveness of education.
2. The positive youth development approach, which builds self-confidence, recognizes strengths and ensures supportive learning environments.
3. Encouragement of both formal and non-formal approaches, using alternative learning systems, appropriate technology and innovative tutoring.
4. The quality of upper primary and/or lower secondary is of greater priority than access.
The need for a Strategic Framework for adolescent education in East Asia and the Pacific is prompted to some degree by the success of Education for All (EFA) and the progress made with primary enrolment rates in countries throughout the region. EAP can boast a primary net enrolment rate of 94 percent. Attention has now shifted from getting young children into school to keeping them there longer and making sure they learn. Increasing numbers of countries in the region have extended their definition of ‘compulsory basic education’ from six years of primary to nine years, including completion of lower secondary education. China, Mongolia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines are among the countries in the region that have extended basic education to include lower secondary (EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR), 2008). Governments in the region are requesting that UNICEF country offices place greater attention on post-primary education and out-of-school youth, and while responses to date may be innovative and focused, they are not cohesive nor necessarily of a strategic nature.

UNICEF’s new ADAP Strategy, still in draft form, has identified three E’s as the organization’s core approach for promoting ADAP globally. The three E’s are:

i) **Education** and learning opportunities of quality and relevance;

ii) **Enabling** and protective environment – with the focus on gender and marginalization; and

iii) **Engagement** through participation and civic action.

The current UNICEF Education Strategy, 2006-2015, also has three priority themes (also called the three E’s), which are:

i) **Equal access** to universal primary;

ii) **Empowerment** through girls’ education and gender mainstreaming; and

iii) **Emergencies** and post-crisis education.

Through these three E’s run two cross-cutting priority themes – early childhood development and enhancing quality at primary and secondary levels. The Education Strategy emphasizes throughout the importance of adolescents. The child-friendly school (CFS) framework is used to analyse potential areas for support in terms of quality at the secondary level, including protective environments, sanitation and health, children’s participation and the links between schools and communities. The Education Strategy also recognizes that both formal and
non-formal approaches will be required to ensure quality education is available for children (UNICEF, 2007). This is supported by the MTSP, which stresses that “reaching adolescents is important, as this is the age when life skills-based education is critical. UNICEF will begin to acquire experience in secondary education, especially for girls, with a view to extending such cooperation in future plan periods” (MTSP 2006-2013).

The MDGs, especially indicators under Goal 3: Promoting Gender Equality, are explicitly focused on both primary and secondary education. As can be seen in Table 1 below, for many EAP countries, the 2005 goal of gender parity was not achieved at the secondary level, with increasing gender disparities being found to the disadvantage of boys. Gender parity and equality in secondary education will not be achieved by 2015 without urgent and intense efforts over the six years remaining. Out of 15 programme countries in the region, 11 did not achieve MDG Goal 3 in 2005 due to low levels of gender parity. For Goal 2: Achieving Universal Primary Education, most countries have reached universal primary enrolment (if universal is defined as 95 per cent) but few have attained the 95 per cent primary survival rate, and could therefore be

Table 1: List of countries’ achievements for MDG 2: Achieving Universal Primary Education and MDG 3: Promoting Gender Equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Goal 2: Achieving Universal Primary Education</th>
<th>Goal 3: Promoting Gender Equality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary NER (&gt;95%)</td>
<td>Primary completion rate (&gt;95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>*85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>**107.89</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPR Korea</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>*99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>***97</td>
<td>*125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>*77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>*98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>*110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>*94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>*101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>*69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>***95</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: GMR 2009

* World Bank database
** EFA MDA
*** childinfo.org
considered to have missed the 2005 Goals. While the MDGs are more focused on access then quality, governments in EAP are placing increasing importance on outcomes, including the quality of graduates completing primary. This is motivated by complaints from the private sector and higher education institutions that the skills of secondary school graduates, with low levels of literacy, numeracy and critical thinking, are not in line with market demands (SEAMEO, 2008).

Another regionally specific rationale for UNICEF investing resources in the education of adolescents involves the demographics of the region and the rapidly diminishing youth bulge. The ‘demographic bonus’ associated with increasing numbers of productive age workers is proven to pay off in terms of economic growth through a bigger workforce and higher domestic savings. This is based on efficiency factors of the population and government policies, but it has certainly worked well for East Asia over the past 20 years. However, with rapidly declining birth rates and an aging population, countries are now facing a shortened period of ‘demographic bonus’, with fewer young people left to earn for their elders. Japan, Republic of Korea, China, Singapore, Viet Nam and Thailand are all facing an end to their ‘demographic bonus’ and attention must shift from the quantity of their labour force to greater efficiency in its use. This, in turn, is extremely dependent on young people receiving a good education and opportunities for continued learning. With the disappearing youth bulge, countries will require greater productivity from future work forces – an issue of prime concern to education and finance ministers and the private sector (Hozumi, 2009).

There has been significant research on the importance of education from an economic standpoint, showing, among other results, that the longer one stays in school, the greater return in terms of income. Whereas primary completion was a watershed for socio-economic status in the 1980’s and early 1990’s, today impacts are felt for each year of secondary education completed (Haversak, 2008; World Bank, 2007). For girls, the benefits of education are tremendous. A direct correlation between years of schooling and age of marriage, risk of HIV infection, number of children and the survival and health of their children has been extensively documented. AED has compiled a substantial body of research on the benefits of secondary education for girls, which also includes elements of empowerment, social engagement and voice, economic status, family size, child health and education and unwanted pregnancy (AED, 2005; UNGEI 2007; EFA GMR, 2007).

With limited resources, UNICEF Country Programmes in the region must be able to strategically engage in policy advocacy and pilots for upstream leveraging of resources in non-formal and lower secondary education. Country offices need to make strategic choices on where to focus their support, realizing that there will not be additional funds made available for new adolescent education programmes. This Strategic Framework has been prepared to provide UNICEF country offices in EAP with a basis for carrying out an analysis of their own contexts in order to prioritize adolescent populations and areas of intervention – especially during Country Programme preparation and Mid-Term Review processes.
The most recent EFA GMR has estimated that there are 176 million\textsuperscript{1} primary school-age children aged 6-11 (depending on each country) in East Asia and the Pacific with another 216 million\textsuperscript{2} aged 12-17. Using these figures as a basis, we estimate that there are approximately 345 million adolescents aged 10-19 years living in East Asia and the Pacific. While the region could boast a primary net enrolment rate of 93 per cent in 2006, only 79 per cent of the primary cohort who enrolled could survive and actually complete the full primary cycle. This means that there are many millions of adolescents in the region whose rights to literacy and a basic education have been denied. For those remaining in school, the quality of what the region’s inefficient and ineffective education systems produce is equally disturbing.

School graduates show low levels of math, literacy and language skills as well as weak critical thinking, problem solving and reasoning skills (GMR 2009). Figure 1 shows results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exam for age-12 students, comparing performances in reading and math. One can find Thailand and Indonesia on the right with the proportion of children scoring well under basic comprehension, while the OECD average is third from the right and the scores from OECD countries in Asia and the Pacific included on the left (OECD PISA, 2006).

National figures, such as those in Figure 1, often mask tremendous differences and disparities at sub-national levels and between different groups within a country. At present however, PISA and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) studies are not structured to provide disaggregated data and only offer national figures disaggregated by sex, for national comparisons. Better disaggregated data on adolescent education can be found in the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) of most countries, especially around enrolment rates. In Indonesia, for example, there are major sub-national disparities in secondary enrolment which can be referred to when making plans and policies. While the national secondary gross enrolment rate (GER) rate for Indonesia was 102.2 per cent in 2005 (GMR 2008), we find rates as low as 60 per cent in East Nusa Tenggara and East Papua\textsuperscript{3}, and as high as 118.8 per cent in West Nusa Tenggara, where many non-resident children are enrolled in both public and private schools. When such figures are linked to population data, we learn that there may be up to nine million secondary school-age children

\textsuperscript{1} Global Monitoring Report 2009, p. 3062
\textsuperscript{2} Global Monitoring Report 2009, p. 330
\textsuperscript{3} MoNE and MoRA Schools Database
© UNICEF/NYHQ2008-0568/Adam Dean
Figure 1: Learning achievement: Proficiency levels for reading and math in the East Asia and Pacific region, 2006

Map 1: Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education in Indonesia by province, 2005

Sources: OECD PISA database 2006

Sources: Indonesia MoNE and MoRA Schools
(13-18 years) not enrolled in secondary school clustered across the archipelago. Further analysis and review of the sub-populations making up this nine million can influence decisions on education budgets and strategic priorities at central and decentralized levels of government.

If we look beyond education indicators such as gross enrolment above and the immediate school environment, we see a very challenging region in which adolescents live and try to negotiate their future. Over 50 per cent of adolescent deaths are caused by unintentional injuries, with traffic accidents and drowning the two most common causes. Boys are far more at risk than girls for unintended injury, although for self-inflicted injury, girls are at greater risk than boys in the EAP region. In fact, for girls aged 20-24 years, the leading cause of death is intentional injury (suicide) (Blum, 2009). HIV positive-related illness is the second leading cause of adolescent deaths in the region, with infectious diseases and homicide/war also figuring prominently. Adolescent sexuality has been changing rapidly in the region, with the age of first sex (sexual debut) dropping as the age of marriage increases, drastically increasing the levels of premarital sex. As Blum has pointed out, an unintended outcome of education is a delay in the age of marriage but not a change in sexual behaviours. As a consequence, a later age of marriage has resulted in more premarital sex and with it an increase in pre-marital pregnancy. For those in school, pregnancy often puts an end to their education even where illegal abortion becomes an option. And legal or not, adolescents are more likely to resort to unsafe abortion providers. Globally, it is estimated that one-third of all maternal deaths are due to abortion complications (Blum, 2009).

