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**Synthesis of Studies on the Generalization
and Sustainability of Reforms**

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BER	Bureau d'Éducation Rurale
IDB	Inter American Development Bank
BIT	International Labor Organisation
BREDA	UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa
CASE AFRICA	Cooperative Action Strategies in Basic Education in Africa
CSLP	Strategic Framework of the Fight Against Poverty
EFA	Education for All
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PERP	Primary Education Reform Program
PNDSE	Plan National du Développement du Secteur Éducatif
SQF	School of Fundamental Quality
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Program

ABSTRACT

1. Generalization is a process that consists in broadening the field of an innovation to a greater scale to expand a field of a reform. Two types of generalization of reform efforts may be distinguished: the generalization of nationwide initiatives right from the beginning, without going through the pilot project stage, and the nationwide generalization of reform initiatives carried out on an experimental basis or small initiatives on a limited zone. Generalization can concern several aspects of the reforms undertaken. It can focus on structures, programs, strategies, policies and resources. In general, it is recommended that the highest authorities visibly and strongly support the reform planned with the help of a national communication and consultation campaign.

2. The results of the five case studies selected corroborate the conclusions of several analysts who agree that the generalization of an educational reform, like education in general, requires a greater political and social commitment at the highest level of the state than any other development activity because it is the most expensive. A committed, devoted and tenacious leadership, made up, often of a charismatic individual whose persistence and obstinacy is an advantage as well as a drawback. In order to ensure generalization and sustainability, any reform initiative requires adequate resources. Governments are therefore encouraged to forge partnerships as broad as possible to see to it that, in particular, teachers organizations and other NGOs and the community are fully associated with the drawing up of reforms, their implementation, their generalization and their monitoring. The full participation of local communities is just as important to facilitate the generalization and sustainability of innovations. The absence of specific national policy and a separate budget line for the generalization of reforms leads to incoherence in the actions carried out by the various institutions.

1. SUMMARY

3. Generalization is a process that consists in broadening the field of innovation to a greater scale to expand the field of a reform. Two types of generalization of reform efforts may be distinguished: *the nationwide generalization of initiatives right from the beginning*, without going through the pilot project stage, and *the nationwide generalization of reform initiatives carried out on an experimental basis or small initiatives on a limited area*.

4. Generalization can concern several aspects of the reform undertaken. It can focus on structures, programs (functional expansion), strategies, policies and resources. Uvin and Miller (2001) note that generalization can be done in various ways. Effective local innovations can be implemented at other sites and the government can attempt to reproduce a promising initiative at other sites. This approach is all the more favored by the states and NGOs as it makes it possible to test a pilot project and combine a community-based activity and rapid expansion.

5. Pilot reforms are what most analysts recommend more often because they present many advantages. They make it possible, among other things, to not waste attention and energy; to carry out the experiment and evaluate it in a field with controllable dimensions, to limit the risks in the event of failure; to build a model that could possibly be reproducible throughout the country. Considering the limited resources that African countries have vis-à-vis a growing demand, it is recommended, initially, to: limit the innovation and reform experiments to one school or school district; properly prepare the terrain, carefully plan the continuation of the operations; make sure that an adequate financing plan is available, carry out the monitoring and evaluation of the results; modify practices according to local realities and preliminary conclusions. It is only when one has a more accurate idea of what works and what doesn't that the pilot experiment can be implemented at other sites.

6. A reform that takes its inspiration from orientations proposed by the base, i.e., that takes into account the desires of the users, assumes a decentralization of power. It is a question of directly challenging the bureaucracy. This approach also requires that the rights and responsibilities of each individual or organization be clearly established. In this perspective, national policies must show the necessary flexibility to leave schools and communities enough margin for maneuvering so that they can define their educational orientations on their own bases. Meant to bring about better proximity management, thanks to the transfer of power and resources, decentralization has created a new steering framework that has increased the responsibilities of the education actors at the base.

7. Conversely, a reform from the top coming from authorities at the summit, and which cannot be the reflection of the realities experienced by users in the field runs the risk of being difficult to generalize. For this reason, the state can certainly reform structures, curriculum and learnings evaluation policy and determine the implementation levels in a movement that goes from top to bottom.

8. In general, it is recommended that the authorities at the highest level visibly and strongly support the reform planned with the help of a national communication and consultation campaign. With time, the different sections of the reform become gradually institutionalized, which ensures the likelihood of the sustainability of the reform once the national mobilization campaign has ended. So that it effectively contributes to the efforts to generalize and sustain reforms, the campaign must be based on participatory communication through which all the parties concerned must feel in a position to start a debate and to freely respond to questioning, instead of settling for being passive receivers of monologues and directives from the others.

2. GENERALIZATION OF REFORMS IN AFRICA: RESULTS OF FIVE CASE STUDIES

9. Benin is making sustained efforts to succeed in instituting a system of standards for a School of Fundamental Quality (SFQ). To ensure its generalization and sustainability, the government made use of a *going to scale by expansion strategy*. The government undertook an information and awareness program throughout the entire country to have its objectives and the intervention sectors of the SFQ known in order to encourage and obtain the support and contribution of the various actors, users, school partners and development associations. The results obtained for internal achievement globally present a tendency toward improvement. The levels obtained in absolute value, however, are fairly weak and correspond to a very low level of school quality. The quantitative development of the school has not been backed by a sizable qualitative development.

10. In Mali, the convergent pedagogy experiment that began in 1987, gradually expanded, starting in October 1994, over a period of several years. So, out of the 13 national languages that cover the entire country, 11 are now being used in basic education. But this generalization could not be done without the certain preliminaries being put in place. First, the language to be introduced (many areas in Mali are at least bilingual) had to be chosen, teachers who were native speakers of the language selected had to be found and trained and didactic material in these languages had to be created. Accounts and results of the research revealed the importance of convergent pedagogy on the students' learning. The students in the schools that apply convergent pedagogy significantly distinguished themselves compared to their counterparts in traditional schools. It was also demonstrated that the best cost-effectiveness ratios are found in schools with convergent pedagogy, which are characterized by relatively moderate costs in view of the benefits that the students get out of it in terms of acquisition.

11. In the framework of the establishment of a reform program, Mauritania considers that the "awareness" dimension of the actors has an aspect that is more than strategic. Starting from this observation, the preparation of the National Plan of the Development of the Education Sector (PNDSE) was taken in charge by the technical and political authorities following a national conception and an approach including all the ministerial departments involved and guaranteeing the participation of all the actors concerned. The Ministry of National Education used all the resources available to make them all aware of potential financing sources. The evaluation of the achievements after 15 months is as follows. As for improvement in access and equity, the student populations that were 360,677 in 2001 totaled 375,695 in 2002 including 183,220 girls, which corresponds to a participation rate of 48.7%. Over the same period, the access rate in the first year of basic education increased from 98% to 117%, the gross rate of children attending school from 87% to 88.7%, but the rate of children that stayed in school decreased. The number of schools with a both primary and secondary grades rose in absolute value, going from 537 out of a total of 2,933 to 574 out of a total of 3,204, but the proportion remained stable at about 18%. As for the allocation of resources, the resources granted by the government for the financing of the PNDSE were conveyed by a significant increase in the sector's budget starting with the implementation of the PNDSE. In this budget, basic education has the largest share compared to other levels of education.

12. In Burundi, the use of Kirundi represents one the strategies of the implementation of the educational reform enacted in 1973. The impact of Kirundi on the improvement of the quality of education in Burundi is reflected by the clearly higher

results obtained by the students in tests given in Kirundi (the national language) compared to those given in French. Although two thirds of the parents, however, think that teaching in the national language is necessary, on the other hand nearly 53% are of the opinion that teaching in the national language does not facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and 74% think that teaching in the national language causes a drop in the students' level although the results of the tests prove otherwise. Paradoxically, 79.7% of the teachers find that using Kirundi in teaching constitutes a handicap for academic achievement. Contradictorily, they think that on the primary level, the lessons given in Kirundi are understood by a great majority of the students. It clearly appears that neither the parents, the inspectors, the school principals, the teachers nor the beneficiaries of the reform including the pupils have understood the soundness of this reform; which does not make it easy to generalize and sustain this reform undertaken more than 30 years ago.

13. In Uganda, a national consultation involving all the actors and partners was considered vital right from the beginning of the conception of the reform in 1993. The implementation strategies of the PERP encouraged the government to set up intermediary reforms. As for the strategies concerning the implementation of universal education, the basic element of this policy is its holistic nature. To reach the objectives of the EFA (Education for All), the government made a commitment to provide: tuition for four children per family, teaching materials in the form of textbooks, the basic infrastructures (classrooms, laboratories, libraries and housing for the teachers, salaries and training for the teachers). The proof of the success of this reform is obvious: growth in school populations between 1995 and 2002 for girls as well as for boys. Whereas in 1995, the school population was 2,636,409 with 1,438,986 boys and 1,197,433 girls, in 2002 this figure was 7,354,153 with 3,721,135 boys and 3,633,018 girls. This population almost tripled in seven years. The school curriculum was revised to favor functional literacy and communication skills in the national languages. The schools benefit from a subsidy of 35% to purchase additional pedagogic materials. These results are attributable to several factors, including: increased government spending for education, the improvement of the student/teacher ratio, a strong demand for education, political stability and economic growth and a tendency toward decentralization.

14. The results of these five studies corroborate the conclusions of several analysts who agree that the generalization of an educational reform, like education in general, requires a greater political and social commitment than any other development activity because it is the most expensive. To make sure that there is generalization and sustainability, any reform initiative must have adequate resources. It requires, competent, highly qualified personnel, able to continue its hard job year after year with patience and devotion. There must be good study programs, as well as enough textbooks, chalk, slates for each student. There must be school buildings and seating. To fulfill all these requirements, governments, the public and parents must decide that to educate a child, other priorities must be sacrificed.

3. SYNTHESIS OF STUDIES ON THE THEME OF THE GENERALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF REFORMS

3.1. Introduction

15. Since their acquisition of independence, the African states have placed education very high on their list of concerns. Because, they consider it the cornerstone of a strategy that aims at eradicating social disparities, unifying the nation and stoking the motor of development (UNICEF, 1999). The priority given to education is expressed by a certain number of political assertions that have succeeded each other (the Education Charter adopted in 1961 at the Addis Ababa Conference and the Jomtien Declaration in 1990 on education for all, to cite just these two examples). Since then, the African states have undertaken several actions to attempt to manage the quality of education for all by initiating various reforms and innovations (Davies, 2001; ADEA, 1997; Healey and DeStefano, 1997): reforms concerning curricula, administrative structures, education systems, financing systems, training for educational personnel (Jansen, 1998). More specifically, innovations can also be cited such as split-shift classes in urban areas, multigrade classes in rural areas, free distribution of textbooks, informal basic education for the recovery of children aged 9 to 15 who have never gone to school or who have dropped out, preschool education (Traoré, Ouedraogo and Ilboudo, 2003).

