



QUALITY EDUCATORS FOR ALL IN MALI

The Quality Educators for All project in Mali is a joint force between Oxfam Novib and Education International on international level and civil society (Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Education for All), Teacher Union (SNEC) and government (Ministry of Education and Literacy) on national level, to improve the education system while focusing on teacher competences because they are important change agents in lives of children and youth. In Mali we have a special focus on community school teachers. Through the Quality Educators for All project contributes to quality public education by assisting public authorities in meeting their responsibility to equip schools with well-trained educators, through the use of various methodologies for teacher training and development. This case looks into details on the project financed by Comic Relief and executed mainly in the Ségou region.

This Case Study was a background briefing for Oxfam Novib's 2013 Annual Review, prepared in partnership with the Coalition des Organisations de la Société Civile pour l'Éducation pour Tous (COSCEPT), and describes the programme in Mali. Although it is not a formal evaluation it does consider lessons learned by both Oxfam Novib and its partner organisations.

These Case Studies are shared in the form in which they were submitted, often written by partners whose first language is not English, and have not been edited since submission. We believe that the meaning is clear enough, and the authenticity of the reporting and the availability of Southern Voices on development makes their inclusion in the Oxfam iLibrary worthwhile for sharing with external readers.

Programme Partner: Coalition des Organisations de la Société Civile pour l'Éducation pour Tous (COSCEPT)

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The Quality ED project (Quality Educators for All project) will increase the numbers of qualified community school teachers, aligned with the competence profile and the government's educational reform. There will be specific attention to qualifying female teachers, ensuring 20% involvement of women in recruitment for training compared to an overall rate of 10% of female teachers in rural areas. The aim of qualifying community teachers is first to have impact on students results and secondly to have them accepted in the public education system to give them to a descent work conditions and a salary.

CONTEXT

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world and its educational indicators are similarly among the poorest. These two facts, poverty and inadequate education, are intimately linked. Similarly, there is a close relationship between the lack of female education and the marked gender discrepancies found across a range of indicators – literacy, mortality, and employment to name just a few. Education is known as an 'enabling right' because without education, other fundamental rights cannot be realized.

Around 60% of education in Mali is provided by the state (public education). The remainder is primarily 'non-formal' provisions funded by communities, external donors or faith-based: community schools (18%), medersas (religious schools, 12%), or private schools (10%). The vast majority of teachers working outside of the public system are not qualified and many are not trained. Across the profession, the average length of training per teacher is five days.

There are many well-known reasons for the poor quality of education in Mali but in the final analysis, there is near universal agreement about the most decisive factor that is undermining educational quality: there are not enough well-trained teachers¹.

After having done some baseline research for Quality Educators for All, and the interesting community school environment, the history on education activities in Mali, Quality Ed decided in 2011 to pilot the project in two countries and one of them was Mali. A pilot in Mali was considered feasible taking into account cooperation among actors, relevance and the availability of partners for ONL and Education International (EI)² to work with. It also reinforced Oxfam International's priority to focus part of its advocacy agenda on education in Mali, (see Oxfam International report of 2009 'Delivering Education for All in Mali'). For this case we look in details on the project financed by Comic Relief and executed mainly in Ségou region.

The main actors on national level are organized in a steering committee: COSC EPT, which is the Association of Civil Society for the Education for All, SNEC which is the National Teacher and Cultural Union in Mali and the ministry of Basic Education and Literacy.

On regional and school level Teacher training institutes, education academies and teachers of community school are the main actors.

Oxfam Novib has direct relations with COSC EPT and the Steering Committee. But only with COSC EPT there is a contractual relation combined with financial support.

METHODOLOGY

The **change** being sought in Mali is formulated in two hypotheses that will be tested during the course of the project. These hypotheses will also orient the monitoring and evaluation system.

In the short term: Introducing a competence framework for teacher education and professional development will create career pathways for community teachers at different stages of their career to become qualified, certified and formalized in public sector employment.

And in the longer term: Strengthening competences of primary school teachers will improve learning outcomes and on-time school completion rates among primary school children.