The urban-rural divide is growing, as more families migrate into urban areas (or across borders) for employment or educational opportunities. Those left behind face a greater risk of marginalization, poverty and adverse effects on the rights of their children. All countries in the region have seen tremendous rises in urban populations over the past 15 years, with the impact on family structures and social norms directly influencing adolescent behaviours. How students feel about their school, their school ‘connectedness’, directly correlates with school performance (attendance, completion and learning achievement), as well as with other social behaviours, including alcohol use, smoking, premarital sex and pregnancy (Blum and Libby, 2004). While these findings are from studies in the United States, similar research has begun in EAP, questioning how students feel about their peers and adults in school, if they feel safe, a part of something, treated fairly and are happy. Research by the OECD has found that schools in South Korea show the lowest levels of student connectedness and liking for school amongst all OECD countries (Innocenti, 2007).
In this Framework, we stress the important roles that education plays in opening up positive pathways to learners and the opportunities that both literacy and the participation in quality education can bring to young people.

i. Principles of the Strategic Framework

For the purposes of this Framework, adolescents in the region have been clustered into four target groups, based on their current educational status and defined by the type of positive pathways that education can open up for them. These four groups and their corresponding pathways are:

1. Adolescents who have never attended primary school or who dropped out before completion. For this group, organized learning around functional literacy, life skills and non-formal education will provide the opportunity for ‘Building Strong Foundations’.

2. Adolescents who are currently enrolled in primary school, but who are overage, attending irregularly, repeating grades and/or not learning – in other words, those whose potential is being left untapped by school. This group is referred to here as ‘Being a Resource’ in recognition of their capacity to contribute positively in school.

3. Adolescents who are out of school, having dropped out of lower secondary. Organized learning, including relevant life and livelihood skills, non-formal education (NFE) certification and secondary equivalence, learning clubs, networks and computer-based learning would provide them with opportunities for improved livelihoods. For these adolescents, education would provide the basis for ‘Making It Work’.

4. Adolescents who are enrolled in lower secondary school but who are overage and/or not learning in overcrowded and under-resourced institutions. For this group, a more child-friendly secondary school experience would provide the opportunity for ‘Stepping to Success’, completing lower secondary and making the transition to continued learning.

Traditional adolescent education programmes tend to highlight the specific form of disadvantage or the type of failure to be
addressed, based on so-called deficit models. This would, for example, call for non-formal education for illiterate adolescents and dropouts, ‘special’ subject tracks for slow learners; special considerations for adolescents with disabilities; and/or special schools for juvenile delinquents. If viewed as a positive pathway, however, education must place participation, and the rights which surround this fundamental principle, at the heart of learning. This is true not only regarding adolescent participation in classroom practices, learning methodologies and student-led organizations, but also their participation in management, monitoring and the planning of schools and learning centres. By framing the target groups as positive pathways, the opportunities that education opens up for adolescents becomes the focus of programmes, rather than focusing on the failures that new educational approaches hope to redress. As can be seen in Figure 2, we have taken these four target groups and tried to quantify them, based on data derived from the EFA GMR 2008.

In the graph above, the horizontal axis is the age of adolescents (10-19 years) while the vertical axis is the percentage enrolled in school. The dark line falling from 87 per cent for 10-year-olds on the left to 12 per cent on the right is grade net enrolment, with the dark blue section above representing the out-of-school population. The yellow section in the middle represents those adolescents in school but overage, attending irregularly and/or not learning, which is estimated at 40 per cent of all children enrolled in formal schools in the region. Based on PISA, TIMMS and other specialized exam results, the percentage of children not learning while in school would be much higher in many EAP countries. The EFA GMR reports that there are 176 million children aged 6-11 years and 216 million aged 12-17. From these figures, we have estimated that the total number of adolescents in the region is 345 million, or approximately 34 million per age cohort (higher for younger ages). Determining the scope of the four target groups was also based on projections derived from the EFA
GMR, especially grade-specific NER and transition rates. Certainly, regional figures are gross estimates and open to considerable debate and recalibration of formulas, but there is no doubt as to the relevance and utility of these categories in conducting situational reviews on adolescent education.

A situation analysis on adolescent education can help more clearly determine the scope, composition and characteristics of these relatively unknown groups. While such exercises at the national level would be of great interest, the real traction comes when countries begin to disaggregate and analyse these groups and their sub-populations further – drilling down into each by gender, urban/rural, sub-national boundaries, ethno-linguistic groups and socio-economic quintiles. Such analysis allows governments and their education partners to better understand where the greatest numbers, disparities and bottlenecks lie, and where an informed response is most required, in terms of policies, resources and services.

A good example of drilling down comes from UNICEF Cambodia, which was interested in knowing more about adolescent education for the Mid-Term Review. UNICEF Cambodia (using existing data) divided the first group, Building Strong Foundations, into two groups: adolescents who never enrolled in primary school or who dropped out before completing three years, and adolescents who completed more than three years but failed to complete the full cycle. This split acknowledges an important distinction in literacy and discourse-related skills which four years of school-based socialization and learning provides.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the proportion of never-enrolled adolescents (the bottom layer in blue) is very high for six-, seven- and eight-year-olds, decreasing significantly amongst up through age 11, indicating late-age enrolment. The largest layer is those enrolled in primary school. However, nearly 80 per cent of 13-year-olds are enrolled in primary school, when, in reality, correct-age enrolment for 13-year-olds is lower secondary school, although only 3 per cent of 13-year-olds are actually enrolled in lower secondary school. The Cambodia DHS 2008 survey also reviewed trends in primary school drop out, primary completion and entry into secondary. Based on these findings, we can estimate that some 500,000 adolescents in Cambodia, or 14 per cent of the adolescent population, has never enrolled in school or has

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Number of adolescents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Strong Foundations</strong></td>
<td>70 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents who never enrolled or dropped out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before completing primary school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being a Resource</strong></td>
<td>33 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents enrolled in primary school who are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overage, attending irregularly and not learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making it Work</strong></td>
<td>90 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents out of school, who dropped out of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower secondary after completing primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stepping to Success</strong></td>
<td>36 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents enrolled in lower secondary school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who are overage, attending irregularly and not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TARGET GROUPS AND OPPORTUNITIES
11
Figure 3: Schooling status, ages 6-19 years, Cambodia, 2005

Source: CDHS, 2005

Figure 4: Schooling status of children of secondary school age (ages 12-17), Cambodia

Source: CDHS, 2005
dropped out before completing primary school (Building Strong Foundations), and must rank as a key priority for any rights-based adolescent education strategy. Another 410,000, or 12 per cent of the population, are enrolled in primary school but are overage, not learning and/or at risk of dropping out (Being a Resource). Of the 29 per cent of the population enrolled in secondary school, based on completion rates, over 50 per cent are at high risk of dropping out and not learning.

Figure 4 shows the breakdown of Cambodia’s adolescent population aged 12-17, with 27.6 per cent in secondary, 39.5 per cent still in primary and 32.8 per cent who have dropped out of the formal school system. Deeper analysis found that there is not much difference in the gender composition of these two groups, but big disparities exist in terms of socio-economic status and rural/urban location, with higher levels of poor and rural adolescents out of school or still in primary, overage and not learning.

Countries are encouraged to undertake similar exercises to determine the scope and nature of the four target groups and to engage in debate over which group and accompanying positive pathways require prioritization. For example, at the national level, China would find a larger proportion of adolescents in the Stepping to Success group (those in lower secondary school who are not learning and are at risk of dropping out), and in Making It Work (adolescents who have dropped out of lower secondary school). In Cambodia and Lao PDR, on the other hand, we find far greater numbers of adolescents in Building Strong Foundations (those that have never enrolled in primary), and in Being a Resource (in primary but overage, at risk of dropping out and not learning). Countries are not encouraged to dabble in all four groups, but to seriously prioritize based on a clear rationale developed through discussion with stakeholders. Strategic engagement with UN Country Teams, Education Sector Working Groups and Country Programme priorities will certainly influence the selection, especially if education is part of a broader office response to the rights of specific adolescent sub-groups. The following section provides a more detailed description of the four groups and their corresponding pathways.

ii. Positive pathways

Before describing the four pathways in more detail, it is important to give a brief description of the principles guiding the Framework. Of vital importance is positive youth development, in which a basic tenet is: “young people are resources to be developed, not problems to be solved” (Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

While education is a key component of positive development, factors of home, community and socio-economic status are also included in the broader youth development framework. Five elements can be used to define positive development:

1. Caring and compassion;
2. Character;
3. Competence (academic and social);
4. Confidence; and
5. Connection.

These elements have a direct bearing on the four positive pathways, which follow below (Lerner, 2009).