16. The implementation and generalization of certain of these reforms has thus made it possible to obtain some remarkable results in certain African countries, notably those that concern the increase in the gross rate of children attending school. The school systems then had, between 1960 and 1980, to deal with a rise in their populations of about 9% on average annually and for which the existing structures were not prepared (UNESCO, 1999). But the progress made between the 1960s and 1980s was seriously threatened after this period (World Bank, 1988; UNESCO, 1980). According to the UNICEF analyses (1999), after having dropped in the 1980s, the rate of children attending primary school was once again near 60%. As for the girls' situation, in 1960, there were twice as many boys as girls in school. The gap has nearly been closed, the rate of girls attending primary school now reaching 57% and that of boys 61%. However, an even greater disparity can be observed in enrollments in certain countries such as Benin where the rate of girls is 30% less than that of boys.

17. Despite certain progress made thanks to various reforms undertaken, it should be observed that the weakness of national capacities to ensure the generalization and sustainability of these reforms and innovations (Samoff, Sebatane and Dembele, 2001), which constitutes one of the major obstacles to improving the quality of basic education for all (ADEA, 2001; Aglo, 2000). Several challenges and constraints comprise the factors that lower the quality of education in Africa. These weaknesses are found on the highest as well as on the lowest levels of the education systems (Benveniste and McEwan, 2000). They generally result from a weakness in strategic vision, an inefficient division of resources, the mediocrity of the financial management processes and the fragility of the data collection and analysis systems on the results of the system and student learning (Weva and Mbemba, 2003; Hamissou, 2000; Sangaré et al., 2000; Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991 and Verspoor, 1992). They are also due, on one hand, to the absence of a participatory approach likely to favor the participation of all the actors in the creation and implementation process of reforms and innovations (Balima, 1996; Millogo, 1997), and, on the other, to the use of a more theoretical rather than practical policy of

decentralization unaccompanied by the effective transfers of resources and power from top to bottom (Traoré, Ouedraogo and Ilboudo, 2003). And it is in this way that Samoff, Sebataane and Dembele (2001) correctly note that:

Many creative, interesting and sometimes spectacular initiatives, implemented in the area of education in Africa, have rarely been able to be successfully integrated into the national education programs. In fact, most of these experiments have not survived the enthusiasm of their beginnings, the drying up of the initial financing that was often provided by outside sources or the departure of their initiator.

18. The objective of this document is to synthesize the results on the generalization and sustainability of reforms in education in Africa in general and in the five countries that served as case studies in the framework of this theme.

3.2. Generalization of reforms in education: an attempt at a definition and typology

19. Generalization is a process that consists in broadening the field of an innovation to a larger scale to broaden the field of a reform. Following a more exhaustive review of the literature on the subject, Sebataane and Dembele (2001) succeeded in distinguishing two types of generalization of reform efforts: *generalization of initiatives on the national scale from the beginning*, without going through the pilot project stage, and *nationwide generalization of reform initiatives carried out on an experimental basis or small initiatives on a limited area*.

3.2.1. Generalization of reforms on the national scale from the beginning

20. The generalization of reforms on the national scale from the beginning, without going through pilot project stage or using a gradual approach, is the most often used method to broaden educational initiatives in Africa, especially in the framework of educational macro-reforms (reform of the use of specifications as steering instruments of primary education in Senegal, Education for Self-reliance in Tanzania, School of Fundamental Quality in Benin, etc.). For example, when Tanzania decided to make Swahili the language of instruction at the primary level, all the primary schools in the country were asked to adopt it from the beginning without turning to a pilot project. Such initiatives, which can be effective strategies for the generalization of and improvement in quality in education, are generally based on management principles and structures that differ from reform efforts carried out on an experimental basis on a limited area (Mingat, 2002; Samoff, Sebataane and Dembele, 2001; Perlman, 2001; Sow, 2001; Myers, 2000; Weva, 1982).

21. The strategy that permits the broadening or generalizing a reform without going through a pilot project stage is *going to scale by expansion* (Myers, 2000). As Samoff, Sebataane and Dembele (2001) remarked, in practice this approach reflects national reforms more than pilot reforms carried out on a limited area. The adjustments that aim at taking into account local specificities are generally done *a posteriori*. This approach requires that major energies and resources and individual commitment relative to implementing a large-scale national reform be mobilized. In general, it is recommended that the authorities on the highest level visibly and strongly support the planned reform using a national communication and consultation campaign. With time,

the different sections of the reform gradually become institutionalized, which ensures the likelihood of their sustainability once the national mobilization campaign is ended.

22. In order for it to comprise a generalization strategy, communication must be participatory so that it can encourage trust and approval, and that it involves frequent exchanges between people and groups in reform situations. In other words, according to Opubor (2001), it concerns a communication mode in which all the parties concerned should feel in a position to start a debate and to freely respond to questioning, instead of just settling for being passive receivers of the others' monologues and directives. For Dagron (2001), the main characteristics of participatory communication are its capacity to involve the actors of social change in the communication process. Certain communication operations use mass media: press releases, information bulletins, programs, announcements broadcast on radio and television, etc. Others bring into play group and interpersonal communication through meetings, parent-student-teacher debates, seminars, gatherings, etc. (Opubor, 2001).

23. In Kenya, the Ministry of National Education attempted to introduce an education program on family life containing elements of sex education, strongly fought by a coalition of parents and religious groups who spoke out against this program in the newspapers, on the radio, on television and in public meetings. The minister was forced to delay the implementation of this program.

24. In 1992-1993, Guinea started redeploying its teaching personnel and administrators throughout the country. This initiative made it possible, at no extra cost, to increase the school attendance rate in urban as well as rural schools. The Ministry of Education integrated communication into its global strategy in order to accompany this operation (Sow, 2001).

25. Apart from communication, consultation with the various actors and partners is also one of the means or tools likely to facilitate the appropriation of the initiative by the different actors concerned and consequently to possibly facilitate its generalization. Consultation enriches educational resources, unites energies around the schools and integrates them into a global group promotion project. Increasingly, most of the African countries consider consultation and the participation of the various partners in the process of designing a reform as being an important generalization strategy. As several specialists have remarked (UNICEF, 1999; Dlamini, 1999; Tunesvik, 1998; Weva, 1995), partnership with other actors can mobilize more funds, but this should not be its only goal. If other actors are asked to financially contribute to the education for all offering but without giving them the right to participate in the decision-making process during the policy conception process, and if they later notice the lack of improvement in the quality of education, they quickly withdraw (UNICEF, 1999; Weva and Mbemba, 2003).

26. Following a review of works concerning consultation and participation, Ethier (2002) discussed the different degrees of participation:

- Degree I: information;
- Degree II: consultation;
- Degree III: collegial structure;
- Degree IV: autonomy.

27. *Information* is the most elementary degree of participation to the point where several specialists even refuse to designate it as a genuine phase of participation. Because, the central authority only informs its partners of decisions and the reasons that justify them but they are never consulted in order to exercise their influence during the preparation of the policy or the decision. This is the case in Burundi. Moreover, *consultation* is a form of participation, perhaps not to the extent wished by certain people.

Real consultation takes place before decision-making. In this case the central authority asks for comments, criticisms and suggestions from the actors concerned so that it can consider them in its policy. Even if the final decision belongs to the central power, the partners have a certain power of influence over the policy. In effect, a good consultation takes into account the opinions expressed, the enlightenment contributed so that the policy or reform reflects as best as possible the desire of all the actors, with the reservations and constraints with which the government must come to terms.

28. *The collegial structure* gives the partners the power to really make decisions with the central power. As a result, the state is only a member of the process and is bound by the group's policy or decision. It is perhaps utopian to think that in the framework of improving education for all any attempt at reform should be initiated in a collegial way. Lastly, autonomy means a degree of participation given to the actors so that they themselves can make decisions without the central government being able to intervene in the decision-making process.

29. Likewise, Somoff, Sebatane and Dembele (2001) report that several other African countries have applied the going to scale by expansion strategy by notably carrying out national literacy campaigns that aim at attaining universal primary school attendance. Moreover, literacy campaigns have been successfully organized in this way in Cuba and Nicaragua.

30. Myers (2000) was more critical of this approach, arguing that it was, generally speaking, not very well anchored locally. The author, however, acknowledges that initiatives concerning the fight against AIDS, which are currently being implemented, indicate a renewal of interest in this approach.

3.2.2. Generalization of pilot reforms on a broader scale

31. The second type of generalization discussed by Somoff, Sebatane and Dembele (2001) brings together the pilot reforms carried out on an experimental basis on a limited area before being transposed to a broader scale on the basis of the success recorded. Considering the limited resources that African countries have vis-à-vis a demand for expansion, these authors recommend, initially, to: limit innovation and reform experiments to one school or school district; properly prepare the terrain, carefully plan the continuation of the operations; see to having an adequate financing plan; monitor and evaluate results; modify practices in terms of local realities and preliminary conclusions. It is only when one has a more accurate idea of what works and what doesn't that the pilot experiment can be generalized to other sites. For example, in Mali, convergent pedagogy experimentation was first carried out by means of a pilot project in the schools of the city of Ségou; this pedagogy is gradually being extended to all the country's schools and regions.

32. Pilot reforms have many advantages. They make it possible, among other things, to not waste attention and energies ; to carry out the experiment and evaluate it in a field with reasonable dimensions, to limit risks in the event of failure; to build a model that could be reproduced throughout the country (Somoff, Sebatane and Dembele, 2001). These authors acknowledge that there are very few case studies on pilot experiments in Africa that have been successfully broadened to the point of being transformed into national programs. Uvin and Miller (2001) report on the general paucity of empirical research on this subject and maintain that most of the existing literature is normative and anecdotal.

