

## REFLECTION ON THE POST-DIAGNOSTIC PART OF THE PROGRAMME

### QUALITY MANAGEMENT

#### The purpose of the note

Following the diagnostic phase, the quality management support programme is now entering phase 2, with the aim of developing proposals for improving quality management. As a reminder, the central objective of the programme is to support the players in transforming their professional practices, each in their own workplace, to make them more relevant, coherent, coordinated and geared towards achieving better quality in education. How can we move from the results of the diagnosis to these proposals? This question has preoccupied the programme since its inception. Initially, ideas were put forward and even included in the current version of the methodological guide to the programme's approach. Unfortunately, these ideas had not yet been tested in the field. Now that this phase of the programme has made good progress in Niger, the first country to have achieved it, these initial ideas are proving incomplete and need to be reviewed. That is the purpose of this note. It looks back at the post-diagnosis phase, which involves moving on from results and findings to action. It presents an approach based on the experience of this work in Niger. It is therefore an approach that benefits from feedback from the field.

#### The situation

This post-diagnostic phase begins with what the programme calls workstreams. A workstream is a collection of findings that require reflection on interrelated, persistent and resistant issues observed in the field. As such, a workstream contains specific concerns that education policy has sought to resolve without yet succeeding. The first requirement for the programme is therefore to be able to contribute to identifying solutions to these specific problems. In addition, the programme must also pursue its initial objective, which is to encourage stakeholders to reflect on the actions they are taking, with a view to improving their ability to manage quality effectively, as measured by the fundamental management functions. As we have begun to see, this will inevitably involve a change in the working relationships between the Ministry's various entities, each of which will no longer be required to work in silos, but rather in synergy, coordination and coherence with the others.

This post-diagnostic phase therefore has a dual objective: i) to propose concrete responses to the difficulties identified and ii) to improve quality management (transformation of the professional practices of those involved and changes in working relations between Ministry entities).

#### Proposed two-stage approach

To achieve this, in this phase the programme proposes adopting a practical approach that builds solutions with the players as and when experience is gained in the field. For each workstream, this means considering that there are two, closely complementary levels of reflection.

### ***A first level of reflection***

The first level of reflection, which we call *level 1*, aims to design a solution that will help resolve the issues raised in the project. Consequently, at this level, the work of the team in charge of the project will consist of clearly identifying all the objectives targeted by the education policy in relation to this project, as well as the obstacles which mean that the actions already taken by the players are not producing satisfactory results (the results of the diagnosis will be very useful here). In devising the solution, it will then be a question of defining the content of the actions to be taken so that their implementation is capable of resolving the obstacles. This means starting to anticipate the conditions for successful implementation of these activities. However, as we have seen on several occasions in this programme, reflection cannot anticipate everything. Facing reality is always a rich source of learning. And this is what gives the second level of reflection its full meaning.

### ***A second level of reflection***

A second level of reflection, which we call *level 2*, aims to make explicit all the conditions linked both to the role that the players themselves must play (personal/individual level), and to the change in working relationships that must take place between the Ministry's entities (system level) so that the education system is not only able to implement the activities, but also to learn to accommodate the innovative approaches to supporting change brought about by the programme's activities, to the point of establishing them as working routines. In other words, the system will not have to carry out a single, isolated action, but will have to learn to perpetuate the action over time and space. This learning at system level is all the more necessary as the conditions that will be explained are bound to evolve. The players and the system will then have to be able to re-accommodate themselves to the new conditions, while pursuing the objectives assigned to the education system (such as MDG4), which will remain the same in the medium and long term (at least until 2030).

### ***Merging the two levels of reflection in an experiment***

To approach level 2, the programme proposes to experiment with the activities proposed at level 1, in a restricted circle. This will make it possible to continue to improve the nature of the actions proposed at level 1, and to see with the players in the education system involved in the experimentation, everything that needs to change both in their professional practices and in the way the system operates. Better still, it will be more specifically a question of seeing how the central level of the Ministry will react to enable the system to be generalised. In other words, to ensure the creation of favourable conditions for carrying out activities in places with different initial contexts. And that's where the quality of education really comes into play: acting appropriately given the context.

### **What will emerge from the application of this approach?**

Once this two-stage approach has been applied to a site, if there are no particular difficulties, we will have a pair consisting of a solution and the conditions for its implementation. The solution will be the proposed programme for improving quality management, which has the potential to remove the obstacles/issues on the site. The conditions refer to what needs to change in the professional practices of the players and in the transformations (changes in working relationships) that the system needs to make if the solution is to be implemented and achieve its objectives. It is these elements (solution and conditions for success) that will be proposed as recommendations to be taken into account in the Ministry's action plan.

The innovative nature of this approach to transforming the results of a diagnosis into action means that the Ministry will need support to implement it. And this is precisely the purpose of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the programme, which will be to lead and negotiate this support with the Ministry's partners.

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