**Building Strong Foundations**
Adolescents who are out of school without completing the primary cycle

For out-of-school adolescents with less than a primary education, relevant and practical learning provides the opportunity to build a strong foundation. There are an estimated 70 million children in this category in East Asia and the Pacific. A larger proportion of the population in less developed countries and in countries with inefficient education systems would fall into this group, and a smaller proportion in middle-income countries. These adolescents are not necessarily sitting around with nothing
to do. They might be active in the informal economy providing income for their families or busy with household chores related to family subsistence. Free time for learning is not always available and the habit of coming together at a prescribed time to learn is not established. This group is made up primarily of lower socio-economic quintiles and has high levels of ethnic minorities and those living in remote areas and/or in urban slums. ‘Speaking Out’ (UNICEF EAPRO, 2005), a survey of young people aged 15-24 from throughout the region, asked respondents why they leave school. The most common reasons given were lack of money (43 per cent), the need to help at home (23 per cent) and the need to work, while, more disturbingly, not liking school and not wanting to attend was cited by 19 per cent of those once enrolled but no longer attending school.

The factors which pulled these children out of school, such as poverty, far distance to a learning centre, language, boredom and irrelevance, will need to be addressed in any educational approach taken on their behalf. This is compounded by the fact that many of these adolescents have experienced failure with the school system. Negative experiences with schools, including harassment and bullying by peers, humiliation by teachers, and fear of danger while travelling to and from classrooms, will need to be overcome. Whether by attaining basic literacy or mastering specific skills through non-formal education, positive experiences with learning provide the foundation for self-confidence and a belief in possibilities. For this group, sustained motivation for learning follows two distinct tracks:

- the desire to continue education in order to gain literacy or specific livelihoods skills through special courses and non-formal learning; and

- the wish to gain official primary equivalence and certification, either to continue with learning at the post-primary level or for other opportunities that primary completion may offer.

Understanding the learning desires, interests and realities of these adolescents is essential to providing a positive educational pathway.

Obstacles to organized learning can be overcome in a variety of ways, and research around possible solutions deserves UNICEF resources. There is a need to link organized learning with other enticements to motivate adolescents to come together. Research on the provision of various incentives and rewards for adolescents in this group to attend and complete a course of study, either school-based or through other approaches, would also be welcome. For out-of-school populations, providing team sports activities to encourage adolescents to learn has also proven effective, as demonstrated by ‘Right To Play’ efforts in southern Thailand. While independent study and distance learning may be attractive for this group, education designers must recognize that many of these adolescents will have rudimentary reading, writing and math skills. The provision of functional literacy is a priority that cannot be ignored when addressing their educational rights. Alternative approaches to learning – for example using cassette tapes, videos, DVDs, peer education, or discussion groups with posters – can deliver specific content and educational opportunities. The need to adapt materials locally to reflect the interests and sometimes the languages of the specific target groups will require the training of teachers and local officials in participatory approaches.

**Being a Resource**

Adolescents enrolled in primary schools who are overage, attending irregularly, repeating grades and/or not learning

The needs of older children in primary school are different to those of young children in Grade 1. Notably, their engagement with the CFS system needs special attention. The term ‘Being a Resource’ refers to the great and typically untapped potential that older students in primary schools represent. Conscious efforts by teachers and school administrative staff to
recognize the positive value and potential resources of these older students can do much to transform their school experience. Greater focus should be placed on cooperative learning and collaborative approaches within the classroom that allow extended group activities, with different age ranges and capacities clustered together and the use of peer teaching and team techniques. Participation as leaders in School Self Assessments (SSA), as members of student councils, as safety wardens to help others to and from school, and as monitors of school policies and mission statements can all be areas where older students are active and their contributions valued, which in turn can increase their connectivity to and positive expectations of school. Extra-curricular clubs and groups that provide opportunities to acquire livelihood skills may involve the need to adapt materials to reflect local context, opportunities and demands. Recognizing that older students may not necessarily be the most advanced in terms of knowledge, peer tutorials and the exchange of skills from younger to older students provides another forum for collaborative learning. This all requires that teachers and school staff work with an open heart and mind – treating students as true stakeholders and engaging with them as partners within a holistic CFS framework.

In East Asia and the Pacific, this group of 35 million children is relatively overlooked in terms of UNICEF’s education programmes. The priority has been to get children into school, using the CFS system, with special focus on the early grades where rates of dropout and repetition are highest. The transition through school and the difficulties faced by older children in grades 4-5 has garnered much less attention. The regional profile of these overage primary school students has several distinct characteristics. Most commonly, we find adolescents who enrolled in primary school a year or two late, and who have repeated grades due to poor attendance and/or unsatisfactory results – which are in turn most directly affected by the language spoken at home, the distance to school, the need to help the family, and the presence of illness (worms, diarrheal, fever). Research also shows that a lack of water and sanitation facilities is a major barrier for adolescent girls, in particular to their continuing on to higher primary school grades. In remote areas with small populations, we find incomplete schools offering only the first few grades of the primary cycle, where learners must repeat the highest grade as long as they remain enrolled in the local school.

The longer older students continue to study in primary school without graduating, the greater the likelihood that they will face violence, abuse and harassment from teachers and other students. The Speaking Out survey also asked young people in the region about their experiences as students in the formal school system. A majority found it difficult to talk to their teachers about their problems at school, saying teachers often yell at them (16 per cent), that they don’t listen to or treat students well (13 per cent) and that they use physical punishment (8 per cent). The recent Mongolia study on violence in schools, which used a broad measure of verbal abuse and humiliation as forms of violence, found that 97 per cent of secondary school students had experienced violence in schools (Mongolia, 2005). Extensive research in recent years is pointing to the importance of the social and emotional environment of schools, and the direct link between students’ feelings of ‘connectedness’ and their level of learning achievement and positive performance on a wide range of indicators (Greenberg, 2003; Mohamed, 2001). In a recent major national study of adolescent learners in the United States, adolescents’ feelings of engagement and connectivity to schools (as measured by feeling close to people at school, feeling a part of the school, feeling treated fairly by teachers and feeling safe), were directly correlated to success with learning, school performance (attendance, completion, etc), and high-risk social behaviour (smoking, alcohol, early sex, pregnancy) (Blum, etc, UNICEF EAPRO, 2009).
**Making It Work**  
*Adolescents who are out of school, who dropped out before completing lower secondary*

For this group of out-of-school adolescents, continued education must be purposeful, with practical applications or gate-keeping functions that relate directly to improved livelihoods or greater job opportunities. As such, education and organized learning must present practical opportunities for *Making It Work*. This is the largest of the four groups in East Asia and the Pacific, with over 90 million adolescents who finished primary but left lower secondary. Regionally, this is a very diverse group, featuring all socio-economic classes and sub-national groupings. In some countries, such as Lao PDR or Papua New Guinea, this group may be quite small and considered advantaged when compared to the vast numbers of adolescents who have never enrolled in primary. There are many reasons why children do not make the transition through lower to upper secondary school, including proximity to home, fees and other cost barriers, lack of interest, fear, abuse, and the perceived low value-added of staying in school. The pressure to contribute to family income also results in many adolescents leaving lower secondary before completion and second-chance opportunities for learning must provide these adolescents with tangible and practical outcomes.

Adolescents in this group should have developed literacy skills and can take advantage of self-learning opportunities and independent study that advance their capacity to find work or improves their existing means of livelihood. Education options for this cluster might include peer education, computer-based tutorials and modular lessons with homework assignments. Within this group, there are two distinct strands. Some of these adolescents will be interested in re-entering the formal school system to achieve equivalency certificates and secondary school diplomas. Other members, while perhaps keen on finishing lower secondary, are more interested in gaining specific skills, information or qualifications that can pave the way for higher-paying jobs and improving their chances for a secure and more sustainable livelihood. Further learning for young people who fall into this category must stress marketable skills that will boost their chances of finding work, or at least offer them an improved quality of life.

Education and training programmes that engage with the private sector allow these adolescents to meet with potential employers and network beyond their peer groups and immediate communities. Life skills and social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies that equip young people for networking, for taking a strategic approach to self development, and for negotiating and communicating are also key elements often missing in the educational opportunities available for this group. Talent academies, which provide learners with the opportunity to focus their studies on areas in which they excel (i.e., art, sports, mechanics) build self-confidence and esteem in ways that promote further learning and personal development.

**Stepping to Success**  
*Adolescents currently enrolled in lower secondary but at risk of dropping out, who have repeated grades, attend irregularly, and/or are not learning*

There are approximately 90 million adolescents currently enrolled in lower secondary schools in East Asia and the Pacific, and we have estimated that approximately 40 per cent, or 36 million, are at risk of dropping out and/or not learning. From a rights perspective, these adolescents may not be considered a priority for UNICEF support. In countries such as Cambodia, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands or Timor-Leste, with lower secondary enrolment rates below 30 per cent, it can be argued that this group is already considerably advantaged. For some sectors of society, however, such as ethnic minorities, those living in remote areas or children with disabilities, the level of disadvantage is so great that from a rights perspective redressing this imbalance becomes a priority. The main reasons why students drop out or fail to learn are irrelevant and outdated
curricula, poor learning conditions and scarce resources, keeping in mind that many face competing demands for their time and show little sense of connectedness to their schools. To keep students in lower secondary, more must be done to improve school quality and to link learning with real life needs – in other words, to make learning an opportunity for learners to Step To Success. This includes linking schools more closely to the community and society at large, to emphasize the bridge between learning and earning and to build confidence and self-esteem through positive learning experiences.

