

Burkina Faso

Unity-Progress-Justice

The experience of planning and implementation of Education for All (EFA) in Burkina Faso

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Laurent S. Kabore

Planning and Research Director,
Ministry of Basic Education and
Literacy

INTRODUCTION

Burkina Faso, in the Sahel region of West Africa, is one of the world's poorest countries, with a per capita GNP of \$220 and 45% of the population living below the poverty line.¹ It was in 172nd place on the 175-country UN Human Development Index in 1997. French is the official language but about 60 local languages and dialects are spoken. It had more than 10 million inhabitants in 1996 – 52% of them female and 84.5% living in the countryside. The economy is based on agricultural crops which are at the mercy of the weather.

Gross primary school enrolment in 2000 was about 43% nationally and 36.2% among girls. Gross enrolment in the first year of primary schooling is still low – 34.3% overall and 28.9% for girls. The literacy rate in any language is also low, at barely 27%. As well as gender disparities, the basic educational system also has rural-urban and regional ones. This pattern is seen higher up in the education system.

I. Adoption of a 10-Year Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB)

The 10-Year Plan adopted in 1999 aims to achieve by 2009:

- 70% school enrolment
- 40% literacy

To do this, the Plan has specific targets:

- Increase opportunities for basic education and narrow the gender, regional and socio-economic gaps between pupils.
- Improve the quality, relevance and effectiveness of basic education and develop coherence and integration between the various levels and styles of education.
- Push literacy and new kinds of alternative education to promote development and support the growth of formal basic education.
- Build capacity to lead, manage and assess centralised and decentralised sectoral structures as well as ability to coordinate external assistance.

After some changes, the Plan is now running for 10 years, from 2001/02 to 2010/11, in three phases.

Phase I (2001/02 – 2004/05): Expanding basic education

This will last four years and involve:

- continuing to expand basic education and implementing strategies and action plans to boost efforts to improve quality and effectiveness of formal and non-formal basic education.
- reducing unit costs and controlling recurrent expenditure through community participation.
- improving methods of devising and implementing literacy campaigns.

Phase II (2005 – 2008): Continuing to expand basic education

This phase will continue efforts to expand formal education and develop informal basic education as well as acting on the results of research done in Phase I.

¹ 1998 survey of households.

Phase III (2008/09 – 20010/11): Consolidating efforts to expand the basic education system

This phase will consolidate efforts to expand the basic education system, to improve its quality and relevance and boost management capacities to achieve the goals of 70% school enrolment and 40% literacy by 2010/11.

Adoption of the Plan caused problems. Some teachers' unions reject it because it changes the status of teachers.

Since it was adopted, the Plan has been coherent and also in harmony with other development contexts and approaches.

II. Planning for EFA goals

The six goals of the Dakar Forum link the planning processes with **deadlines, forecasting present and future educational needs, the budgets required and searching for funding**. It is also tied in with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) adopted in July 2000 and aiming to **guarantee access for the poor to basic social sectors. Alleviating Burkina's debt will provide \$700 million (490 million CFA francs) in funding between 2000 and 2007**.

The UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) adopted in 2001 has the same goals as the PRSP. To target its action better, an area of convergence has been designated in eastern Burkina, where human development indicators are poor.

This set of integrated frameworks aims to achieve the EFA goals, which is why the entire process is underpinned by planning activities, taking stock of funding sources, the process of implementation and follow-up assessment of action taken. The holding of a **national conference on education** in 2002 was a highlight in efforts to further discussion about implementation so as to offer access to all as well as providing quality education.

At sub-regional level, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in which Burkina is actively participating, aims to achieve universal primary education by 2015.

Establishing these EFA cooperation structures has come up against the education ministry's limited ability to set up a monitoring system. Capacity-building is therefore the main challenge if data is to be passed on about how successful EFA is.

III. Partnership and consultation within EFA

The national EFA action plan was drawn up in consultation with civil society (parents, trade unions, NGOs and religious and tribal authorities).

More than 140 NGOs operate in Burkina and their many activities touch on the basic education sector.

A conference of ADEA working groups in 2001 considered the progress and problems encountered by EFA in Burkina, showing the involvement of academics and think-tanks not just in supporting the goals of EFA but also coming up with proposals to streamline its implementation.

To recruit the help of the media, the education ministry set up a communication and press department to put out statistics about the national EFA action plan. A paper version of the 10-Year Plan was produced and sent to all technical and financial partners as well as civil society groups to firmly establish EFA in people's minds. In a country where more than 80% are illiterate, it is hard to communicate the Plan to everyone, so radio, TV and the written

press are employed to reach the public in the various local languages. Unfortunately, these channels are not very extensive and access to them is confined to the intellectual elite.

IV. Funding sources

The state budget

The 1998 budget and its Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) included targets on the road to universal school enrolment:

- Increasing the basic education budget from 13.18% of the total in 2000 to 20% in 2009.
- Increasing the education ministry's budget (including external contributions) from 45.56% in 2000 to 137.45% in 2009.
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- Increasing the literacy budget from 1% of the total in 2000 to 7% in 2009.

HIPC funding

The qualification of Burkina Faso for HIPC funding aimed at reducing poverty has enabled designation of 20 provinces (out of a total of 45) as priority areas because of their low gross school enrolment, including for girls, and the allocation of all HIPC funds to these provinces, where classrooms and teacher housing, wells, toilets, and food and supplies for pupils are being provided.

External funding

The challenge of offering education for all has meant priority HIPC funding of basic social sectors such as basic education.

Bringing education for all to Burkina Faso has involved various partners. Firm commitments have been received from the International Development Association (IDA), the Canadian International Development Association (CIDA), the Netherlands and Belgium. Other partners, like Switzerland, are involved (under the HIPC Initiative) in areas such as literacy. To coordinate the aid, a consultation network of technical and financial partners has been set up. A major difficulty is the demands of implementing the EFA Plan.

These partners play a very big role in planning EFA by setting up the means to manage, monitor and assess the country's 10-Year Plan.

Conclusion

The planning and implementation of EFA in Burkina Faso has been made possible by the commitment of countries and partners to provide all its people with fair access to good quality education. The problems are many but there is hope, even if Burkina Faso will not achieve universal schooling by 2010. The recent choice of Burkina as a beneficiary of the **Education for All** programme is a sign of the international community's recognition of the efforts of all those working in the country's educational system.