33. According to Myers (2000), the strategy consisting in transposing an innovation to a larger scale is called *generalization or going to scale by expansion*

(starting small, increasing, gradually, and building on success). It is the most popular strategy in most of the institutions aiming at broadening the scale of implementing an innovation. Referring to Korten (1980), Myers associates this strategy with a three-phase learning process. In this case, the generalization process begins above all with learning effectiveness. In other words, generalization starts with learning to be effective, which makes it possible to decrease needs in input per product unit and, finally, learning to generalize the reform by recognizing the importance of taking into consideration local realities and by adapting the rhythm of the generalization to the existing institutional capacities.

34. According to Bergmann (2002), pilot projects must be avoided: small projects limited in space, and even more so model projects, are not very judicious to the extent that education systems always have a national scope. Improvements limited in space only very rarely influence the entire system. When they are a technical-pedagogic success, they even increase social inequalities since very only very few students get any benefit out of them. Quite often, pilot or model projects are nevertheless necessary in pedagogic innovations. Right from the start, they must be designed with the viewpoint of generalization in the entire education system.

3.2.3. Types of reforms and subject of the generalization

35. The OECD (1995) establishes distinctions between reforms concerning the curriculum, the administrative structure, evaluation and financing. Davies (2001) also proposes four types of reforms, namely, structural reforms, curricular and evaluative reforms affecting the content of the teaching properly speaking and the expected competencies, reforms related to the sharing of power and decision-making in the decentralization movement and the types of supervision and reforms that spread and distribute resources. Davies recognizes that these reform categories must be interrelated. To illustrate his ideas, the author explains as an example that a curriculum reform of a given country whose schools are unevenly supplied in resources will have little effect in terms of equity if this same reform is not accompanied by a reform of the redistribution of resources in such a way as to better support disadvantaged milieus. To really succeed, a reform must be designed with a systemic approach.

36. According to the observations of Bergmann (2000), projects that limit themselves to the technical-pedagogic level and which leave sectorial institutions, budget questions, educational policy and school administration “outside,” are rarely durable. Their results are almost never generalized and very often disappear even in the places where they were initiated during the life-span of the project. The fate of the agriculture courses in Tanzania is one example. Even though the fact that they worked well was recognized, they were not able to be anchored in a long lasting way in the education system. That is why Bergmann comments that there are no partial solutions. Only systemic reform approaches can be a guarantee of success, including when the action is focused almost exclusively on the technical-pedagogic level. In Rwanda, in the improvement of teaching subjects concerning practical life, in the 1980s, the authorities had stressed just their need for equipment. After having observed that this equipment was not used, because of a lack of teacher training, some years later, they finally agreed to training for the teachers as a complementary measure

37. The systemic approach in the generalization of reforms depends on the very nature of the learning process both in and outside school. Learning takes place in the framework of a process organized by the teaching personnel. This process uses different production factors: knowledge and the teacher's ability to transmit this knowledge, the information contained in the school material, infrastructural conditions. These factors must be intertwined and can only substitute for each other with difficulty (Bergmann, 2002).

38. Uvin and Miller (2001) recognize that generalization can concern several aspects of the reforms undertaken. It can concern structures, programs (functional expansion), strategies, policies and resources. They note that generalization can be done in various ways. Effective local innovations can be generalized to other sites and the government can attempt to reproduce a promising initiative at other sites. According to the authors, this path is all the more favored by the states and NGOs in that it permits a pilot project to be tested and a community-based activity to be combined with rapid expansion. The structure in charge of managing the initiative does not need to wait for strong community organizations to be put in place at all the planned intervention sites. The states and other organizations can use incentives and rewards to stimulate the expansion process and support promising initiatives that are planned to be gradually extended. Unfortunately, according to the observations of Samoff, Sebatane and Dembele (2001):

Many innovative educational programs and projects implemented in Africa were presented as success stories. The relevant cases were listed and documented, for example, in the framework of the Cooperative Action Strategies in Basic Education in Africa (CASE AFRICA) project implemented by UNESCO. In 1999, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa asked the African countries to present national reports and studies in the framework of its propostive[sic]/evaluation of education in Africa study, which stressed innovations in access, quality and strengthening of capacities. One would expect that most of these successes would have been applied on a large scale. But the reading of these reports indicates that this was not at all the case. Moreover, certain of the reports mention that generalization of reforms is planned, others that it is not.

3.2.4. Reform proposed from the top or the bottom

39. It is important to ask what the mechanisms appropriated in light of implementing an educational reform are in order to increase its chances of generalization and sustainability. In this respect, the remarks of Elmore (1980) shed useful light on the subject: taking into account the individual and organizational choices that are at the center of the problem at the origin of the reform as well as the rules, procedures and structures connected to these choices in addition to the tools available that exercise an influence on the achievement of the reform's objectives.

40. A reform that is inspired by orientations proposed by the base, i.e., that considers the desire of the users, implies a decentralization of power. It is a question here of a direct challenge raised to the bureaucracy (Davies, 2001). This approach also requires that the rights and responsibilities of each individual or organization be clearly established. In this perspective, national policies must demonstrate the necessary flexibility to leave schools and local communities enough margin for maneuvering so that

they can define their educational focuses on their own bases (BIT, 2000). Let us mention, as an example, the objective aiming at encouraging school attendance for boys as well as girls. The dynamic induced by this choice asks the higher authorities to implement the means required to support it such as adapted teacher training, cooperation between schools, training and information workshops for parents, etc.

41. Certain education specialists recommend conceptualizing initiatives on a local basis before implementing them. This was the case, for example, of the conclusions drawn from a basic education program that was applied at the University of Natal, in South Africa. This program was focused on training trainers and creating didactic materials for teaching English as a second language (Lyster, 1991).

42. On the other hand, a reform proposed by the top coming from authorities at the summit may not be the reflection of the realities experienced by users in the field (Davies, 2001). For this reason, the state may very well reform structures, curriculum, learning evaluation policy and determine the implementation levels in a movement from the top to the bottom. It may even consult those interested in this subject, but the subject remains defined by the central powers (BIT, 2000). According to Davies (2001), by analogy, a reform from the top is similar to a volume sale in the field while a reform coming from the base is, by definition, open and evolutive. In the first case, the reform is national and corrections in the course can be random or limited to simple patchwork, but can also, in certain cases, improve the situation, as seems to be the case, at least in part, in Botswana. In this countries, the authorities are going ahead with a basic educational reform. The determination to eliminate inequalities created by the existence of two parallel education systems – one for the rich and one for the deprived – was expressed by better financing for the latter and better distribution of teachers and students in the field. This was carried out with some success (Marope, 1996).

43. The most spectacular failure reported by Bergmann (2002) in the framework of an innovation financed by the German Voluntary Overseas Service was the ruralization of education in Burkina Faso in the 1970s. The parents rejected a school program concept, that was however, thoroughly thought through, because this variation of basic education led, according to them, to a dead end – there was no relationship to the formal system, no link, no equivalency exam. The relevance of the teaching programs was not considered adequate by the parents.

44. In its work relating to new education policies, the OECD (1995) identifies two major trends that go hand in hand with the quality and relevance of the training offered. It concerns the education authorities in the dual perspective of decentralization/centralization and the autonomy of schools. This is expressed by a frame of reference that stresses: a strengthening of the voice of users; competition and the free choice of schools; the transfer of responsibilities to the school; performance reporting policies. In this way, the following changes take place:

- from bureaucratic control and procedures to the choices of end objectives and performance targets;
- from rigid means of control to their loosening, a process accompanied by support of the interested parties and the institution of mechanisms favoring performance recording;
- from a dismantling of large bureaucratic structures to quasi-autonomous agencies.

45. In the second case, the reform is based on pilot projects evaluated and applied at a larger scale with time if the results are promising, as was the case in Colombia with the new school programs. Moreover, it can happen that the states plan development during the pilot project period without however sufficiently taking into account the evaluation of these projects. it may be a question, in these cases, of a

truncated decentralization and one that is primarily coordinated, in reality, from the top of the pyramid (Davies 2001). In the framework of the emergence of the primary education steering initiative through specifications, Senegal adopted, in 1996, a law on decentralization that endows the region, the commune and the rural community with a legal status and financial autonomy. On this basis, they freely administer and through the intermediary of councils elected by universal suffrage the various powers transferred to them. Intended to create better proximity management, thanks to the transfer of power and resources, decentralization has created a new steering framework that has increased the responsibilities of the education actors at the base (Sow, 2001).

3.2.5. Influence of commercial reasoning on the generalization and sustainability of reforms

46. According to Davies (2001), emerging countries are often the target of structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that encourage them to cut in public spending what affects the generalization of educational innovations. The expected achievement, however, lies within a framework marked by cultural differences and inequalities. Inequalities between urban centers and rural milieus, between ethnic, tribal and religious groups, between men and women, between languages used. These questions are part of the problem of social justice, but are also sources of tensions and political instability.

47. Apart from the fact that they are interested in the quality of education and the relevance of training, educational reforms in these countries are at the same time focused on the search for financing (in a dynamic through which the transfer of responsibilities from the public to the private sector takes place and in which the rules of the market prevail) and a certain balance between this objective and the many inequalities of these societies.

48. This spirit of commerce, which now extends to all activity sectors, is the subject of several analyses (Bines, 1995). According to this author, the strengthening of the power of parents as consumers of educational services will go far in reducing the inequalities that are developed through a market approach in the field of education.

49. In South Africa, for example, the fight against inequalities must at the same time take into account the culture differences that shape this country. And the determination to guarantee access to everyone to training does not however do away with a certain number of obstacles, as Francine de Clerq (1997) points out:

- the evaluation criteria knowledge and social learnings turn out to be difficult to determine;
- teaching and learning styles remain unchanged;
- teachers are not part of the decision-making process in curriculum reform;
- the selective function of education is not challenged (cultural capital and academic success);
- unless resources are better redistributed, the formal equality of qualifications will exercise little influence on the equality of access to institutional roles.

50. Along with the fact that free education is not feasible in the short term in this country, it is to be anticipated that because of the costs of access to education, Blacks will continue to be the subject of discrimination vis-à-vis whites. With the reform underway, the powers granted to local authorities will make it possible, in fact, to determine the course enrollment fees and to select the students, which, as Tikly (1997) has written, will in all likelihood favor whites. In this way, exclusion endures. Other questions may be

raised, notably concerning respecting cultural differences. Although ideologically democratic on the discursive level, Davies (2001) wonders if the free choice of South African schools to pick the language of instruction and to grant recognition to one religion rather than another risks bringing about unequal access to higher education and work and consequently maintaining social tensions.