There is a big mismatch between what is taught at school and the skills needed by the private sector. In many countries, students in rural lower secondary schools have only the smallest chance of passing exams to gain a precious seat in upper secondary, so that lower secondary is essentially the end of their formal schooling. In this context, when comparing the relative importance of regular school attendance against the opportunity to contribute to family income and household well-being, school loses out. This is especially true if schools are not linked to the local economy and do not provide skills and contacts that lead to desired jobs. Livelihood skills can be incorporated into secondary school education through special subject courses, extra-curricular clubs and after-school projects that are linked to local employers and the private sector.

Ministers of education in the region are acutely aware of the challenges facing adolescents. At the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) annual Consultation of Ministers in Kuala Lumpur in 2008, major concerns were raised about the quality of secondary education and the poor view that students have of their schools. The ministers spoke frankly about the legions of disillusioned secondary students who are bored and tuned out, and the direct link this has to poor learning outcomes and low completion rates (SEAMEO, 2008). In the Pacific, the recent Forum of Ministers of Education also highlighted the importance of adolescents, education and employment opportunities, and the critical role quality plays in retention and student engagement (Pacific Forum, 2008, Fiji). Improving the social and emotional environment in secondary schools would address many of the shortcomings that put adolescents off learning. For this reason, expansion of the CFS format (especially as regards participation and protection) to secondary schools is a key feature of the Framework.

### iii. Typologies of countries in the region

For the purposes of the regional strategy and in order to advance the notion of country typologies, we have clustered countries according to the proportion of adolescents belonging to each of the four target groups, calculated at national levels. An analysis of the educational status of adolescents allows us to build a typology based on the prioritization of the two largest target groups. This does not mean that country offices must limit their engagement in adolescent education to just these two groups, but that efforts in other areas must be focused, strategic and of limited scope. Country offices are encouraged to carry out more extensive analysis and discussions at national level on the importance of these four target groups and to finalize their priorities accordingly. Their relative size is not necessarily what matters most in terms of UNICEF’s comparative advantage and the rights-based approach that guides our programme focus. For each country, the top two priority groups have been identified in the following table.

It should be noted that whole these categorizations and target groups are based on the current situation facing the countries in the region in 2009. If we look to the future, even five years from now, we can expect to see some significant shifts in the composition of these four target groups. In all likelihood, we would see the number of adolescents in...
primary schools who are not learning and likely to drop out to be greatly reduced. This will be the result of a combination of improved quality in the formal system and expanded access to early childhood programmes, as well as implementation of policies related to automatic promotion. Teachers are often the strongest opponents of automatic promotion policies, stating that it makes a mockery of teaching and learning and will allow students to pass through the education system without being required to acquire basic literacy, numeracy or general knowledge. Certainly automatic promotion policies will make the practice of special tuition classes after schools redundant, and will greatly reduce the opportunities for public school teachers to make additional income through coaching classes and special after school cram sessions. While risks are involved, automatic promotion will greatly reduce levels of primary school drop-out (and repetition) and allow for additional resources to be allocated to quality improvements in schools. As a result we can expect far fewer children to be included in the target group Building a Strong Foundation in the years to come. On the other hand, we can expect larger number of adolescents to be found in the target group Making It Work out of school after completing their primary education. As a result, in future, more attention and resources will be required for alternative learning opportunities, including on-line learning, non-formal equivalency courses, partnerships with private sector and up-stream policy support. Building a Strong Foundation, the group comprised of primary school drop outs, will take some time to reduce, but in the longer term, 10 years or more, we can expect to see improvements to the primary system to pay off, with fewer and fewer children dropping out, and those adolescents who have dropped out in the past maturing into adulthood and out of the target focus of this strategy.
V. PRIORITY AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Five Priority Areas have been identified as a means of guiding country offices in their strategic choice of interventions for creating positive pathways for adolescent education. A matrix, with specific examples of interventions for the four target groups and their pathways, is provided below. The Priority Areas are:

i. Identifying education disparities and filling knowledge gaps
ii. Improving quality in formal schools, building on experiences with CFS
iii. Supporting alternative approaches and non-school models of learning
iv. Promoting adolescent participation and active citizenry
v. Education for well-being and behaviour change

By limiting UNICEF’s engagement to these Priority Areas, the regional office is strategically placing parameters on country office support to the secondary and non-formal sub-sectors. There is still too much unfinished business in ensuring the right to quality primary education for UNICEF to place disproportionate attention on secondary, although addressing the need for more pathways to quality lower secondary will make primary completion more attractive to learners. The matrix below attempts to summarize examples of UNICEF-supported activities under each Priority Area in relation to each of the four target groups. As can be seen, not all Priority Areas are relevant to all groups. The commentary that follows the matrix explains the links between the Priority Areas and the positive pathways and gives examples of the type of interventions that UNICEF country offices should consider supporting. These examples are neither exhaustive, nor necessarily relevant to each country across the region, but attempt to provide UNICEF and its partners some practical guidance and options to consider when applying the Framework.
### i. Identifying education disparities and filling knowledge gaps

- Improve quality, analysis and use of EMIS for NFE, private sector, NGO systems
- Knowledge generation and surveys on out-of-school populations in relation to education and schooling
- Surveys and qualitative research on attitudes, expectations and environments to shape policy and practice
- Capacity building in analysis – linking data on disparities to decision-making
- Improve quality, analysis and use of EMIS systems for adolescents
- Knowledge generation and surveys on out-of-school populations in relation to education and schooling
- Learning achievement – technical support to strengthen NF equivalence examinations and certification standards
- Improve quality, analysis and use of EMIS systems for adolescents
- Learning achievement – technical support, baseline and impact surveys for pilot projects, use LA to influence curriculum reviews, teacher training and exam reform

### ii. Improving quality in formal schools, building on experiences with CFS

- Expanded CFS frameworks and standards for secondary and boarding school facilities
- Pre-service and in-service teacher training – cooperative learning
- School management – Student-led organizations, active engagement
- Quality CFS standards with national frameworks
- School management practices
- Pre-service and in-service teacher training
- Exam reform
- School-based WASH – water sanitation facilities and practice

### iii. Supporting alternative approaches and non-formal models of learning

- Network mechanisms and coordination support
- Non-formal equivalence policy, innovation and capacity development
- NFE courses – functional literacy and life skills
- Network mechanisms and coordination support – Public-private partnerships
- Non-formal equivalence policy, innovation and capacity development
- Non-formal livelihoods and life skills courses and alternative learning models

### iv. Promoting adolescent participation and active citizenry

- Mainstream the use of active learning – learner-centred methods
- Child-to-child – students as agents of change
- Mainstream active learning – learner-centred methods
- Student roles in school management and decision-making
- Child-to-child – students as agents of change
- Mainstream the use of active learning – learner-centred methods
- Student roles in school management and decision-making
- Right To Play – organized clubs and team sport
- Learners as agents of change
- Communities involved in schools

### v. Education for well-being and behaviour change

- Canvassing and classroom-based advocacy
- Independent learning modules on key message areas using various media
- Canvassing and classroom-based advocacy
- School health/WASH – Lao PDR
- Disaster risk reduction – environment and climate change
- Canvassing and classroom-based advocacy
- Independent learning modules on key message areas using various media
- Engage adolescent to develop independent learning modules on key message areas
- Canvassing and classroom advocacy
- Life skills and social and emotional learning
- Disaster risk reduction – environmental education
There are tremendous data gaps that need to be filled in terms of the status of adolescent education in the region, and this Priority Area is appropriate for all four target groups. Within the formal sector, education data are available in most countries through EMIS for primary education – a significant outcome of the EFA movement. There are major data gaps, however, for post-primary education, with secondary NER data available for just a few countries in the region (2009 EFA GMR). Disaggregated secondary, vocational and post-secondary data was very weak in most country reports of the EFA Mid Decade Assessment (MDA) process, and there is no EMIS reporting on age by grade breakdowns for secondary. There are also significant capacity gaps in the analysis and use of data by decision makers and stakeholders at all levels of the education system, something that can be addressed under this Framework. The most glaring knowledge gaps, however, pertain to those adolescents no longer enrolled in the school system. In this context, the following three areas are suggested for intervention: strengthening the use of post-primary EMIS; investing in surveys and qualitative research; and measuring learning achievements and student outcomes.

Strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and EMIS

Large data gaps appear with the existing EMIS systems at secondary and post-secondary levels. The paucity of data exists for all adolescent age groups, as evidenced by the EFA GMR data tables and the UNESCO Sub-Regional Synthesis Reports of the EFA MDA (UNESCO SSR. 2009). Technical resource support to increase school data collection may be necessary in only a few cases. A review of policies and practices related to monitoring performance can include looking at inspectorate data collection tools, creating stronger M&E links with non-state providers of education, strengthening stakeholder capacity for data analysis and improving the use of data for decision-making. With better analysis, counterparts at central and decentralized levels can pinpoint where the greatest disparities lie and where resources are most required. UNICEF can play a key role to support improved quality and use of EMIS and M&E systems for formal post-primary levels, NFE courses, and private sector-certified courses. This will require budget discussions and the prioritization of resources in policy planning. Excellent examples of such engagement at upper primary and secondary levels can be found in Mongolia, Cambodia and Timor- Leste.

