

Diagnosis of education quality management practices in Senegal

Executive Summary



This study aimed to assess the level of education quality management within Senegal's 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 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 allocating the corresponding resources.

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

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

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Function 1 - Definition of objectives and impetus for action

A strong capacity for defining objectives and strategies, hindered by over-injunctive channels of transmission

This is the function the Senegalese education system masters the best. It is reflected in:

- A wide variety of sectoral and sub-sectoral strategies (LGPS, PAQUET-EF, etc.);
- The existence of a range of documents to drive objectives and actions aimed at improving the quality of basic education and setting target values to be achieved;
- Attempts to set up more inclusive governance, with closer involvement of the trade unions, parents, partners and local authorities;
- A notable effort to adapt sectoral planning to the diverse contexts of the regional education inspectorates.

Nevertheless, the diagnosis reveals that these dynamics are in practice hampered by their implementation channels: these are often vertical, still very injunctive and too uniform to correspond to the realities of the different territories within the country.

Function 2 – Negotiation of action and allocation of resources

Favourable management conditions, but a lack of coordination in the field

The existence of micro planning of objectives, right down to school level in the framework of results-based management (RBM), as well as the existence of numerous spaces for coordination of sectoral policy, are two potentially effective levers to fulfil this management function.

However, despite this positive strategic framework, the central services demonstrate a lack of synergy in the field, which leads to confusion, overlapping of instructions and a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities from the central level to the devolved level. In addition, management remains highly centralised, particularly concerning the allocation of resources, which limits the autonomy of actors and their ownership of the policies and reforms undertaken.

Function 3 – Supporting and monitoring action

A well-equipped function that does not achieve its objectives

Despite the existence of a wide variety of tools for monitoring policies, projects and actions to promote the quality of education (policy contract tools, pedagogical management tools, data collection tools), their use by the actors does not achieve the desired objectives. As such, the support function is the one that poses the greatest difficulties in the system.

It is noted that:

- Tools focus for the most part on quantitative or procedural data that do not contribute to effective support of those in charge of implementing actions;
- Actors do not really take on ownership of the tools as these cannot be adapted to their realities in the field;
- The tools are not integrated into operational monitoring and evaluation processes at each level of the system.

The pedagogical support system's weak capacity to transform teaching practices and strengthen pupils' achievements is also observed. This situation can be explained more particularly by:

- The absence of frameworks for actors to transform their professional practices and postures: spaces for pooling and strengthening practices through peer exchange are not really functional; visits by supervisory bodies are more to do with compliance control than pedagogical support;
- The fact that there are initiatives coming from the actors themselves (for example, informal meetings such as « pedagogical palavers » or « pedagogical partnerships » for sharing practices between teachers to strengthen their classroom practices), but that they are not recognised or valued, and therefore not capitalised on.

Lastly, the support policy for the differentiated needs of schools and pupils in difficulty is also relatively limited.

Even though there is a policy to encourage greater support for pupils experiencing the most difficulty and tools to measure implementation, the reality and effectiveness of this support are not really monitored and evaluated. The tools used correspond to a collection of quantitative data, and the diversity of tutoring formats (informal, paid, during school time, outside of school time, etc.) makes monitoring by education and training inspectors difficult.

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

A system struggling to use its data and feedback in order to adjust its action

This function also poses difficulties within the Senegalese education system. Although the central directorates have demonstrated their capacity to innovate by adjusting sectoral policies based on factual observations, it is not fully integrated into the routine processes of the administration and does not concern all fields and issues. Besides, this observation only applies to the central level since the devolved level - through to school level – does not have the appropriate frameworks to operate and readjust its action.

Moreover, there is a lack of spaces for dialogue to promote sharing and reflection for actors at all levels on the issues and problems impacting the management of the quality of basic education. Formal spaces for exchange do exist (CAP, CODEC, IA and IEF coordination, etc.) but, due to their fairly inaccessible operation (in terms of themes, participation modes or angle of exchange), they are not or are barely used for sharing reflections on the issues and problems impacting quality management.

Yet it is about their missions. Moreover, there are no spaces for genuine reflection around innovative practices by officials in order to capitalise on and enhance them.

Finally, the last observation concerns the low capacity for adjustment and regulation, particularly regarding the use of assessment data to manage school learning. While the system has many school assessment devices at its disposal, generating substantial data on pupils' performances during their school life, only a very small place is granted to the analysis and use of these data in the practices of key actors (teachers, supervisors). The actors' poor perception or understanding of the function of evaluation in the effective management of learning distorts their practice, and so too the general data on which the system relies for adjustment and regulation.

The diagnosis identified four priority areas of work needed to support the Ministry of education in strengthening its capacity to manage quality. These are:

- 1: Strengthening the local pedagogical support system for teachers through more strategic support practices;
- 2: Initiating frameworks for dialogue between the central level and the academic inspectorate for effective operation of reforms and intervention mechanisms;
- 3: Repositioning evaluation to serve the fluidity of pupils' schooling paths;
- 4: Setting up a partnership between the devolved services, the local authorities and the schools to create a school environment favourable to pupils' wellbeing and learning achievements.

While the Senegalese education system benefits from a solid sectoral framework, clear objectives, precise indicators and a strong will to drive action, the logic of vertical implementation and the discrepancy with the practices and needs of actors in the field hinder the effectiveness of quality management.

The diagnosis thus reveals that the functions related to « support and monitoring action » and to « capitalisation, assessment of action and regulation » are those that pose the most difficulties to the Senegalese education system. Continuing to carry out reforms without improving the Ministry's capacity to perform these two functions will not produce more results.

The subject of strategic dialogue between the different actors in the system and that of support for the transformation of professional practices and postures therefore appear central to better management of the quality of education.