51. Poland offers another example of the generalization of educational reform following a change in the political system. The consequences of going from communism to capitalism had visible repercussions in the field of education. This was how, through legislation, schools were authorized, in 1992, to open their own bank accounts, to function, in a certain way, like businesses and this, with a view to compensating for the lack of funds coming from the state. These schools began to rent their premises, to rent out buildings to movie companies, to paint and repair cars. Some of them set up innovative special classes whose access, due to the high cost of enrollment, was reserved for a minority that could afford it. At the same time, it was moreover observed that the inequalities of income and access to health care rose dramatically, that teachers' salaries were reduced while private schools grew like weeds (Vulliamy and Webb, 1996).

3.2.6. Challenges and constraints connected to the implementation of reforms in Africa

Challenges

52. According to the African Development Bank (1999), in most of Africa, the generalization and sustainability of reforms in education takes place in a difficult context marked by poverty, low productivity, high demographic growth rates, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and continuous armed conflicts. Armed conflicts and economic of dept pressures and structural adjustment policies have taken a heavy toll on education. The region has over 30 countries that are heavily indebted, and the governments spend as much on debt servicing as for health and education activities combined. Costs constitute one of the main obstacles to attempts at generalizing innovative initiatives in Africa. An empirical study carried out by Cobbe (1995) dealt with this question in the framework of the interactive educational program implemented in South Africa and called "English in Action." The author examined the various factors that went into the framework of putting such a program into operation and notably the cost of generalizing it and concluded that cost expectations influence economic and political factors.

53. Internal challenges must be added to these external challenges to education systems. Overcrowded classrooms, mediocre teacher training (Lockheed and Komenan, 1989), rundown buildings and the lack of pedagogic materials in a certain number of countries are just so many factors that lower improvement in the quality of education (UNICEF, 1999). Moreover, in the last few years, the combined effects of the challenges of globalization and the intensification of international competition that results as well as the growing predominance of science and technology have raised major new challenges that Africa will have to meet if it wishes to emerge as a full-fledged partner in the world arena of the twenty-first century (BAD, 1999).

Constraints

54. Specialists (Sangaré, 2000; BAD, 1999; UNICEF, 1999; BREDA, 1995) on education in Africa identify four main constraints connected to the generalization and sustainability of reforms: limited and unequal access to basic education, the poor quality of education systems, inadequate management and planning abilities and poor financing mechanisms. As for limited and unequal access to basic education, it is estimated that over 50 million primary school-age children do not go to school for many reasons. In

several countries, enrollments in rural primary schools are clearly behind compared to urban areas. As for the situation of girls, in 1960, there were nearly twice as many boys as girls in African primary schools. The gap has clearly been filled as the rate of school attendance of girls in primary school has now reached 57% and that of boys 61%. Although, according to these positive indications, progress has been recorded that, although slow, is going in the right direction, disparities between boys and girls still persist (UNICEF, 1999; Floro and Wolf, 1990). Moreover, there are major differences between the urban and rural milieus, between regions, social, racial, ethnic and religious groups. One third of all children enrolled in primary school drop out before the fifth grade.

55. Concerning the poor quality of education systems, the indicators of academic results for Africa in general are among the worst in the world. For example, according to the analyses of UNESCO (1999) and UNICEF (1999), one third of all children in sub-Saharan Africa having started school drop out before the fifth grade. This poor quality of education is attributable to the following main factors: study programs that are often not tailored to the needs of the students and whose implementation leaves something to be desired, the shortage of motivated and qualified teachers and the lack of appropriate pedagogic materials and books (ADEA, 1995).

56. Inadequate management and planning abilities also constitute constraints to the generalization and sustainability of educational innovations. In fact, in most cases, the design of reforms and policies linked to their introduction are often excessively centralized, and therefore are not in a position to properly meet local needs. As the BAD experts (1999) point out, the fact that information is not systematically collected and analyzed hinders the process of effectively designing and programming reforms and innovations.

57. Lastly, as for financing mechanisms that leave something to be desired, African education systems are criticized for tending to overly rely on too rare governmental resources and for not being concerned enough with mobilizing funds from other sources. This state of affairs is exacerbated by the very heavy debt that most African countries must service. The problem in all this is that scarce resources are not used judiciously (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). In fact, a considerable part of these resources is earmarked for higher education and the majority of public funds for the education sector is basically used to cover recurrent charges like teachers' salaries as opposed to spending related to improving various pedagogic services (FAD, 1997).

3.3. Generalization of reforms in five countries: synthesis of case studies

58. The generalization and sustainability of educational reforms and innovations is one of the innovative strategies that several Africa countries are using to ensure the quality of basic education for all as the examples taken from Latin America and Asia attempt to demonstrate. The results of the case studies presented below make it possible to see the experience acquired in this sector in five countries: Benin, Mali, Burundi, Mauritania and Uganda. These five national case studies are as rich as they are varied. Our presentation of them is very synthetic and attempts to present the summary of a very rich body of information given by the countries and the working teams. Our synthesis is therefore to a certain degree very selective because it shows a preference for the aspects of the innovations on which the countries provide sufficient data on the generalization and sustainability of the reforms undertaken.

3.3.1. Case study of Benin¹

59. In Benin, after the adoption by the government, in 1991, of the education policy framework paper, which spells out the major sectorial orientations to face up to the dysfunctioning and lack of performance of the system, the country committed itself to a vase reform program of the education system. Its execution on the primary school level effectively began in 1992-1993 and is continuing. As primary education is the basis of the system, it was declared a priority, its mission was recognized as that of ensuring compulsory school attendance, gradually becoming free for all school-age children.

60. The specific objectives that result from it consist in : i) improving the quality of the primary education system through the strengthening and improvement of systems and contributions (quality of the system) ; ii) increasing the chances of access to primary education of fundamental quality (equity) ; iii) instituting a durable and financially viable primary education system; iv) instituting an effective and efficient planning and management system that encourages real participation from the public in primary education.

61. All the programmed actions implemented in the framework of this reform should in theory work toward improving the quality of education. Benin acknowledges however that this quality could only be appraised starting with the expansion of innovations on the classroom, school and school environment levels. This is how the government sees to it that the focal point of the primary educational reform in Benin, the School, is definitely its greatest beneficiary. It is the *raison d'être* of the "School of Fundamental Quality" (SFQ) action plan whose objective is to create an indicator system: the SFQ standards, defining the minimum welcome and supervision conditions, which best guarantee or contribute to the quality of education.

62. To ensure its generalization and sustainability, the government used what Myers (2000) calls the strategy of going to scale by expansion. Starting with the First Definition of the School of Fundamental Quality (FD/SFQ), the government undertook an information and awareness program throughout the entire country to have the objectives and the intervention areas of the SFQ known in order to encourage and obtain the support and contribution of the various actors, users, school partners and development associations. The main targets of this information and awareness campaign were:

- the officials in charge of the program, the directors and members of the cabinet of the Ministry of National Education;
- the officials of the cabinet of the president of the Republic, the other state ministries and institutions;
- the development partners, bilateral and multilateral agencies, national and international NGOs;
- the community : parents associations, private school promoters, the clergy, development associations and education unions;
- communication professionals and the general public.

63. It may be observed that the SFQ brochure that was used as a campaign support was translated into the main national languages so that all the categories of actors concerned had access to the information on this reform. Furthermore, the SFQ program

¹ This information comes from the case study of Benin concerning *Learning conditions for a quality education in Benin: the application of SFQ standards*. Carried out by the national team under the coordination of Honoré Dewanou (national coordinator) and Prof. Kabule W. Weva (theme coordinator), in the framework of the Biennial 2003 organized by the ADEA..

was presented at several regional and international meetings on education. After this consultation work, the government took stock of the situation.

64. The SFQ strategy favors a repeated and gradual approach for the definition of standards as well as the implementation of actions.

65. The principle on which the program is based was the decentralization of the implementation of activities. A national central team was set up and SFQ monitoring and evaluation committees were formed in all the Departmental Divisions of Primary and Secondary Education (DDEPS) as well as in the school districts run by primary school inspectors. Once the FD/SFQ was adopted, an information and awareness program was created and executed.

66. The standards of the School of Fundamental Quality, designed and developed both as an operational vision and a planning tool of the implementation of the reform of the education system in general and primary education in particular were used to set not only the learning conditions necessary for a quality education in Benin but also the conditions with a few to orienting the interventions of the main actors in the Benin school.

67. The gradual implementation of these standards ended in tangible results permitting to a certain extent the welcome and supervision conditions of the students to be improved. This was made possible by a convergence of factors such as the sociopolitical and national economic context undergoing great change, the motivation and availability of national government officials, the availability of development partners to help in the form of budget support, the improvement in the framework of educational policies and strategies, the institutional framework and the school environment.

68. Five groups of standards were selected to ensure the SFQ: i) qualification of the teaching personnel; ii) pedagogic material; iii) school environment; iv) equipment and furnishings then, v) processes. The data available indicates the following results between 1996 and 2001:

- Relating to the qualification of teaching personnel, the situation worsened between 1996 and 2001. The training needs for acquiring a basic professional qualification (CEAP) went from 1,192 teachers to 6,446, reducing the percentage of schools all of whose personnel have the CEAP from 68% to 23%.
- As for pedagogic material, the situation is qualified. The context and the group of actions carried out, however, particularly for the period between 1998 and 2001, allows us to conclude that that this input or more exactly the availability of pedagogic material in the schools has improved. This has been particularly verified for the CI and CP classes for which generalization of the NPEs has begun.
- For the school environment, most of the standards are about or over 50%. There has been an improvement compared to the situation in 1996.
- Equipment and furnishing is the input for which relative improvement is the highest, globally having gone from 7 to 30%. This reflects the actions carried out in this area.
- Lastly, for all of the processes, it can be retained that i) the activities of the Pedagogic Stimulation Network have slightly improved but remain at a level that is still very low; ii) better participation of the parents associations in school management has been found; iii) the number of students per class has not always been complied with. In over half the schools (58%) the average number is over 50 students per class.

69. The results obtained for internal achievement globally show a tendency toward improvement. The levels reached, however, in absolute value are still rather low

and correspond to a very low level of quality of the school. The quantitative development of the school has not been supported by a notable qualitative development.