Surveys and research

Data on adolescents and young people who are not enrolled in school is almost non-existent, restricted to just a few surveys. Children are not featured in the health system after they have completed their immunizations at age five. In education, once children stop showing up for services and officially drop out, the child is usually no longer monitored or recorded by EMIS. Household surveys, qualitative studies and action research can provide excellent data on adolescents and education. The Viet Nam study on Ethnic Minority Girls’ Transition to Lower Secondary School is an excellent example of research that could introduce innovative participatory data collection techniques. The findings had a direct impact on education policy and government programmes for ethnic minority girls’ education in the Northern provinces. A situation analysis of adolescent education can also include mapping exercises where the myriad of partners and agencies involved are identified, with the potential for synergy and collaboration spelled out. Studies or published research on the effectiveness of various targeted budget support schemes amongst specific groups, including incentives, waivers and scholarships for secondary schools, would be a valuable contribution to the sector. Qualitative research can also be initiated looking at the hopes, fears
and aspirations of adolescents, the transition to and success in post-primary, and experiences with private sector education amongst various target groups. Surveys on specific sub-groups within the four target groups, including education surveys with ethnic minority adolescents, adolescents in poor families and remote places and those with disabilities, are also encouraged. In the region, Viet Nam, China, Thailand and Timor-Leste are examples of countries that have carried out excellent survey and research work on adolescent education.

**Learning achievement**
A third area of strategic importance where UNICEF can provide support is research and analysis on learning achievement in terms of student performance in various educational settings. Such research and analysis can highlight disparities in learning achievements between various members of society, regions of a country, type of school and/or learning environment. Closer alliances can be made with ongoing PISA and TIMMS initiatives, including support to countries that have yet to introduce these exams to assist with the skills, sampling design and tools needed to undertake a study. In 2005, the East Asia Learning Achievement Study (EALAS) was introduced in seven countries in EAPRO, focusing on the primary level. The innovations of EALAS, which could easily be applied at the secondary level, were the use of the Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) taxonomy in item design, the use of questionnaires to obtain data on schools and learners, and the use of Rasch Modelling in the analysis of the findings. Research that can shed light on the link between various quality interventions, such as teacher training, or SEL connectivity, and learning achievement can have a real impact on policy formulation and sector discussions, as well as curriculum reform, teacher training and school management guidelines. Continued research on learning achievement can also contribute to our support for exam reform, detailed below.

### ii. Improving quality in formal schools, building on experiences with CFS

This Priority Area is most appropriate for adolescents in groups two and four, students enrolled in upper primary or lower secondary schools who are overage, repeaters and/or late enrollers with poor attendance, at risk of dropping out and not learning. In countries in East Asia and the Pacific, these two populations are quite large. When applied in practice, quality should be conceived from a holistic perspective, in line with the principles of existing national CFS frameworks. Within this area, five specific interventions have been identified for UNICEF country level support:

**Expanding CFS standards**
The CFS holistic framework provides a rights-based learning environment. To date the focus has been mainly on primary education. However, some initial work has begun on the secondary level. The Philippines and Viet Nam have applied the CFS approach in school management practices, including school self-assessments, school improvement plans, headmaster/teacher training and community orientations. UNICEF and its partners need to consider how the CFS framework can be implemented at the secondary level. CFS standards and processes at the secondary level will include much larger dimensions for participation, inclusion and protection – and the necessity for information and knowledge about reproductive health. UNICEF can use pilot activities and research to identify best practices and innovative models to improve the quality and equity of education at the secondary level. As secondary schools in the region often have dormitories, the application of CFS principles, holistic standards and management processes to these places will be important.
Some country offices are also working with governments to develop standards to guide the rehabilitation, construction and maintenance of lower secondary school facilities, either as part of an emergency response, or in applying CFS principles to learning spaces. Country offices must take care that support to standard setting does not commit UNICEF to supporting large-scale school construction schemes. UNICEF’s support to construction should be limited to introducing innovative new designs (e.g., for remote multigrade schools, for water/sanitation systems) or to new construction approaches (e.g., increasing community or public-private partnerships, training local youth to build and maintain schools). In China, the development of a National CFS Framework and Standards resulted in surveys being conducted to review the status of specific dimensions. In 2009, the government initiated a national review of the safety and protection dimension of the CFS framework, which will look at school environments and the health and physical safety of students, including the SEL environment, using tools developed with UNICEF support.

School management practices
This is closely linked to CFS standards, the distinction here being that the focus is on transforming the roles that teachers and learners play in the classroom and school management. The most consistent way this is being done in formal schools is through school self-assessment processes that involve local stakeholders in developing school improvement plans (SIPs). These processes are common in many child-friendly primary schools, and have been modified in several countries for use in lower secondary (Thailand, the Philippines and Viet Nam). Once students see that their opinions and views are valued and taken into consideration, their relationship and engagement with school starts to change. Certainly such changes require clear directives and guidance from senior ministry officials, circulated directly to schools and local government. They also require investments in headmaster training, bringing together school management committees and parents groups as well as civil society, faith-based and private sector groups if relevant. Granting greater flexibility to headmasters and teachers, especially if they are taking initiatives and making learning relevant to their learners, is an iterative process that leads to stronger schools. It may also be possible to address policies that keep girls out of school after they have had children, or to lift restrictions on older children who would like to try accelerated learning and skip grades where appropriate, as just two examples.

For adolescents in groups two and four, teachers and school management should do more to emphasize and utilize their potential. Overage adolescents can assume many leadership roles in school, such as being responsible for various classroom and management functions, as playground monitors and sports group leaders, and being in charge of walking young children to and from school. These arrangements require attention during pre-service and in-service teacher training, and are closely linked to the efforts described below under life skills. In Thailand, the NGO Right to Play worked with government schools to strengthen students’ leadership, team building and communication skills through games and organized team activities. Introducing these concepts and practical techniques to headmasters, teachers and students can lay the ground for expanding such practices nationally.

Exam reform
Across the region, national secondary school exams are one of the biggest obstacles to introducing quality initiatives into the classroom. For historical and cultural reasons, most national exams test rote memorization, rewarding those students and schools that are able to regurgitate vast tracts of text and remember examples from practice exams. Introducing child-centred methods and other quality initiatives in such a context can result in students actually performing worse on
traditional exams, as was evidenced in a CFS Impact Study conducted in Cambodia in 2005. Exams that measure the ability to memorize textbooks are not relevant to the demands of the private sector or the needs of adolescents in today’s world. Revising them is a quid pro quo for quality reform at primary and secondary levels.

UNICEF’s work in the region at the primary level under EALAS can be a basis for engagement in exam reform at the secondary level. Learning achievement studies can place greater emphasis on questionnaires that examine adolescents’ connectivity to schools and their families and other social and contextual influences. As in EALAS, support for secondary exam reform can include the use of SOLO taxonomy to classify items, with Rasch modelling used to link exam results to specific curriculum objectives, the school environment and other social/family factors. Without exam reform, efforts to make the classroom more student-centred and participatory at the secondary level risk being ineffective. This is a long-term endeavour and should be undertaken in partnership with other donors, especially the World Bank, AusAID and the European Union.

Exam reform also needs to be extended to non-formal education equivalence courses that offer accreditation and certification to out-of-school adolescents. Technical support to ensure comparability between the various exams and curricula expectations will help ensure quality. In Indonesia, non-formal equivalence exams for lower and upper secondary are available and offered on specific dates, although only 30 per cent of NFE students are able to pass on average (NFE Desk Review, UNICEF EAPRO, 2009).

Water and sanitation hygiene (WASH) in schools
WASH in schools combines instructional materials, advocacy and awareness – the so-called software – with hardware support in terms of toilet facilities and water supplies. Experience has shown that supporting lessons on sanitation and hygiene without providing access to toilets and water, or providing hardware without offering lessons or materials on sanitation is far less effective than a combination of the two. UNICEF should consider WASH support for both primary and secondary schools, incorporating both software and hardware elements, and allowing communities and students to participate in the design and construction of new facilities. Lack of toilets in secondary schools is a key reason for the low attendance of girls and is off-putting for adolescents in general. Linking WASH in schools to home and community-based outreach by students has proven effective at primary levels, and there is an even greater potential at the secondary level for learners to bring lessons home and to start the process of behaviour change in the community. WASH messages and indicators can also be incorporated into SSA and SIP exercises.

Pre-service and in-service teacher training
Teacher training is key to any effort to improve the quality of education. For adolescents, there are currently very few development agencies in EAP that support teacher training for secondary education. UNICEF must be careful, therefore, not to get overly committed to support secondary teacher training without a clear exit strategy. While innovative approaches to in-service training can provide models, unless there is a clear plan for handing these models over, it will be difficult for UNICEF to extricate itself from what can become a boutique pilot. There is greater potential with pre-service training to put effective models in place which can be mainstreamed through existing teacher training institutes and pre-service training centres. Before they take up duties in the classroom, teachers can be trained on CFS principles, on social emotional learning, on student participation or on knowledge for well being.
This Priority Area is primarily intended for adolescents in target groups one and three - those who are currently out of school. These adolescents have a lot of potential and continue to learn after leaving school. In EAP countries, governments have a long history of implementing NFE, both in terms of mass literacy campaigns, and skills-based education programmes for young people. Throughout the entire education sector, the greatest partnerships and most active engagement with civil society partners, NGOs, people’s unions and community groups are usually found in NFE departments and programmes. While distinct in terms of modes of delivery and levels of flexibility, formal and non-formal education systems are quite similar in the elements that influence their quality. The recent NFE Desk Review (UNICEF EAPRO, 2009) was commissioned to help determine the scope and comparative advantage of UNICEF’s engagement in NFE equivalence in the region. The Desk Review analyzed existing NFE equivalence programmes in the region under three domains: organization, context and goals (UNICEF EAPRO, 2009). The review helped to identify the key activities below recommended for this Priority Area.

