

# *South Asia Forum for Education Development (SAFED)*

## *Scope & Terms of Reference*

### **1. Preamble:**

South Asian region is marked by its immense diversity and plurality. Yet it has many common strands weaving a rich mosaic of the South Asian diaspora: its religions, local, regional and national histories, arts, music, crafts, origins of education systems; codes of social conduct etc. However, unlike other regions of the world where there are regional education associations exploring solutions to common problems of education and learning, South Asia has had no active regional forum to explore these issues regularly and formally. UNESCO had spear headed the E-9 countries dialogue very effectively which included only the high population countries of South Asia (India, Bangladesh and Pakistan), excluding others. In 2001 the ministers and governments of South Asia had launched the South Asia EFA forum in the post Dakar period to spur actions for EFA, however, there has been only a modest amount of activity.

The emergent curriculum frameworks, teacher education programs, local governance, higher education and knowledge generation, public private partnerships, right to education initiatives spanning in scope from early childhood to school and technical education usher unimagined possibilities for cross border collaborations. The collaboration may take the form of research, policy refinement, sharing implementation strategies and innovations as value additions to resolve and move forward on many contentious and contemporary education issues.

Recognizing the emerging opportunities, SAFED has been established with a mandate to explore active partnerships between doers, policy makers, researchers and innovators; to facilitate a regional knowledge and practice platform indigenous and yet global, led and owned by local leadership cadres.

### **2. SAFED is a network of South Asian:**

- Practitioner-thinkers
- Ministries
- Education specialists and researchers
- Civil Society Organizations(CSOs) active in education including media/lawyers/teachers
- Private sector
- Development partners

### **3. SAFED's Mission is to**

- Promote partnerships for learning and policy solutions
- Create a critical mass on research, policy and implementation challenges in South Asia
- Build capacities of Ministries and civil society organizations to develop, manage, and implement education policies
- Promote sharing of experiences and successful strategies
- Build linkages between research, innovations and practice to inform policy and timely access to information and best practices for decision makers
- Accelerate implementation of nationally-driven education policies, programs through hybrid synergistic solutions (girls education, linkages of higher and basic education, local governance, inclusion, promoting technologies in education, meeting learning and access challenges through public private partnerships, social entrepreneurship programs, fostering cross country researches, and many more areas)
- Improve the quality of data and accountability systems to meet national and international targets/goals.

### **4. Organizational Structure of SAFED**

#### **Steering Committee**

The SAFED Steering Committee is to be a governing body for the coordination among members and the ministries of education.

The Steering Committee will comprise of:

- seven institutional representatives from the respective countries,
- three members from public and private sectors
- one Secretary of the Steering Committee from the SAFED secretariat(max. )

#### **Secretariat**

The Secretariat for SAFED must be housed within an institution independently with core professionals who can exclusively focus on the SAFED agenda. The core personnel will be responsible for managing its governance, exploring and collecting information on key thematic issues, arranging regular meetings and managing its membership base in consultation with the Steering Group. In addition, the Secretariat will also assist in circulating related information/documents through the setting up of a network website, maintain regular contact with all network members and serve as Secretariat to the Steering Group itself.

## **Working Group**

These will be active thematic groups focusing on regional bottlenecks to undertake advocacy, research, capacity building and dissemination of best practices. These working groups can be set up through institutional affiliations across professional and research organizations. A portal or website with very substantive space will be launched to ensure that governance and information are accessible to all member states through extensive use of e-communication.

SAFED's working groups could focus on:

- Girls Education and its upscaling (all levels)
- Curriculum Frameworks and outcomes based learning
- Quality of Education- learning and assessment
- Teacher preparation and professional development
- Early Childhood Education & Development
- Books and Joint Development of Learning Materials/Publications
- Mathematics and science education
- Promoting History and Social Sciences: reclaiming and indigenizing knowledge systems
- Education Sector Analysis including Assessment, Evaluation and Impact of educational policy and programmes
- Local governance of education and decentralization reforms
- Education Statistics: devising regional software for education statistics
- Social Enterprise in Low Cost Private School including impact funding
- Education Resource Management
- Public and private sectors – contributors to right to education
- Distance Education and Open Learning
- Vocational and Technical education
- Inclusive education
- Non Formal & Bridge Alternative Education
- Higher Education
- HIV AIDs and SRHR education
- Promoting learning for diversity through Culture and Peace initiatives
- Citizenship Education for promoting democracy

## **5. Operational Model of the Network**

The following operational model is suggested:

### **Annual Meetings of SAFED**

SAFED will hold Annual Meetings/conferences to bring together South Asian Members/Steering Committee; representatives of institutions, researchers, development partners and other education professionals to debate and promote the initiatives. Meetings will focus on thematic areas considered most important by the core members.

**Intra-South Asian Exchanges**

Designed to promote the cross-fertilization of creative responses for specific challenges facing education, the program of South Asian Exchanges will include: comparative education research projects, training and capacity building visits, research /cultural fellowships, exchange of expertise, and commissioned papers on education in South Asia.

**Awards in Education**

In order to keep SAFED as an active body, SAFED will launch awards in education that recognizes journalists, teachers and education innovators in the South Asian region .

**Dissemination of Information: Communication Channels**

ICTs (Information Communication Technologies) would be optimized for SAFED. A print and e-Newsletter could be circulated quarterly/annually/bi annually to share latest updates and initiatives of alliances, in the region. The website /portal will be updated to provide information regarding alliances in regions, upcoming events, initiatives etc. A portal for SAFED can be mobilized for efficient communication within the regional partners.

**Budgets and Financing of SAFED:**

Financing for SAFED may be jointly launched through a consortium of development partners, INGOs and Corporate Sector who have expressed willingness for this initiative. In addition the buoyant corporate sector of South Asia seeking creative learning solutions for addressing human resource bottlenecks will be mobilized to support this regional learning platform.