70. Benin is making sustained efforts to succeed in instituting a system of standards for a School of Fundamental Quality (SFQ). However, to do so, the government must face up to several obstacles, including the following:

- A persistent shortage of qualified teachers linked to the growing demand in education, the management of available human resources and the training and recruitment policy. In fact, in 20% of the schools, there are classes without any teachers. The shortfall is evaluated at 1.066 teachers for the school year 2000-2001. Moreover, the personnel on the job are not always qualified for the teaching profession: 40% of all teachers present in the classrooms do not have the basic professional qualification. To this situation must be added the dysfunctioning of the Pedagogic Stimulation Network, which is responsible for ensuring ongoing teacher training and the lack of a large-capacity structure able to handle training primary school teachers.
- A low capacity for welcoming students at the primary education level linked to the lack of infrastructures, teachers and furniture. This is illustrated by the number of students per class. Nearly half of the schools (48%) have over 50 students on average per class. This does not comply with the SFQ standard, which recommends a class of fewer than or equal to 50 students. Over a quarter of the students (28%) have no place to sit. All these factors reflect an education offering that is still weak.
- A lack of textbooks in the four (4) last years of primary school. Only one third of the schools in Benin meet the SFQ standards concerning pedagogic material. This observed weakness in all the administrative departments could be explained by the fact that the implementation of new study programs had not yet reached the last four years of primary school in 2001, in contrast to the first two years, which are already in the implementation phase.
- A certain geographic inequity with strong communal disparities due to a lack of coherence in the input distribution policy, which should contribute to the quality of education and to sociocultural factors. Concerning regional disparities, they are considerable on the level of the educational offering and the training and supervision of primary school teachers. The teacher training and supervision policy is also questioned here. Disparity is not absent from gender as much vis-à-vis access as internal achievement. It will be necessary not only to have more girls enrolled in school but also to keep them there.

3.3.2. Case study of Mali²

71. The development of education appears today as a preoccupation of the Mali government. In point of fact, the Mali education system is characterized by a relatively low school attendance rate (around 50%) and a fairly average rate at which children stay in school that is also relatively low compared to other countries in the subregion with a comparable economic level. In the aim of meeting the challenge of quality education for all, the government of Mali committed itself, in 1987, through the Ten-year Development Program of its education system, in a gradual extension of convergent pedagogy to all the schools in the country. Convergent pedagogy is an active language teaching method,

² The data on Mali comes from the final report of the case study on *Convergent pedagogy (CP) as an improvement factor in the quality of basic education in Mali: analysis of the development of education and perspectives*. Carried out by the national team under the coordination of Dr. Cheik Oumar Fomba (national coordinator) and Prof. Kabule W. Weva (theme coordinator) in the framework of the Biennial 2003 organized by the ADEA.

based on the appropriation of the child's mother tongue, a process that should lead in its turn to the acquisition of a second language (French).

72. Convergent pedagogy experimentation benefited from dialogues between the various actors. It was backed by political determination and awareness on the part of the actors and partners. It required the mobilization and involvement of the different actors (school administration authorities, teachers, teachers unions, parents, etc.) through dialogues and awareness and training sessions. This made it possible to identify the problems, define the objectives to be pursued and put them into a hierarchy during the experimentation of the pedagogic innovation. After these meetings and dialogues, a certain number of steps were taken to define the conditions of the experimentation among which were:

- the determination of objectives to be reached by level and of the number of hours assigned to each of the two languages;
- the identification of the material of a convergent pedagogy class;
- the limitation of students to 35 per class;
- the creation and maintenance of a school garden;
- a ban on children redoing a year or being excluded during the first three years of school;
- the diagnostic evaluation of the experimentation at the end of the fifth grade;
- the diagnostic and summative evaluation of the experimentation at the end of the sixth grade, which corresponds to the end of the experimentation;
- thus, after having defined the objectives to be reached and determined the experimentation conditions, two first grade classes started on October 1, 1987 in the city of Ségou. In 1992, there were already a dozen classes applying convergent pedagogy;
- during the experimental phase, the teachers who had convergent pedagogy classes were pedagogically and regularly monitored by the national level and the CIAVE;
- the development of didactic material, the training of teachers on the national level and the evaluation of the acquisitions of learners were turned over to a multidisciplinary team that also took advanced training courses.

73. Convergent pedagogy experimentation that began in 1987 was gradually extended to other schools starting in October 1994. But this could not be done without certain preliminaries being put in place. First, it was necessary to choose the language to be introduced (many areas in Mali are at least bilingual), identify teachers who were native speakers of the languages selected, train them and develop the didactic material in the languages chosen. Let us point out that our languages have been studied by linguists in an unequal manner.

74. Given this situation, the extension of convergent pedagogy to all the languages used in teaching and to all the schools can only be done by stages. A steering committee was set up for this purpose. This committee had the weighty task of choosing, in the multilingual areas characterized by a diversity and a very strong ethnic and cultural intermixing, a language of instruction without offending the sensibilities of the communities. Judicious choices could be made thanks to awareness actions and dialogues with the communities.

75. To determine the linguistic abilities of the teachers and the potential of each language and its localization, the steering committee began, in 1999, throughout the country, a sociolinguistic survey. It concerned all the teachers and principals of primary schools in Fundamental Education. This made it possible, in addition, to determine the

dominant language in multilingual areas. This survey permitted a judicious planning of teacher recruitment and, if needed, their redeployment.

76. The gradual extension of convergent pedagogy was carried out over a period of several years. So, out of the 13 languages that cover the entire territory of Mali, 11 languages that are already used in informal education, and therefore having linguistic units available able to conduct research on these languages, were gradually introduced into formal education with convergent pedagogy as the teaching method.

77. What emerges is that the application of convergent pedagogy constitutes a decisive turning point in the qualitative development of the Mali education system. This preoccupation makes convergent pedagogy the base on which all the reforms in Mali should rely to make education everyone's business. Accounts and results of research have shown the importance of convergent pedagogy on student learning. The students in schools that apply convergent pedagogy have significantly distinguished themselves in math and French compared to their counterparts in traditional schools. It has also been demonstrated that the best cost-effectiveness ratios are found in schools with convergent pedagogy, which is characterized by relatively moderate costs vis-à-vis the benefits that the students get out of it in terms of acquisition.

78. It has also been observed that convergent pedagogy has helped bring the school closer to the population that participates in its development. This participation comes into play on different levels:

- the participation of certain parents in classroom activities through telling stories about the milieu to the children;
- repair activities benefit from the assistance of certain parents who have the children benefit from their experiences in certain activities of the milieu (metalwork, pottery, weaving, etc.);
- certain parents are invited to attend model lessons given in the classrooms. The parents are directly impregnated with what goes on in class. This form of collaboration is of the sort to positively influence the development of the community on several aspects as, for example, the strengthening of sanitary measures and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. These ideas are included in textbooks used in the primary schools. In point of fact, one of the program's priorities is to make the school an awareness center, directed at the community, for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

79. These various observations justify today the obvious interest of the decision-makers in generalizing convergent pedagogy in all the schools in the country. This position-taking indicates that it is urgent to take up the challenge of a quality education in the country. Many actions undertaken in the framework of the Ten-year Education Development Program are underway to increase the effectiveness of teaching given in the schools. These actions could not reach their objectives apart from convergent pedagogy, which makes the student the craftsman of his own training and an actor in development.

80. Mali is making enormous efforts to implement convergent pedagogy. These efforts, however, are handicapped by a certain number of obstacles. The implementation of experimentation presents certain difficulties related to the choice of language of instruction, which often poses problems, especially in multilingual milieus that only have a single school. Moreover, there are frequently not enough teachers for certain languages and their redeployment causes problems. It is not infrequent to see teachers chosen to teach languages that they hardly speak.

81. The adaptation of certain mathematical concepts and symbolism (such as traditional measurement units, currency conversion, the teaching of counting, etc.), whose correspondences could not be formally established in national languages, are just so many

questions that remain unanswered in the framework of convergent pedagogy. The creation and adaptation of these concepts requires that a group of experts be formed that should pursue research on this subject. There are also and especially problems in the illustration, production and distribution of textbooks. They are related to the insufficiency of training for illustrators in modern techniques and the poor organization of the didactic material distribution network.

3.3.3. Case study of Mauritania³

82. Mauritania presents an approach to improvement of the quality of education in a context of reform called “National Development Program of the Educational Sector (PNDSE).” It is a ten-year program covering the 2001-2010 period. In fact, the strategic framework of the fight against poverty constitutes the economic and social development plan of the country for the 2000-2015 period. The reform of the education system, enacted in 1999, finalizes the major orientations in education. The PNDSE reflects, on one hand, one of the priority focuses of the strategic framework of the fight against poverty, and concretizes, on the other, the orientations of the new reform through strategies and action plans that come from the results of the diagnostic analysis of the education system. It sanctions, moreover, moving from the project approach to the sectorial approach, which induces more coherence and continuity in the programming procedure.

83. Mauritania considers this approach more suitable for the educational policy because it offers it the advantage of putting the contributions of the various actors into synergy, creating a unique framework for intervention by the state and its partners in a long-term perspective. By launching the PNDSE during the year 2000, the government sought in this way to meet a major challenge from the viewpoint of the objects pursued over the 2001-2010 period:

- improving the education offering and promoting the system;
- strengthening the quality of teaching and learning;
- rationalizing resource management;
- consolidating the steering of the system at all levels of the administration;
- reducing disparities between genders, regions and areas;
- acquiring training that meets the aspirations of individuals and the needs of society and the economy.

84. In the framework of the setting up of a reform program, Mauritania considers that the “awareness” dimension of the actors takes on an aspect that is more than strategic. Starting from this observation, the preparation of the PNDSE was taken in charge by the technical and political authorities following a national concept and an approach that integrates all the ministerial departments involved and that guarantees the participation of all the actors concerned. The Ministry of National Education used all the available resources to carry out a broad awareness campaign concerning potential financing sources.

85. On the other hand, the development of the CSLP (Strategic Framework of the Fight Against Poverty) had provided the Mauritanian actors and decision-makers with some experience in the joint creation of drafts of development programs for education. Once the observations, analyses and major focuses had been defined, the minister along

³ The data comes from the final report of the case study on *An approach to improvement of the quality of education in the context of reform*. Carried out by the national team under the coordination of Nebfhouha Mint Mohamed Vall (national coordinator) and Prof. Kabule W. Weva (theme coordinator) in the framework of the Biennial 2003 organized by the ADEA.

with the directors concerned at the Ministry of National Education went to the sector's main partners to make them aware of the programs and to get them involved as partners in the development of the PNDSE and to draw their attention to the fact that Mauritania had a rather clear view of the situation and action priorities and that it was ready to undertake a ten-year reflection/action.