**Network coordination**

As mentioned above, a wide range of NGOs, civil society and cross-sectoral partners are involved in non-formal and alternative modes of education. Regrettably, there are few coordination mechanisms in place and very little synergy between potential partners. In Cambodia, an exception exists in the form of KAPE, an NGO umbrella organization that is supported by UNICEF to provide a common platform for non-government, civil society and faith-based organizations that are active in the education sector. In addition to coordinating the efforts of various NGOs, KAPE plays a proactive role as a member of the Education Sector Working Group, shaping policy through advocacy and well-documented pilot projects. Without committed resources for overhead expenses KAPE could not exist, and the civil society partners would remain a disparate bunch devoid of focus and the power of numbers. To help adolescents as they approach adulthood, better coordination mechanisms are needed with community development efforts, including education extension programmes by other sectors, such as health, agriculture, public works and local development. Through more formalized NGO coordination, stronger links can also be fostered with the government monitoring and evaluation system.

Other levels of networking and representation can be considered in terms of assisting youth organizations to get registered. It is one thing to organize on behalf of adolescents, quite another to allow them to organize themselves, register as groups and to be officially recognized. Such policy engagement requires a strategic vision and commitment over time to produce results. While it is relatively easy to support adolescents who are in school, relatively few country offices provide support to student governments and councils and to national efforts to bring together representatives of these groups to meet with senior government officials. Even fewer countries (Myanmar, Viet Nam) have managed to engage with groups of out-of-school adolescents, providing them with local support and advice on how they can best make their voices heard by government.

**Non-formal equivalence: Policy, innovation and capacity development**

The recent NFE Desk Review found that many countries in the region do not have established curricula, delivery systems and certification processes to provide accredited non-formal equivalency courses at the primary, lower or upper secondary levels. The exceptions are Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines which have extensive non-formal equivalency programmes, with national equivalence exams and accreditation systems in place up through upper secondary. The risk remains that non-formal education is considered ‘second-chance’, a parallel but inferior system of certification.
The Desk Review also highlighted the weak performance of students in NFE equivalency programmes, with exam pass rates well under 40 per cent for most countries offering NFE equivalence in the region (CIE-UNICEF EAPRO, 2008). Follow-up research on the impact of such courses, their utility for graduates, as well as the social value placed on such programmes could shape future policy directions, curricula content and advocacy initiatives. Under the Framework, support could be channelled to revising the NFE curriculum, textbooks and the examination system, increasing the relevance, as well as the comparability, to the formal curriculum.

Guidelines that govern teacher training and professional support can also be shaped with UNICEF help. At present, there is little to no role for the private sector to play in providing accredited non-formal courses and this is an area for future policy engagement, as is the role of web-based platforms for providing NFE equivalency lessons and modules. Issues related to quality assurance, such as the roles of the private sector and NGOs in service delivery, improved M&E support, EMIS linkages and analysis of barriers to reintegration into the formal system all need to be assessed as part of the overall commitment to adolescent education.

Countries with NFE equivalence have noted the need for social marketing to raise the public recognition and value of the certificate and to overcome negative opinions. Such public opinion issues need to be recognized and reviewed through research, with support for appropriate revision to NFE equivalency policies and guidelines for implementation. There is an increasing number of new options for non-formal education – linkages with talent academies, with social marketing and advocacy, with ICT and networks of social learning and with the private sector. All these build on the potential that adolescents bring with them to learning. Flexible scheduling and venues, recruitment of local teachers and stronger links to livelihoods are all important considerations.

Non-formal functional literacy, livelihoods and life skills education
UNICEF country offices should be able to prioritize support for NFE courses, including specifically functional literacy and specific livelihood skills. NFE and alternative learning approaches can be offered by NGOs, faith-based groups, private sector or government partners using face-to-face sessions, independent learning, internet and DVD-based lessons. In working with adolescents who have not yet completed primary school, emphasis should be placed on strengthening basic literacy and numeracy skills while providing content that is relevant to livelihoods skills. Innovation is needed to create stimulating and useful literacy and numeracy lessons to motivate young people to stay in class. For adolescents who have dropped out of lower secondary school, non-formal courses could focus more on livelihood skills. Alternative approaches that nurture decision-making, leadership, negotiation and critical thinking abilities can be useful for clubs and sports teams and for adolescents learning a specific skill. Talent Academies, which are skills-based rather than certificate-awarding, build on talents and skills that adolescents bring with them and are linked with the broader community context. As with other priority areas, decisions regarding which NFE activities to support should be grounded in baseline studies, impact assessments and other documentation.

In some countries, an increasing number of young people who have dropped out of lower secondary, are not interested in obtaining a equivalency certificate. Rather, they are interested in non-accredited learning which opens up opportunities to sharpen their marketable skills and job-earning potential. Modern technologies allow for a wide range of options to reach such adolescents – including distance education through radio and self-study, and through CDs and DVDs. UNICEF support can also focus on building partnerships with the private sector, including with private sector associations and foundations. Such partnerships, based on corporate social responsibility, or even on private sector needs for new staff, can help bridge learning with earning.
iv. Promoting adolescent participation and active citizenry

This Priority Area is directly relevant to all four groups, applicable to adolescents both in and out of school, although it is far easier to implement activities with the former. The focus here is on three areas:

i) Active learning and student-centred methods of instruction;
ii) Student decision-making and responsibility in school management; and
iii) Students as agents of change.

The importance of classroom dynamics and how students feel about their learning environment in determining academic and non-academic outcomes is drawing increasing attention from education ministries and academics across the region. UNICEF regional support for SEL environment surveys in 2008 helped to focus attention and guide policy debate on lower secondary students and their feelings of connectedness to school (UNICEF EAPRO SEL, 2009). A key element in addressing social connectivity to schools is to use student-centred learning approaches and to emphasize students’ participatory role in school management. While curricula and textbooks are influential, teacher training and supportive school management practices are the two key elements behind learner-centred instruction (OECD, 2004). UNICEF country offices should consider support for pre- and in-service teacher training and headmaster guidance in this respect. Efforts to increase participatory learning are possible for both formal and non-formal education. The Extended and Continuous Education and Learning (EXCEL) programme in Myanmar is an excellent example of the child-centred approach being applied to non-formal life skills-based education. EXCEL views students as active learners, using team work activities, ensuring relevance of lessons to daily life, offering leadership roles to students, and encouraging problem solving as part of its course work.

Adolescent students can be ideal conduits for passing on information that helps to improve their own, and their community’s, environment. As an example, the governments of Lao PDR and Viet Nam support advocacy campaigns whereby students knock on individual doors to encourage all children in the community to enrol in school. Community mapping exercises, where students prepare detailed maps of the community and identify households with out-of-school children and the barriers to their enrolment have also been piloted in some countries (i.e., Thailand, the Philippines). Adolescents have been effectively used to monitor fee-free policies and report practices that keep poorer families from sending their children to school. Attention should also be placed on serviced learning schemes. In these, students in post-primary are linked to public service institutions, serving as interns or volunteers in health, education, early childhood, conservation and social welfare sectors of government, and in middle-income countries, with the private sector. Engagement with adolescents as partners requires changing the perspectives of and training teachers, school administrators and managers/planners at different management levels (IAWGCP, 2007). These efforts can also include initiatives in peace education and conflict resolution in recognition of the role young people will play in building a peaceful and sustainable future for us all.

Among the many changes that children experience as they head into adolescence is a greater awareness of and interest in the world around them. Unfortunately, the energy, idealism and creativity of young people often remain untapped, especially by those institutions set up as basic service providers, especially schools. Enhancing children’s roles as active citizens can be done within a broad framework of youth participation, but it should
not be taken that adolescents are being made accountable for improving education systems. Rather, what is being proposed is that adolescents, especially older students in primary school, be key players in making schools better. Support for primary school student councils, for school self-assessments and planning and for sports, clubs and extra-curricular groups – all involving active citizenry – can meaningfully engage students at risk of dropping out or losing interest in their studies.

UNICEF country offices have a variety of experiences in supporting extra-curricular activities and student councils. In Mongolia, support and training for student councils resulted in a nationwide ‘My Passport’ campaign. Student councils in schools were used to support young journalists, reporters and photographers, and to produce documentation on child rights that was exchanged between schools. In Viet Nam, UNICEF supported the organization of student clubs for both in-school and out-of-school adolescents, organizing their meetings around key issues. This led to the creation of a national forum where club representatives come together to meet with education policy-makers to discuss education policy, budgets and their own experiences. Support for school councils, clubs, student governments, and extra-curricular activities can build on a wide range of existing partnerships and stakeholders.