To come to these changes the project, by 2015:

1. Will integrate innovations from non-formal education i.e. la pédagogie convergente in the in-service teacher training programs.
2. Want to have all community school teachers in Ségou been trained to fulfill the standards set in the competence profile.
3. Wants to achieve that 50% of community school teachers in Ségou have the same legal status as public teachers.
4. And fourthly, would like children in community schools in Ségou show a 20% increase in on-time school completion compared to the benchmark.

Under the four outcomes the following activities were done till the end of December 2013.

1. Will integrate innovations from non-formal education i.e. la pédagogie convergente in the in-service teacher training programs.
 - Alignment of in-service training curriculum at FCM and CAP with CP and other innovations.
 - Develop materials for use in in-service training.
2. Want to have all community school teachers in Ségou been trained to fulfill the standards set in the competence profile.
 - Training of 30 trainers (of which 3 women) to form pool of trainers
 - In-service training of 3000 teachers and 1200 were women.
3. Wants to achieve that 50% of community school teachers in Ségou have the same legal status as public teachers.
 - Advocacy activities during Global Action Week and labour negotiations.
 - Plan for and implement annual communication strategies directed to first circle of government actors with a role to play in formalizing teachers.
 - Mobilization of public support, through radio and TV programs, for community teachers by highlighting their contribution to policy priorities i.e. access to education, quality of education, integration of ECOM schools into public system.
4. And fourthly, would like children in community schools in Ségou show a 20% increase in on-time school completion compared to the benchmark.
 - There is proven that there is too little application of competences by teachers in the classroom.
 - Consistent monitoring of teachers and students in the classroom.
 - There is backstopping of teachers and students where needed, but should be improved in coming year.

Besides the aims and there activities, the collaboration between the ministry of Education, the Teacher Union and Civil Society is a fundamental strength of the project. Because all products developed during the projects are developed together and owned by the government it is easier to build on that during advocacy process of improving the national education system.

Most Significant Change- Participatory Video

To improve the monitoring and also to build the capacities of partners to be better informed and better follow up their activities, the methodology of the Most Significant Change Participatory Video (MSC-PV) was introduced in 2013. The first training of COSC-EPT and teachers took place in March 2014. A first internal evaluation shows that the MSC PV methodology helps discover the gaps in results (and/or framework) by finding new results and/or indicators by the changes that are reported by beneficiaries. For this reason it is expected when participants will continue with this process they will definitely find new/improved results/indicators for the framework and actually have the possibility to create a more effective monitoring instrument for the programme.

Another learning of the first training is simply the improvement in their ability to analyse answers and ask questions, which is the essential skill for any monitoring & evaluation practice. It is probably one of the best methodologies to 'teach' this.

The Participatory videos can be found on <http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Quality-teaching-benefits-generations-to-come.html>, under read more.

Governance of the project

The leadership and management of the Quality-ED project in Mali is shared between ONL and Education International (EI). There is a division of labour worked out between them but even where one agency takes the lead on a given task, the other is always consulted and gives input. Project outputs are brought out under a project banner that consistently includes logos from EI and ONL and any other relevant parties.

There is a Project Leader in place at each organisation. The Project Leader at ONL is responsible for contractual reporting and accounting to donors. There is a team of people within ONL who contribute to this role including financial staff, programme officer and financial staff at ONL's office in Mali and administrative support at headquarters.

RESULTS

The project was monitored after 12 months. The monitoring report has a special focus on the 3 hypotheses to measure the results or impact so far.

The analysis showed that teachers who have attended training as part of the project are more qualified than those who received no training. The quality of training received was measured based on 4 independent variables relating to teaching practices, namely 1) the quality of worksheets 2) the quality of lesson delivery by teachers 3) the quality of educational use of teaching materials by teachers in the classroom 4) the quality of assessments of pupil learning by teachers.