86. It should be noted that the sponsors demonstrated a great deal of commitment when the PNDSE was developed and did so through an involvement that lasted throughout the process. So an enormous communication and awareness movement was conducted regarding the sponsors (multilateral sponsors (ADB, IDB, IDA Ireland), UN organizations (UNDP, WFP, UNICEF) and bilateral sponsors (French Voluntary Overseas Service), with the purpose of making sure of their participation in the financing of actions defined in the framework of the PNDSE.

87. The evaluation of achievements after 15 months of execution is presented as follows. As for the improvement in access and equity, the student population, which was 360,677 in 2001, totaled 375,695 in 2002 including 183,220 girls, which corresponds to a participation rate of 48%. Over the same period, the access rate in the first year of fundamental education increased from 98% to 117%, the gross rate of the number of school-age children in school rose from 87% to 88.7% but the rate at which children remain in school dropped. The number of schools with both primary and secondary grades increased in absolute value, going from 537 out of a total of 2,933 to 574 out of a total of 3,204, but the proportion remained stable at around 18%.

88. The objectives concerning classroom construction, request handling and the creation of corresponding cofinancing agreements were generally met: 55 classrooms were completed and 972 others are being finished. In certain moughatas (administrative departments), schools were equipped with fences and latrines. As for the teachers, forecasts in initial training were achieved, thus, the number of ENI (National School for Primary School Teachers) graduates in June 2002 was 561 while 1,300 student teachers are currently in training in these institutions.

89. In regard to teachers, an order from the minister of national education defining the criteria of assigning teaching personnel was adopted in October 2002. Incentive measures for teachers working in disadvantaged areas were decided on and approved during regional awareness seminars on the PNDSE. A first application test had already been carried out for the teachers concerned for the last quarter of the 2001-2002 school year. So distance criteria were defined and applied and a distance compensation set as a result was allocated to teachers assigned to difficult areas. Likewise, the review of compensation for teachers with multigrade classes is underway.

90. The setting up of a professional training system began with the creation of a professional training unit on the level of the DEF (Department of Fundamental Education), the allocation to the ENIs of jurisdiction in terms of professional training and the allocation of budgets for professional training to the wilayas. Teachers of the first and the fourth AF (Fundamental Grade) were trained on the new programs. The strengthening of professional training of ENI trainers, inspectors and school principals has begun.

91. The objectives pursued by the PNDSE entail an improvement in system management abilities. The implementation of the action program decided on for this purpose has permitted a certain number of measures specific to improving administrative and pedagogic management to be carried out. This is how in terms of teacher management, the effectiveness index of the allocation in teaching personnel, which is the coefficient of linear correlation between the number of student and the number of teachers per school went from 81% to 89%.

92. As for the allocation of resources, the resources granted by the government for the financing of the PNDSE were expressed by a significant increase in the sector's budget starting with the setting up of the PNDSE. Within this budget, fundamental education has the greatest share compared to other education sectors. The implementation of the measures cited above made it possible to envisage a positive impact of the PNDSE on the performances of the education system. The data available, however, does not permit a definitive evaluation. The information provided by the school census indicates that the rate at which grades are repeated decreased from 15% in 2000 to 13.3% in 2001 and that the number of students per teacher also dropped from 42 to 39.

93. The policy of giving prizes to girls who had entered competitions was carried out at the end of the 2001-2002 school year and turned out to be motivating to the degree that the top students in each of the options of the competitive admissions exams in the first school year were girls. We can note that on the whole, the forecasts regarding improvement in access and the promotion of equity came to pass, thus creating favorable conditions for a long lasting and equitable development of the offering.

94. Certain major obstacles, however, remain to be dealt with. The disengagement of the teaching profession brought out by all the sectorial studies heavily penalizes the image of the school and endangers the achievements expected the investments. The sectorial capacities in terms of statistical analysis, prospective studies and evaluation are inadequate, at the level of the Ministry of National Education as well as other ministries that provide teaching or training activities.

95. Among the lessons to be learned, we can note the existence of a strong political will that makes up a precious asset in the definition of choices, the mobilization of actors and resources, the in-time validation of technical proposals. The steering committee has succeeded in having itself accompanied by this political will from the beginning to the end of the exercise.

96. A second lesson can be found in the setting up of structures responsible for the development of all the work. It is the role given over to the different committees created for this purpose.

97. A third lesson consists in ensuring the availability and reliability of information on the education system before beginning the programming process and not hesitating to undertake studies or surveys if needed during the exercise to complete the information. A constant flow of information must also be maintained toward all the partners in development throughout the preparation of the program and the experience disseminated in the framework of the EFA and the CSLP must be used to advantage.

98. Concerning the programming properly speaking, a certain number of precautions are necessary. It must be notably seen to that the awareness process accompanies the programming process through the organization of seminars, workshops, field assignments and the use of the media (official and independent press). It should also be remembered that in order to put in place a relevant action strategy, it seems necessary to share with the decision-makers the objective results of the diagnosis and to have each subsectorial strategy validated by the political authorities, so that the resulting establishment of coherent syntheses can be done in the desired timeframes.

99. To do so, what is indicated is to have communication organizations that ascend to the decision-makers and descend to the technical groups to permit the coordination committee to monitor and evaluate the progress of the work at every stage.

3.3.4. Case study of Burundi⁴

100. One of the operational concepts of the reform undertaken in 1973 was the Kirundi approach, i.e., the adoption of Kirundi, the national language, as the teaching vehicle during the six years of primary school. The objective aimed at by this option was to improve academic achievement, support ruralization, restore the Burundi cultural heritage and promote a community school.

101. For the Burundi state, the Kirundi approach was an important option of the reform because it offers an advantage from the psycholinguistic and civic viewpoint. It permits the student to understand its study without any complexes, to take up the study of other subjects in a language he speaks and understands, to learn and deepen the culture it serves as a vehicle for and to preserve it as a sacred heritage. The use of Kirundi in primary education was supposed to give the pupil the possible of escaping his “social isolation” in which the use of French as the language of instruction had confined him. Kirundi, in the framework of ruralization, was also supposed to service as a link between the school and the community, whose effect would be the creation of a community school likely to promote the progress and the “better being” of the entire society.

102. The use of Kirundi represents one the implementation strategies of the educational reform enacted in 1973. According to the data consulted, it seems that there had not been a consultation process with the different groups of actors during its conception by the central government.

103. In Burundi, the strategies put in place first of all consisted of the creation of the Bureau of Regional Education (BER). At its creation, the bureau included, under the authority of its director, a secretariat and four sections, the section of primary school teacher training, that of advanced training for primary school teachers, that of primary school education programs and methods and lastly the production of textbooks and didactic materials. The mission of this structure was to design and develop training programs, to reflect on the conception and production of didactic materials, to monitor, supervise and evaluate training programs such as the training of primary school teachers, school principals and inspectors. The work of the Kirundi unit was to influence the effective startup of the work of the other units in charge of developing, in Kirundi, the pedagogic tools of the other subjects taught in the primary school, namely, arithmetic, study of the milieu, practical farm work, practical home economics, crafts, artistic and musical expression, etc..

104. The impact of Kirundi on the improvement in the quality of education in Burundi is reflected by the following results:

- The students obtain distinctly better results in the tests given in Kirundi (the national language) compared to those given in French.
- The results are good from the first to the fourth grade in primary school (around 70% on average) basically because the students learn in the national language.
- The best results are recorded in the national language.
- In French, which is taught from the first grade to the fourth grade and whose teaching represents almost 30% of total class hours, the students have mediocre grades.
- In arithmetic and in the study of the milieu in the sixth grade, it globally appears that the students succeed better in the tests given in the national language (58.25%) than

⁴ Data coming from the final report of the case study on *The use of national language as the language of instruction. Development and production of student textbooks and teacher files for primary school*. Carried out by the national team under the coordination of Antime Mivuba (national coordinator) and Prof. Kabule W. Weva (theme coordinator), in the framework of the Biennial 2003 organized by the ADEA.

in those given in French even if the latter had been the language of instruction, for the last two years. 55% of the teachers acknowledged that the use of Kirundi had helped reduce illiteracy.

- It may be observed that all the students' textbooks and the teachers' files meet most of the minimum criteria, i.e., those that must be absolutely complied with. They also fulfill most of the upgrading criteria.

105. There are many challenges and obstacles in the Kirundi approach in Burundi when the results of the case study are examined:

- Although two thirds of the parents think that teaching in the national language is necessary, on the other hand nearly 53% are of the opinion that teaching in the national language does not make the acquisition of knowledge easier and 74% believe that teaching in the national language causes a drop in the level of the students whereas the test results prove the opposite.
- Paradoxically, 79% of the teachers find that the Kirundi approach in education constitutes a handicap for academic achievement. Contradictorily, they believe that on the primary school level the lessons given in Kirundi are understood by the great majority of the students.
- 50% of the students seem to be convinced about the effectiveness of learning in the national language but only 20% of all civil servants believe this.
- Contrary to all expectations, the teachers (74.8%) go as far as believing that the use of Kirundi constitutes an obstacle to the proper learning of French.
- On the whole, 69% of the teachers prefer to teach in French.
- 91.6% of the school children admit that the subject contents are easy and comprehensible in the national language but contradictorily they prefer to learn these contents in French.
- The pedagogic tools developed in the national language present a few shortcomings: the textbooks are not in color; bibliographic references are not cited; answers to the exercises are not provided; evaluation proposals are not systematic: they do not present a glossary of technical terms; they do not offer summaries-syntheses; certain textbooks are the vehicle for a certain number of stereotypes that do not show a positive image of girls and women.
- The teachers' files are widely available but it is regrettable that each student does not have his own textbook.

106. Lastly, it clearly appears that neither the parents, nor the inspectors, school principals, teachers and beneficiaries of the reform including schoolchildren have understood the soundness of the reform, which does not facilitate the generalization and sustainability of this reform initiated over 30 years ago. This is explained by the fact that the reform did not follow the principal stages of the setting up of any innovation, which are: the awareness of the main actors, the development of the project, its experimentation and validation, the training of personnel responsible for implementation and lastly its generalization. The reform was conceived in a limited circle and was imposed by the political authority without seeking the support of the population, the parents, the main partners of the education system (inspectors, school principals, teachers) and even the beneficiaries. This explains the hesitation in its implementation and in its accomplishment.