Excellent work has been done in Thailand with the NGO Right to Play, using sports and games to build self-confidence and teamwork and inculcate the principles of fair play for adolescents in and out of school. It is important to note that advocacy with education ministries is needed so that budgets can be allocated for student councils and extra-curricular activities.

v. Education for well-being and behaviour change

This Priority Area applies to all four adolescent groups. The Framework also acknowledges the importance of young child survival and development, and the relevance of the Regional Strategy on Maternal Mortality to adolescent education (Save the Children, 2007, SCF UK 2007, UNICEF EAPRO, 2006).

Education for well being

It is considered fundamental to the Framework that all adolescents understand how, at a minimum, influenza, malaria, pneumonia, HIV, and sexually transmitted diseases are transmitted and how they can be prevented. In EAP today, even with the advances in primary school enrolment, the level of knowledge about basic health and hygiene practices and HIV prevention is still extremely low. A recent study asked young women aged 15-24 years to name three ways that HIV can be transmitted and prevented. Correct answers ranged from under 10 per cent in Indonesia to just over 40 per cent in Viet Nam (UNICEF EAPRO, 2005; World Bank, 2005). While we recognize that knowledge alone does not change behaviour, a fundamental role of education is to ensure that all citizens have basic knowledge about reproductive health and that clear information is available. Studies provide evidence on the impact and efficacy of various communication modes (posters, peer-to-peer, modularized lessons, etc) and can help shed light on the most effective means of raising levels of awareness and understanding related to young child survival and development and the prevention of HIV, swine flu, avian influenza, etc. Such efforts should be carried out with our UN, civil society and bilateral partners wherever possible.

Social and emotional learning

Blum and others have found a direct correlation between the SEL environment and adolescent social behaviour, learning achievement and success in various developmental indicators. Governments within the region are paying greater attention to the notion of ‘connectivity’ and the relationship between secondary school students and their schools (SEAMEO Brunei and Kuala Lumpur). Adolescents in Asia report
that they do not feel close to their teachers or other students, that large numbers experience fear and abuse in school, and that harassment, discrimination and bullying are impeding their ability to learn (UNICEF, Speaking Out, 2005). Students’ interests in, and how well they do at school (both academically and non-academically) are directly linked to the SEL climate. Surveys used observation, questionnaires and focus group discussion to measure SEL climates in ways that can be linked to other data, including attendance, completion and learning achievement. Thus far, UNICEF offices in five countries have provided initial support to such surveys. In the case of China, the initial SEL pilot allowed researchers and education ministry staff to collect data from several schools, where they found significant differences in levels of SEL, which correlated with other measures of quality in these schools.

Two main areas of SEL follow-up were identified during a UNICEF regional workshop in 2009. First is for country offices to do more to mainstream life skills and child-centred processes and methodologies into all subjects of learning and school management practices. This means, for example, that a math lesson can be taught in a manner that reinforces life skills principles, such as negotiation, effective communication or problem solving. This integration requires UNICEF involvement in teacher training (both pre- and in-service), along with school management reform (to encourage new school practices and new relationships with students), and curriculum and materials development.

Second, countries were keen to continue refining methods to assess SEL environments, using climate surveys or other tools. Data on how students feel about their school environment and how this relates to other indicators can provide a basis for advocacy and input into policy formulation. Studies on positive deviance that identify schools in difficult circumstances but with good SEL climates and other positive educational outcomes can help pinpoint key factors influencing school performance. Helping student-led organizations set action plans and monitor their school environment has proven effective in some contexts. Support for expanded protection networks in schools and increasing awareness of the vulnerabilities and social-emotional needs of students requires the backing of school management. These approaches can be integrated and/or mainstreamed into both formal and non-formal education through curriculum and teacher training, student councils and extra-curricular activities.

**Emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction**

Improving emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR) for adolescents is an area in need of greater attention. Currently, the immediate response is focused on primary education, with very little attention given to ensuring secondary learning continues. Almost no attention is paid to educational rights, as these young people are too old to join overcrowded temporary primary schools and there is no provision for non-formal education. This is a serious gap that needs to be addressed. We need to develop a proactive approach to get all displaced children into learning programmes, both formal and non-formal – including older children. The tried and tested school-in-a-box approach could easily be adapted to lower secondary and upper secondary levels. Older children could also be motivated to serve as ‘assistant teachers’ for primary classes, while still having an opportunity to study at the secondary level, with access to textbook materials.

The introduction of basic and functional literacy and livelihood skills training through non-formal approaches, and knowledge for behaviour change are of direct relevance to education in emergency and preparedness planning. In addition, secondary school students suffer tremendous stress if emergencies erupt and cause displacement or the closure of schools during national exams. As part of overall emergency readiness, education systems should have policies in place that allow those students who exams are disrupted to have special provisions made on their behalf.
There is also a good deal of work that can be done around DRR, especially when linked to adolescents as active citizens, as mentioned above. School readiness plans – including drills and general awareness about preparedness – need to be absorbed into school management. Experiences with DRR in the region have highlighted the importance of working directly with students at the secondary level, both so they are prepared in case of emergencies and also to mitigate the effect of these emergencies on their lives and communities. Excellent work has already been done in the region in this respect, especially in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami emergency. Environmental awareness, linked to climate change and DRR, helps to focus education on sustainable development and the realities of the community. Schools can become less wasteful of energy, with less littering and waste around the school compound. Students and school management can use recycling, energy-efficient ideas, hygienic and water-efficient sanitation systems and other innovations as part of their class projects and as student management responsibilities. Save the Children’s publication on child-led disaster risk reduction is an excellent reference on working with young people as a resource. Linking DRR with the working with CFS framework for post-primary settings is another area for future research and advocacy (SCF UK 2007, UNICEF 2006).

vi. Areas not recommended for UNICEF support

There are five major areas of adolescent education that the Framework would not recommend country offices support:

- Vocational education centres
- Large-scale construction of secondary schools
- Curriculum revision or boutique extra-curricular materials
- Conditional cash transfers and incentives
- Upper secondary and higher education

The Framework does not encourage UNICEF engagement with traditional vocational education centres and advanced skills training. Rather, it favours engagement in basic livelihoods, life skills and practical vocational education for adolescents who have not completed lower secondary. It also is not for large-scale construction of secondary schools which is not UNICEF’s comparative advantage (even after emergencies). However, construction in terms of modelling new school designs and setting standards is encouraged, as is building water and toilet infrastructure for secondary schools.

Country offices are discouraged from leading national secondary curriculum revision, which is also not UNICEF’s comparative advantage. But they may support specific aspects of national curriculum revision and reform, such as setting standards, providing gender and rights audits, or supporting life skills or knowledge for well-being within the curriculum. With conditional cash transfers (CCTs) long-term commitments are required for impact, and secured funding for 5-10 years is not something UNICEF programmes are in a position to offer. Finding the balance between the targeting and management aspects of CCTs with a rights perspective is important and is an area that UNICEF can support through research and assessment rather than through direct provision. Joint programming, where UNICEF supports the software components of school management or the targeting process, and other partners provide incentives or cash are encouraged.

Lastly, country offices are discouraged from engaging at upper secondary and higher education levels. Other programme sectors may be active with this group, but outside of pre-service education, this is not an educational priority.
To make the most of the limited resources available to invest in adolescent education, it is important to align the new EAP strategy with MTSP Focus Area 5 and its approach to policy advocacy. Research, standard-setting and public advocacy can have an impact far beyond what UNICEF resources alone can achieve. Building a strong evidence-base, filling in knowledge gaps, and utilizing data to inform policies and plans is an important contribution that UNICEF can make to adolescent education.

i. UNICEF’s upstream focus

Working together with other development partners to leverage resources and influence national programmes and policies strengthens the effectiveness of such efforts. As an example, UNICEF Viet Nam in partnership with UNESCO led a research study on the transition of ethnic minority girls into lower secondary school. While neither UNICEF nor UNESCO were supporting specific activities for secondary education, research in this area was encouraged by the government and other donors as a means of shedding light on possible solutions to the inequities related to ethnic minority girls’ education. This research, both through its approach and findings, is having a direct influence on specific government policies and resource allocation by other education partners.

UNICEF has decades of experience in conducting innovative pilots, especially in response to the educational needs of disadvantaged groups. However, given human resource and budget constraints, care is needed to ensure that pilots do not become boutique projects with a limited impact and no exit strategy. A rigorous pilot regimen, with government ownership, stakeholder interest, a clear baseline and assessment of results and a strategic approach for advocacy and the use of the findings, are all necessary to ensure an upstream impact.

ii. Link with other MTSP priorities

Adolescents are both a key target group of and a key partner in achieving all the goals of the five MTSP Focus Areas. The Strategic Framework for adolescent education must be able to accommodate the diverse expectations of other programme areas and sectors. Essential messages, knowledge and skills, as identified by colleagues in the protection, HIV/AIDS and young child survival and development sectors need to be integrated into formal and
non-formal programmes in a coordinated manner that does not overcrowd the curriculum and overwhelm students. Education professionals need to support their cross-sector colleagues in designing curricula, information/communication materials and lessons that are appropriate, effective and encourage active learning with definable outcomes. Education staff in UNICEF country offices needs to be proactive in coordinating office-wide education efforts for adolescents, or we run the risk of having disparate pilot activities for similar target groups that are project-based, unsustainable and ineffective.

