

# Diagnosis of education quality management practices in Niger

## Executive Summary



This study aimed to assess the level of education quality management within the Nigerien education system. It was based on the capacity to perform four functions considered as fundamental for effective management:

« **Definition of objectives and impetus for action** », concerning the capacity to define clear objectives and targets adapted to school territorial context and to stimulate action;

« **Negotiation of action and allocation of resources** », consisting of enabling a dialogue between the different actors with a view to adapting action to realities in the field and to available resources;

« **Supporting and monitoring action** », concerning the capacity to produce and use reliable information to guide, support and transform actors' practices for effective implementation;

« **Capitalisation, assessment of the effects of action and regulation** », consisting of documenting action, sharing and disseminating the resulting information and using it to adjust and adapt projects and policies accordingly.



### **Function 1 - Definition of objectives and impetus for action**

**A strong capacity for defining objectives and ambitious projects to improve the quality of education, hindered by poor consideration of the differentiated needs of regional territories.**

This is the function the Nigerien education system masters the best. It is reflected in the existence of a large variety of sectoral planning documents comprising several specific objectives directly related to improving the quality of basic education. For central administration actors, these documents constitute frameworks that structure the routine management of actions and programmes under their supervision.

However, the diagnosis reveals that the capacity for defining objectives suffers from a poor knowledge of the often-differentiated levels of quality and needs of the different regions of the country. In fact, although the reforms and actions defined by the central level are relatively well perceived by local actors, the latter consider their implementation to be too standardised. This lack of contextualisation of actions and reforms driven by the central administration weakens the actors' ownership on the ground and limits the impact on improving the quality of learning.

### **Function 2 – Negotiation of action and allocation of resources**

**Central and devolved administration authorities have difficulty in mobilising actors at local level in a coordinated manner for the implementation of policies and actions aimed at improving the quality of education.**

The diagnosis highlights a lack of coordination in the implementation of the objectives and actions in favour of the quality of education. This observation can be explained by several factors, including:

- The strong presence of partners leading to a multiplication of initiatives and actions aimed at improving quality;
- A high degree of verticality in the transmission of ministerial orders and of reforms, which does not always allow for the effective mobilisation of actors in the field for their implementation;
- A poor capacity for making resources available in the field, despite the fact that these resources have been budgeted;
- Inequitable coverage of interventions (often in favour of urban areas and areas with better TFP coverage) concerning pedagogical support and training for example.

In addition, there is a lack of functionality of the management bodies supposed to facilitate the operationalisation of educational policy decisions on the ground. This results in a lack of collaborative workspaces between actors at different levels of the education system for them to agree on the implementation of national decisions according to differentiated territorial needs.

### **Function 3 – Supporting and monitoring action**

**The education system has a variety of tools at its disposal to ensure policy follow-up, but these contribute little to the production of relevant knowledge for strengthening actors in performing their tasks.**

This is the function posing the greatest difficulty to actors in the system. In fact, despite the existence of a wide variety of tools for monitoring policies, projects and actions in favour of the quality of education, their format and their use by the actors do not enable the desired objectives to be met. This observation is illustrated by:

- The tools for monitoring school achievements, which are not always used to produce relevant, precise and reliable information;
- The tools for monitoring in-service teacher training, which essentially provide information on quantitative aspects (number of those trained) and do not provide an assessment of the effectiveness of training.
- The tools for pedagogical support, which are mainly focused on collecting formal information (compliance with the duration and frequency of pedagogical facilitation sessions, compliance with the duration and prescribed curriculum content during pedagogical visits, etc.) instead of information liable to support the regulation of pedagogical support according to the needs, difficulties and other realities of actors in the field.

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Another observation concerns the poor capacity of the in-service teacher training system to support the transformation of teaching practices and ultimately strengthen pupils' achievements. This situation can be explained more particularly by the fact that:

- Training on pedagogical innovations is disconnected from teachers' problems and the actual contexts in which they operate;
- Pedagogical tools currently available to support teachers in the conduct of learning are poorly adapted to classroom realities;
- Pedagogical support practices are still strongly centred on controlling teachers' actions, which produces little encouragement and a genuine mistrust between actors, leaving little room for interaction, exchange and optimisation of teachers' professional practices.

#### **Function 4 - Capitalisation, assessment of the effects of action and regulation**

**A system struggling to produce reliable data and encourage dialogue and reflection among actors in order to adjust actions effectively**

This function also poses difficulties in Madagascar's education system, even though there is a strong capacity for documenting certain practices and impacts of actions made, especially through recourse to external expertise. In fact, the Ministry of education has a fairly large number of studies and evaluations at its disposal: some inform on the management of the quality of education, others suggest actions for improving the management of quality. They provide information on local supervision, planning, school projects under contract (PEC), the status of non-civil servant teachers (FRAM teachers), principals, etc. However, the different Ministry of education actors know little about most of these studies, due mainly to high turnover linked to political instability, and their results are not used.

It also appears that the system's capacity to review policies and actions in favour of the improvement of quality, is weakened by a number of structural factors: the existence of strong hierarchical relationships and complacency among the actors, an analysis of data often limited to a work of compilation, or even a simple numerical observation, and inadequate operation of the spaces for dialogue to promote sharing and reflection of actors at all levels on the issues affecting the management of the system.

While Madagascar's education system has a solid sectoral framework, clear objectives, precise indicators and a strong desire to drive action, recurring political instability constitutes a major obstacle to the effective mobilisation of actors to manage the quality of education.

The diagnosis thus reveals that the functions related to « negotiation of action and allocation of resources », « supporting and monitoring action » and « capitalisation, assessment of the effects of action and regulation » pose considerable difficulties. High turnover and the loss of institutional memory that ensues makes it impossible to follow through with the efforts undertaken and for the actors to assimilate the initiatives put in place.

The issues of planning, monitoring-evaluation and capitalisation on the actions undertaken therefore appear to be central to ensuring that the efforts made by the actors, each one at their level, have an impact on improving the quality of the education system.