107. The observations that emerge from the analysis of the use of the national language and the development and production of textbooks and teachers' files result in several lessons to be learned.

- Even if the sectorial policy of education in Burundi maintains that the students in primary school must learn in the national language, everything still must be done so that this decision is applied because the use of Kirundi currently goes no further than the fourth grade.
- A general and systematic evaluation of the reform is necessary to permit the teaching-learning process, especially concerning languages, to be regulated.
- The development structures for textbooks in the framework of the Bureau of Rural Education must be supported and consolidated. To do so, pedagogic counselors in charge of developing textbooks must be trained so that they can write textbooks meeting all the minimum criteria and the upgrading criteria for a quality textbook. The Board of Pedagogic Production must be supported to enable it to produce more and better textbooks so that each student has his own. All textbooks must be reviewed with the purpose of removing gender-connected stereotypes.
- The public authority should conduct information and awareness campaigns on the advantages of using the national language as the language of instruction for educational partners (parents, teachers) since it has been verified that teaching in the national language improves the quality of learnings.
- In a study done in the framework of the *UNESCO-UNICEF joint project of ongoing monitoring of academic acquisitions and evaluation of teaching and learning*, it was proved that the real reasons for failures in the primary school are the weakness of initial teacher training, the lack of ongoing training, overcrowded classrooms, the absence or insufficiency of didactic materials, the weakness of the supervision, poor evaluation, the inappropriateness of the programs, unadapted teaching methods, overloaded curricula, etc. The public authority should therefore grant the resources needed to solve all these problems, which are the basis of the failures wrongly attributed to the use of Kirundi.

3.3.5. Case study of Uganda⁵

108. Aware of the deterioration of its school system, the Uganda government launched an ambitious and wide-ranging policy aiming at improving the quality of education for all. This study therefore gives an account of the impact of the Primary Education Reform Programme (PERP). Adopted in 1993, the PERP is pursuing a triple goal: improving access to quality learnings, improving the quality of school management and teaching and strengthening management, planning and implementation capacities. The implementation policy tackles all questions on access, equity, relevance, equality, generalization and strengthening of capacities. The determination to promote this reform is inseparable from the context, the emergence of the country after long years of conflict and political changes that came into play under the new government in 1986.

109. In Uganda, national consultation with all the actors and partners was considered essential right from the beginning of the conception of the reform. This advisory process lasted two years, from 1989 to 1990. It was after the recommendations of this national consultation that the government finally succeeded in drawing up the PERP.

110. The strategies for implementing the PERP encouraged the government to put in place intermediary reforms. As for the strategies relating to the implementation of universal education, the basic element of this policy lies in its holistic nature. In liaison

⁵ Data coming from the final report of the case study on *Impact of Primary Education Reform Programme (PERP) on the Quality of Basic Education in Uganda*. Carried out by the national team under the coordination of Joseph Eilor (national coordinator) and Dr. Kabiru Kinyanzui (theme coordinator), in the framework of the Biennial 2003 organized by the ADEA.

with outside partners, Uganda began, in 1993, to implement reforms and notably: a teacher development and management system to execute the primary school teacher training. program reform, a primary school education program reform, a reform aiming at reviewing exams and introducing evaluation, a teaching materials production unit in charge of proving textbooks and other pedagogic tools, an ongoing evaluation

111. To meet the objectives of the UPE, the government undertook to provide: the tuition for four children per family, teaching materials in the form of textbooks, the basic infrastructures (classrooms, laboratories, libraries and teachers' housing, teachers' salary and training).

112. The proof of this reform's success is obvious: increase in school populations between 1995 and 2002 for girls as much as for boys. Whereas in 1995, the populations were 2,636,409 of which 1,438,986 were boys and 1,197,433 girls, in 2002 the figure was 7,354,153 with 3,721,135 boys and 3,633,018 girls. These populations almost tripled over seven years. The school curriculum was revised, favoring functional literacy and communication skills in the national languages. The schools benefited from a subsidy of 35% for the purchase of additional pedagogic materials. These results are attributable to several factors including increased government spending for education, the improvement of the student/teacher ratio, a heavy demand for education, political stability and economic growth, the trend toward decentralization.

113. As can be observed, Uganda is in the process of making enormous progress in its fight for the generalization and sustainability of its reform in order to improve the quality of its education system. These efforts, however, face considerable obstacles and challenges: poverty, a high rate of individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, limited financial resources, armed conflicts, the inequality of opportunity between the sexes, regional and ethnic disparities, a population explosion due to a high birth rate, the problem of nomadic children.

3.3.6. Other lessons to be learned from these case studies

114. As for the Benin school, the evaluation of the quality of the school makes it possible to conclude that despite the resources made available to this sector in recent years, the level of the quality of education is still very low because of a lack of adequate resources. The evaluation shows: the inefficiency of the education offering (there are still too few teachers and some of the existing teachers are underqualified; the classrooms, textbooks, didactic material, school furnishings are inadequate) (Case study. Benin, 2003).

115. The findings collected on convergent pedagogy in Mali lead us to point out that the extension of the program to all the schools requires other more in-depth investigations on the evaluation of what the students have learned in order to more accurately identify the real problems that confront them. Future evaluations concerning the acquisition level of the students could, for example, extend to other subjects in addition to French and math. Likewise, it would also be equally to follow the students in primary schools a little further in their education (in secondary, for example) to ensure the real effectiveness of the teaching they receive (Case study. Mali, 2003).

116. One of the lessons learned from the case study of Mauritania concerns the direction followed, which is founded on a partner approach that integrates a global vision and permits the paper to prove all the reliability necessary to benefit from the support of all the partners of education. The first favorable sign came from the most difficult milieus in general, the outside sources of financing, which immediately agreed to mobilize the resources necessary for the execution of the five-year program. The Ministry of Finance,

which was also reluctant to appropriate such considerable allocations to the sector, showed, in its turn, an unprecedented availability. A commitment from the Dakar Forum (2000) stipulated that no country that had made a serious commitment to basic education would see its efforts hindered by a lack of resources. This commitment was conclusively verified in the case of Mauritania and its PNDSE (Case study. Mauritania, 2003).

117. The disengagement of the teaching profession brought forward by all the sectorial studies seriously penalizes the image of the school and endangers the achievement expected from the investments. This phenomenon is specifically targeted by the sectorial strategy through the implementation of sustained and multiform actions concerning awareness, training, and the moral and material encouragement of the teachers. Hope lies in the effective execution of this action program in compliance with the planned timeframes.

118. Sectorial capacities in statistical analysis and prospective and evaluation studies are insufficient in all the African countries, on the level of the ministries of education as well as the other ministries that provide teaching or training activities. This situation can negatively influence the harmonious application of the reform.

119. The implementation of any reform requires an awareness campaign in regard to all the partners of the education system to dialogue on the foundations of the reform with a view to seeking comprehension, support and commitment for the action. Moreover, before the reform is generalized, broadened experimentation must be carried out to measure if this reform will really bring about an improvement in the quality of learnings. Unfortunately, in the case of Burundi, the introduction of the use of Kirundi did not benefit from this consultation and communication campaign directed at the various parties concerned, which resulted in the fact that after a little more than 30 years after its introduction, this reform is still meeting resistance from parents and teachers (Case study. Burundi, 2003).

120. The case study of Uganda has made it possible to learn the following lessons: a realistic vision and plan, strengthened by a broad consultation and involvement from all the actors at every stage of the decision-making process are indispensable (Case study. Uganda, 2003):

- The appropriation of the reform by all the actors is a critical element in the success of the implementation of this reform;
- The political determination and commitment of the political authorities to bring everything into play is also an important element in the implementation of any reform initiative;
- The support and involvement of the community contribute to the sustainability of the innovation and for better effectiveness, the administration and management of the education system must be as close as possible to the schools;
- Good governance and transparency are vital elements.

4. STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES TO BE RETAINED FOR THE SUCCESSFUL GENERALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF REFORMS IN AFRICA

4.1. Priorities

121. In reality, no educational reform can be meaningful if its generalization and sustainability is not ensured (Kone et al, 2003; Davies, 2001; Samoff and N'Dri, 1996). Each of the synthesized case studies provides several elements of information. Naturally, several of these elements are connected to the specific context of each country. Through each of these experiences, however, we can conclude that African countries are in the process of doing their best to improve the quality of their education systems. Nonetheless, a great deal remains to be done, and effective implementation, as much on the national level as on the departmental and local levels, will make it possible to continue to program and carry out ever more relevant actions with a view to gradually solving the problems of the quality of education and equitable access to schools and the quality of the services offered.

122. The reasons brought up most often by all the countries to justify the generalization of reforms are the improvement in the quality of education, equitable access, etc. Unfortunately, we have observed that, in general, there is a certain absence of a global vision in the conception of certain reforms implemented. The absence of a global vision is also found in the isolated nature of the reforms. In most cases, the solutions advocated to solve the crises are nonetheless still partial and isolated. For example, in most cases, the adoption of the national languages as the languages of instruction does not seem to take into account the use of these languages in other sectors of the country's life. The strategies often recommended at the conception of these reforms are not often taken into consideration, or are only partially so, when the project is executed. National languages are only used as the languages of instruction during the first few years of schooling. Unfortunately, the use of these languages does not go further than the first years of basic education. In point of fact, as Bergmann (2002) has remarked, reforms that are limited to just the technical-pedagogic level are rarely long lasting.

123. Another fact that seems to reveal the absence of a global vision in the reforms implemented consists in not apparently having taken into account their possible implications from the viewpoint of financial, material and human resources (Simmons, 1978). It is well-known that all these reforms are expensive and require, to apply them, qualified personnel. Despite the fact that everyone agrees that the success of any reform lies in the production of qualified teachers, on the other hand people say that in all the countries, the question of teaching personnel considered qualified constitutes a problem to which a great deal of attention still must be paid.

124. Lastly, the isolated nature of these reforms vis-à-vis the development of all their societies that they are called on to serve must be pointed out. It is true that the inability to integrate the reforms into socioeconomic development is the greatest obstacle that undertakings of this kind come up against in Africa (Isango, 1982, 1978). This depends, however, on the development model to which each country aspires or for which it has opted. In fact, more success has been recorded in the process of adapting education to the demands of development, in the pays where the reduction of poverty is the government's priority objective. To have an educational reform succeed, it must therefore

be preceded by real political and economic reforms that place the interest of the people in the heart of their preoccupations. Without this, people will settle for custom-made reforms that will only perpetuate the status quo favorable to the dominant class.