Country Management Teams need to identify the most vital areas of importance to adolescents, whether they are related to accidents and injuries, HIV prevention, protection issues or safety against pandemics. Collectively, country offices can ensure that adolescents are given adequate opportunities to absorb key messages (such as hand washing) and information through their education experience. It would be unfortunate if different sectors used the formal school system – either to disseminate information or for broader participation and advocacy campaigns – without close collaboration and consultation with UNICEF education colleagues. National education strategies and sector plans may have set clearly defined priority areas for adolescents which colleagues from other sectors may not be aware of. Ensuring that collective efforts to achieve MDGs through the education system and schools require close coordination with, if not leadership by, education colleagues.

iii. One UN and sector-wide approaches

Adolescents are both a key target group of and a key partner in achieving all the goals of the five MTSP Focus Areas. The Strategic Framework for adolescent education must be able to accommodate the diverse expectations of other programme areas and sectors. Essential messages, knowledge and skills, as identified by colleagues in the protection, HIV/AIDS and young child survival and development sectors need to be integrated into formal and non-formal programmes in a coordinated manner that does not overcrowd the curriculum and overwhelm students. Education professionals need to support their cross-sector colleagues in designing curricula, information/communication materials and lessons that are appropriate, effective and encourage active learning with definable outcomes. Education staff in UNICEF country offices needs to be proactive in coordinating office-wide education efforts for adolescents, or we run the risk of having disparate pilot activities for similar target groups that are project-based, unsustainable and ineffective.

Adolescent education may or may not feature prominently in the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). In countries where youth and adolescents are a priority target group, notably in the Pacific as well as in several middle-income countries, we can expect greater attention to be placed on adolescents and youth in these plans. UNICEF should ensure that the data provided for the Situation Analysis and CCA for the UNDAF include disaggregated and qualitative data on secondary, non-formal and out-of-school adolescent populations. The four adolescent groups articulated for this Framework are offered as a basis for initial analysis while detailed data can help inform joint discussions on how to address glaring disparities. Certainly, the more that adolescent education issues are raised in UN and sector-wide discussions, the greater the chance of partnership and achieving sustainable results. The Framework recognizes the valued role that other partners play, with UNESCO a lead agency in non-formal and vocational education and adult literacy. In this region, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the EU, the UK Department for International Development, AusAID, USAID, the Swedish International Development Agency, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Save the Children, Plan International,
iv. Partnerships

UNICEF places great importance on building effective partnerships in education in the EAP region. The East Asia and Pacific Regional Office is a key member of the Regional EFA Thematic Working Group (TWG) formed under ESCAP, co-chaired with UNESCO and embracing 15 UN, international NGO, foundation and civil society member organizations. The EFA TWG was responsible for overseeing the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment process, with the theme of ‘reaching the unreached’ and a focus on sub-national data. Gender equality in education is being advanced through the regional UN Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) partnership, which EAPRO co-chairs jointly with UNESCO Bangkok.

At the country level, various partnerships exist, including cluster coordination for emergency response and sector coordination through Education Sector Working Groups. In terms of regional partners, significant mention must be made of UNESCO Bangkok, and the bigger role it could potentially play in many areas, such as NFE, secondary school policy and education for sustainable development. We should be looking at working in a more systematic way with UNESCO as regards adolescents, providing support when it can take the lead or for specific tasks. Other key partners in the region include the Asian Development Bank, which is very active in post-primary education, and the EU and World Bank which are also active in post-primary and higher education. The NGO community, in particular Save the Children Fund, Plan, World Education and Care, are also active in non-formal education, and increasingly, secondary school education for disadvantaged groups as are bilaterals, including AusAID, JICA, SIDA and USAID. National mapping exercises of partners and the roles that various stakeholders play in adolescent education is a valuable contribution UNICEF can make to the sector.

There are few national networks or coalitions for secondary education such as those between private and public schools, faith-based groups, NGOs, private and community charter schools and education ministries. Networks can be created through partnerships and might involve the mutual sharing of expertise between the government and groups at the national and local level. Collaboration with teacher unions and professional associations can also be fostered with an eye to self-regulation, the integration of protection issues into the teaching profession and the strengthening of referral/response mechanisms. Work with the private sector might revolve around fostering an ethos of corporate responsibility, with businesses adopting schools for life-long learning or supporting communities for early childhood development centres. The private sector is a consumer of what the education system provides, and partnerships with the business community that support the employment of young people, for example, should be on the list of options. Even with supportive policy environments, a greater push is needed to expand service learning opportunities and community service programmes with links to the private sector and local government agencies. UNICEF should not be shy about providing support to the private sector to address the educational rights of disadvantaged adolescents and leveraging its resources, creativity and needs for a skilled and educated labour force.
v. Gender

Throughout the region, the gap between boys and girls at the secondary level is much larger than in primary. As mentioned previously, disparities in gender parity exist for both boys and girls and in many countries with national gender parity, considerable gaps exist at sub-national levels. For secondary enrolment in Myanmar, for example, girls are at greater disadvantage in the west of the country, while far fewer boys attend secondary schools in the eastern regions. In Myanmar, and in many other EAP countries, we find that socio-economic status, not gender, is the most influential factor in education performance in the area where the highest disparities exist. The graph below shows the levels of disparity favouring boys and girls in the region. It is through sub-national analysis that the importance of a refined policy approach becomes clear. Governments need a targeted approach to addressing gender amongst adolescents, one that is based on evidence and considers the specific contexts of diverse populations.

It is important to keep in mind that gender equality is far more significant than gender parity. Equal enrolment rates do not translate into equal completion rates or equality in the numbers advancing to higher levels of education. Similarly, gender parity says nothing about the education experience, including the gender biases in curricula and textbooks, or the overall classroom experience. With their burgeoning sexuality, girls are particularly vulnerable to harassment and sexual abuse, although boys are by no means safe from such abuse by teachers, classmates and the school at large. Gender audits of school curricula and textbook materials have been conducted in just a few countries in the region and very few governments have undertaken substantial gender reviews of textbooks. The selection of education professionals is also extremely biased along gender lines, with women making up the ranks of pre-school and primary school teachers, while men generally dominate in secondary, post-secondary and education management positions. Classroom and school management practices are often steeped in social norms that reinforce gender typecasting, with girls sweeping and cleaning toilets at school and boys left to enjoy sports activities. UNICEF country offices are encouraged to carry out gender-based research and policy advocacy as a key element of their adolescent education efforts.

Figure 4: Gender gaps in secondary enrolment

vi. Migration

This region is marked by significant levels of migration, most which is internal, but all of which can lead to a disruption in education, or at least to distractions in school interest and changes in access to school. In China alone, 55 million children have been left at home by parents who have migrated for work, while 27 million have migrated with their parents. Children who follow their parents in migrating to urban centres and areas of economic opportunity face different enrolment policies, as well as a lack of supportive learning environments, especially in overcrowded classes with scarce resources. Children left behind by migrating parents have their own challenges to overcome, in terms of disruption to home environment, the lack of family support and potential risks to family income. While there is no doubt that large-scale migration of populations has a direct impact on schooling and children’s capacity to learn, we know little about this area. More research is required on the impacts of migration on children’s education, including school performance, feelings of confidence and connectedness, and hopes for the future.

There is also additional work to be done, from a rights perspective, on cross-border migration related to education, and the role that sub-regional education policy can play in terms of recognizing neighbouring countries’ accreditation and certification processes, especially at post-primary levels. Investigating ways to provide cross-border educational opportunities for upper secondary and tertiary education as well as for specific vocational trades and skills requires long-term vision and the commitment of governments and other partners. In the Pacific, considerable work has been done to ensure that secondary school certification in one country can lead to acceptance in higher education in another. In ASEAN countries, through the SEAMEO network, education ministers are seeking to address the educational needs and rights of their adolescents who have migrated to other countries. UNICEF has a role to play, in terms of policy, advocacy and research that can provide a basis for cross border collaboration.
The ultimate purpose of the Framework is to help UNICEF country offices devise a strategic approach for addressing the educational rights of adolescents. If the analysis they undertake as part of the process is of interest to governments and the wider donor community, the Framework may also have an influence on national policy and sector plans. It should, at the very least, help country offices set priorities and coordinate the disparate education-related activities for adolescents that different sectoral programmes might be supporting.

An ideal time to use this Framework is during Country Programme preparation, or when planning for a Mid-Term Review. Both of these processes offer the opportunity to collect specific information on adolescent education. Such research could highlight current attitudes, how students feel about their schools, their behaviour, or could focus on cost-effective innovation or good practices. For a situation analysis, it is essential that the education section takes the lead in reviewing all education support for adolescents. However, it may be possible to establish a credible inter-sectoral team or task force to help procure data.

The Framework will no doubt spark debate, which in fact is what it aims to do. An argument still lingers over UNICEF’s comparative advantage in supporting basic literacy programmes. The new strategy’s recommendation not to back vocational education, for example, will certainly stimulate reaction in some quarters. The Framework will feed into the global ADAP Strategy, which should be finalized in early 2010 and a Concept Note from the Adolescent Education Taskforce, set up by the Education Cluster in New York.

The new strategy’s success will be measured by its relevance to, and use by, country offices. As it unfurls, a structured review process will be put into place to provide feedback that will be reflected in any future refinement. The Framework aims to take adolescent education off the back burner and give it a much-deserved higher profile. In essence, it is about unleashing creativity and innovation to properly educate a generation in whose hands our future lies.