The second hypothesis is about the training organised by the project having an impact on public sector recruitment rates among community school teachers. In other words are teachers that are trained by consequence accepted in the public system? This assumption is not confirmed by the results of the monitoring research which can be explained by two reasons. The first is that the result should be put in perspective since only a minority of teachers in the sample (15/40) received training as part of the project. In future, a monitoring should increase the number of teachers in the study sample who have received training as part of the project with a view to more effective evaluation of the impact of training on qualification and public sector appointment rates. These circumstances may also be explained by the situation in the country, particularly the political situation with a Coup d'Etat and conflict in the north. Aside from educating displaced children, education has not been a government priority.

In view of the above results, we should point out that the third research assumption which states that teachers' attendance of training organised by the project should have an impact on the teaching and learning process, has only been partially confirmed, that is, only in terms of the quality of worksheets and lesson delivery. In terms of the quality of educational use made of teaching materials and the quality of assessments of pupil learning, the third assumption has not been confirmed. Therefore greater emphasis should be placed on teachers' use of teaching materials and assessments of learning in future training modules. Moreover, the observations in the field have shown that teaching materials are in short supply and faulty. In the field, we also noted that most teachers are not proficient in the basic educational principles and methods of the skill-based curricular approach. Similarly, few teachers were able to complete portfolios and few pupils were even able to write their first name and surname on evaluation sheets.

To improve the monitoring of the project and have more evidence based material for monitoring but also for advocacy, there will be Most Significant Change and Participatory Videos. These videos will visualize the change projects makes in participants' lives. The trajectory will end by June 2014 and

results will be viewable on <http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Quality-teaching-benefits-generations-to-come.html>.

LESSONS LEARNED

Successes & failures

The strength of the program is the collaboration between the three actors that resulted in the integration of all developed material in teachers training colleges and institutions and also in the in-service training of teachers. Government in Mali is showing that they have incorporated the competence profile.

Training of teachers based on competences is improving teaching, but the impact on students is too early to measure. It is also important that we take into account the role of in-service training and the supervision role of the decentralised authorities of the ministry of Education. The decentralized authorities have the duty to provide support and training to the in-service teachers, which is too weak on the moment and very crucial. A training of one or two weeks is shown not to be sufficient to practice what you have been told. Experience and support during the period after is very important to make the teacher practice new ways of teaching, mother tongue teaching, using new materials etc.

Advocacy on education policies and budget will be getting more attention in the coming phases of the projects in Mali.

Tips and more

If you want to improve an education system, if you want to institutional change, you have to work hand in hand with the government and from the very start. Do involve them in Steering Committees or in project groups. Teacher Unions do have a lot of experience in lobbying government, do have a lot of curriculum and subjects developed, so they are also interesting to have them on board whenever you want to work on education system, improvement or students improvement in a longer and sustainable manner.

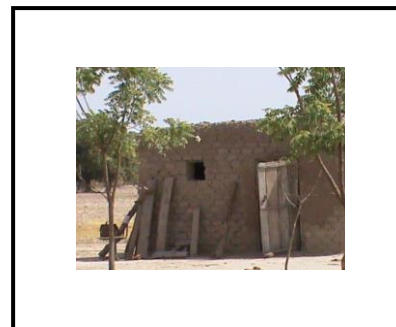
Read on

- The website of Quality Educators for All: <http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Quality-teaching-benefits-generations-to-come.html>
- Watch :
The teacher Union about Quality of Education is inline with the Quality of the Educators (French): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j61elfz4NYE>
The project Officer of Oxfam Novib in Mali about gender and the project (French) : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48qYGyrMoR0>
The Ministry of Education on the project (French) : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVK6tkM8E-4>
The former project Leader at Oxfam Novib level (English) : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XuTTpDWI8M>

HUMAN INTEREST

Story of Mali

Madame Touré Fata Dede, is a teacher at Community School Paridara in Segou region of Mali. She told: "Since my first training of the project Every Child Needs a good teachers, I improved my teaching in mother tongue and now use different pedagogical techniques in my class. These are things that have transformed my classroom practices. And have a positive effect on students. Because of teaching in mother tongue, students quickly and fully understand the lessons."



NOTES

¹ See Pearce, C., Fourmy, S. & Kovach, H. (2009) *Delivering Education for All in Mali*, Oxfam International Research Report and COSC-EPT.

² Education International is the consortium partner of Oxfam Novib in this project.

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