125. Let us also point out the haste that characterizes the application of certain of these reforms and that compromises their chances of success, as is the case of the reform concerning the use of Kirundi in Burundi (for which the authorities had not taken the time to make the users aware of the advantages of the local language as the language of instruction before introducing it into teaching). The question may be asked about whether the time devoted to their development is adequate for producing a sufficiently thought-out reform, taking into consideration the importance of the stakes. In fact, whatever the circumstances of time and place, certain conditions (equipment, teacher qualification, etc.) must necessarily be brought together and must reach a certain threshold if people expect to hoist education to an acceptable level. That is why Samoff, Sebatane and Dembele (2001) asked the African states to not rush the generalization of educational reforms:

When comparing the generalization strategies of reforms, it is important to avoid formulating definitive conclusions based on experiments carried out over the short term. Educational initiatives and reforms can take years to produce results that can be considered reliable and measurable.

126. We have also noticed a widespread absence of a conceptual framework relative to the development of reforms implemented in most of the African countries (with the exception of Mauritania and Benin). This failure at the conceptual framework level means that certain important variables usually required to implement a successful reform in the search for a basic education of quality for all have been neglected or overlooked.

127. Let us note that the education of girls currently constitutes one of the priorities in the reforms implemented in Africa. Nonetheless, there are very few countries that have defined concrete and specific policies permitting the various actors to be guided in their efforts to manage the differences between the sexes. For example, among the five countries studied, only Uganda seems to us to show a firm determination in introducing an innovative and original policy in this area, by introducing compulsory but free schooling accompanied by a complementary policy forcing each family to send four children, two of whom are girls, to school.

128. In general, several reforms in Africa were designed without any conceptual framework, without precise indicators of their performance and without any attempt at experimentation. Without determine what one wants to change, why one wants to change it and what to do in order to make it change, it is hard in the end to comprehend the successes and failures of these innovations that were put in place. This failure often has a tendency to negatively affect the generalization and sustainability of reforms. In their critical review of the support given to reforms in education, Healey and DeStefano (1997) maintain that most of the reform initiatives in education are, in one way or another, demonstration models or pilot projects. They mention that one can find almost everywhere, pockets of good educational practices and suggest that “good educational practices have nothing esoteric about them.” According to these researchers, creative teachers, parents who take initiatives and who have a political influence; nonconformist school principals who take risks and communities open to change can constitute effective innovation factors in the area of education.

129. The case studies analyzed here show that all the reforms initiated in these five countries have, to a certain extent, benefited from a conceptual framework and

performance indicators. Convergent pedagogy in Mali even benefited from an attempt at experimentation in a few schools before being applied to the entire country.

130. The data presented above also leads us to confirm the conclusions of certain specialists in this sector. In fact, in Africa, the implementation of reforms on the level of the school comes up against the same obstacles as economic and social progress. Most of the primary schools suffer from a very poor infrastructure: dilapidated or unfinished buildings, poorly equipped offices, a lack of pedagogic material, poorly trained or indifferent personnel, overcrowded classrooms. Taking into account the internal environment of the school, the African governments must aim at correcting certain shortcomings by providing the material and financial as well as human resources required to be able to innovate the teaching and learning process if they wish to guarantee academic success. According to Healy and DeStefano (1997):

If the specialists in educational reform knew how to create good schools, the problem of generalizing reforms in education would not exist.... There are simply no miracle formulas....

131. Several analysts agree that the implementation of an educational reform, like education in general, demands a political and social commitment that is greater than any other development activity because it is the most expensive. To guarantee its quality and to give everyone the right to it, it requires competent, highly qualified personnel, capable of pursuing their arduous labor year after year with patience and devotion. There must be good study programs, as well as enough textbooks, chalk and slates for every student. There must be buildings and seating. To fulfill all these requirements, the governments, publics and parents have to decide that to educate a child, other priorities must be sacrificed (Sawyer, 1997).

132. According to the observations made by Mingat (2002), a strong political commitment at the highest level of the state is essential to ensure the implementation of reforms:

The lesson of experience is very clear: a strong public political commitment at the highest level of the state is the essential condition so that policies capable of leading to a significant acceleration in school attendance are effectively decided on and put in place in a long-lasting fashion. ...but it is important to create a context that marks a break vis-à-vis earlier practices, leads to the convergent mobilization of the different actors involved in basic education....

133. Based on the list drawn up by Samoff, Sebatane and Dembele (2001) of our analysis of the five case studies presented above, the factors below can serve the strategies required to successfully generalize and sustain educational reforms in Africa.

4.2. Strategies required to successfully generalize educational reforms

- a) A committed, devoted tenacious leadership, often made up of a charismatic individual whose persistence and obstinacy may constitute an advantage as well as a drawback.
- b) A direct and deep involvement on the part of the local community and other actors playing an important role in the reform.

- c) The local appropriation of specific aspects of the reform; this appropriation is more likely when the factors concerned are developed by the local actors.
- d) The availability of sufficient, even modest, financing but coming from sources that are not only exterior but also local.
- e) The adoption of an approach that considers the pilot project a learning experience, plans adjustments and modifications, pays particular attention over the long term and to the greater implications of the implementation process.
- f) A good evaluation of the feasibility of the implementation.
- g) Supple and repeated planning.
- h) Precise criteria concerning practices and performances, paired with an appropriate and reliable system for monitoring and drawing up reports on the results.
- i) A precise definition of the processes of performance reporting on the results.
- j) The provision of solid basic and ongoing training to all of the program's participants. The most effective training is participatory, focused on the reform and based on earlier experiences. The implementation of reforms without prior training for the users encounters problems.
- k) The availability of funds or subsidies granted on a competitive basis and reserved for the most promising initiatives; the risk here being to discourage those that initiate the projects that have been rejected.
- l) The availability of facilitators, moderators, trainers and other support personnel; processes and institutions permitting this group to be filled in and enlarged. These two factors determine the feasibility and rhythm of the generalization.
- m) The creation of forums bringing together the actors involved to permit them to share their ideas and results with other people involved in similar reforms.
- n) A reform has a chance of taking root and constituting a solid springboard for expansion when it is very selective, focused on a single goal or a single type of service; these being able to be diversified and extended later.
- o) We stress the fact that it is incumbent on the national governments in the first place to ensure education, and in particular basic education for all that is free, compulsory and of quality. All the partners in the education for all movement must work on the coordination of the efforts they accomplish under the direction of national governments in the framework of trans-sectorial strategies on the fight against poverty and the planning of the education sector. Governments are therefore encouraged to forge partnerships as broad as possible to see to it, in particular, that the teachers organizations and other NGOs and the community are fully associated with the development of reforms, their implementation and their monitoring. The full participation of the local communities is just as important to facilitate the generalization and sustainability of innovations.
- p) The absence of a specific national policy and a separate budget for the generalization of reforms leads to incoherence of the actions carried out by the various institutions.
- q) The expansion of desired school reforms is limited by the freeze on recruitment of qualified and competent teachers in the public sector.
- r) Strengthening of decentralization to better take local needs into account.

134. Apart from the strategies mentioned above, Samoff, Sebatane and Dembele (2001) recommend other conditions and factors they consider favorable. These are:

- The ability of the leadership to keep attention focused on implementation and on the conditions necessary for its execution.

- The strong and sustained involvement of local actors in the decision-making and implementation process (notably, the parents); the possibility of carrying out informed deliberations in a democratic manner.
- The existence of shared and intangible values, convictions and principles: (a) being convinced of the value and importance of the reform; (b) being certain that teachers and other professional agents can assume greater responsibilities despite limits due to their educational level and preparation; (c) being persuaded that certain people can assume responsibilities that they have never assumed before or that they seemed incapable of assuming; (d) being determined to pursue the initiative even with insufficient resources; (e) being determined to set up a system of recruitment and incentives based on competencies and performances; (f) deciding to put acquisitions back into play in order to meet the objective of the generalization of the reform; (g) deciding to pursue the process even if the results are not completely satisfactory.
- The clear, explicit, visible and repeated commitment of local and national political officials. This commitment is all the more difficult to obtain as the reforms can be perceived, rightly or wrongly, as threats to established interests.
- Generalization has more chance of success when it is planned from the beginning.
- The effective integration of pilot projects and community initiatives into national programs. Certain commentators stress that successful reforms that have been initiated outside the formal education system have succeeded precisely because of the difficulties they had to overcome.
- The existence of a solid network that links the community to other organizations and constitutes a support framework for the reform and the generalization process. The organization of this network must be based on collaboration, regardless of the diversity of the objectives and the operating modes of the participating organizations.
- The existence of simple information systems, capable of reacting rapidly, with greater relevance than information systems that are complex, fragile and require greater human and financial resources.
- The anticipation of mechanisms that will permit the actors involved to review the progress achieved and to celebrate successes.
- The existence of a stable support structure that goes beyond support of a formal institutional backing and that includes individuals and groups that work on the execution and the strengthening of the viability of the reform process.

5. CONCLUSION

135. Generalization is a process that consists in broadening the field of an innovation to a larger scale to broaden the field of a reform. Two types of generalization of reform efforts can be distinguished: the generalization of initiatives on the national scale right from the beginning, without going through the pilot project stage and the nationwide generalization of reform initiatives carried out on an experimental basis or small initiatives on a limited area. In general, it is recommended that the authorities on the highest level visibly and strongly support the reform envisaged with the help of a national communication and consultation campaign. Generalization can concern several aspects of the reforms undertaken. It can concern structures, programs, strategies, policies and resources.

136. The results of the five case studies selected corroborate the conclusions of several analysts who agree that the generalization of an educational reform, like education in general, requires a greater political and social commitment at the highest level of the state than any other development activity because it is the most expensive. A committed, devoted and tenacious leadership, made up, often, of a charismatic individual whose persistence and obstinacy is an advantage as well as a drawback. In order to ensure generalization and sustainability, any reform initiative requires adequate resources. Governments are therefore encouraged to forge partnerships as broad as possible to see to it that, in particular, teachers organizations and other NGOs and the community are fully associated with the drawing up of reforms, their implementation, their generalization and their monitoring. The full participation of local communities is just as important to facilitate the generalization and sustainability of innovations. The absence of a specific national policy and a separate budget for the generalization of reforms leads to incoherence in the actions carried out by the various institutions. The expansion of desired school reforms is limited by the freeze on recruitment of qualified and competent teachers in the public sector.

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