

Findings

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Good Practice
Infobrief



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Burkina Faso : the Post-primary Education project

In September 1994, the Government of Burkina Faso held a National Convention on post-primary education to analyze the status of this sub-sector and to define a forward-looking strategy. In August 1995, the government initiated a 10-year post-primary education development plan (PDEPP) which focused on the educational system as the key determining factor for human resource development. Following a request from the government, the World Bank agreed to providing a credit of US\$ 36.6 million (1997-2004) which would support the plan through (i) the promotion of cost-effective and equitable use of education resources; and (ii) an increase in access to and the quality of education.

Impact on the ground

- To increase enrolment outside Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso, 50 public College d'Enseignement General (CEGs) were built and equipped in low coverage areas outside big cities and are currently operating.
- In order to increase access in 3 provinces with limited coverage, 3 secondary schools were built and operated through contracts by local NGOs. These schools were built by private entrepreneurs and supervised by NGOs and their construction quality is better than the public schools. One of the 3 NGOs initially selected, Women and Development, continues to manage its school, while the other 2 were transferred to municipalities through a decentralized management scheme in which the ministry provided the municipality with salaries for 3 teachers, and the municipality paid the recurrent costs. The quality of instruction seems to be higher in these schools than in those run by the central ministry.
- To increase enrolment in private schools, 10 schools were constructed and paid for by private contractors and self-financed municipalities – 7 are run by the former and 3 by the latter. Each school has the same facilities as those built by NGOs. These schools have been operating for the past several years under a contract signed between the Ministry of Secondary Education and the operators.
- To support equity and enlarge access to private schools, the concerned Ministry, under an agreement with private and parochial schools, provides scholarships for 400 students from poor families whereby families pay FCFA 17,500 per year for each student and the ministry pays FCFA 27,500 (approximately 500 FCFA=1US\$). This innovative approach in developing private secondary schools is a first for Sub-Saharan francophone Africa – it facilitates government withdrawal from daily education management and the effective decentralization of secondary education.

- Another program financed the construction of 80 additional classrooms in existing private schools under a matching scheme – for each classroom constructed and equipped by the private operator on its premises according to government standards, the project built and equipped an additional classroom. The new private classrooms enrolled an additional 3,780 students in lower secondary schools in 2004.
- Secondary school teachers' pre-service training was reformed by introducing a 30-week training program comprising two-thirds subject matter and one-third practice in a school setting under supervision. This approach bridged relationships among student-teachers, teachers, headmasters and the supervision team, who learned about teaching difficulties during their class visits and discussions at teachers/teachers group meetings.
- In-service training was financed for more than 2,200 teachers in all subjects, 90 pedagogic advisors and more than 440 headmasters. Participants worked together in assessing teaching practices, evaluating students' learning, developing pedagogical projects in a teachers' network, implementing projects and assessing their impact. As a result of these interventions, participants built their capacity to identify collaboratively and solve problems affecting teaching and learning.
- In total, 1,766,000 textbooks were bought and distributed to schools which raised the student-textbook ratio to 1/1 in math, sciences, French and social science. The project also financed the acquisition of 10,000 teachers' guides, 444 pedagogic kits for teachers and students, 50,508 library books for university libraries, and the construction of Bobo Dioulasso University's library.
- The project contributed to establish a rolling textbooks fund, which at the end of the project, had FCFA 500 million in its account. This fund is partly constituted from the Ministry, which provides FCFA 30 million each year, and funds from textbook rental to public students at FCFA 500 per book per year (\$ 1) and from textbooks sold to private schools.
- The project carried out a pilot students' assessment to help the Ministry of Secondary Education allocate resources more efficiently to improve the quality of education. Teams were organized to design, plan, implement and analyze the entire assessment process. The teams developed a database of more than 1,000 testing items in each of the 5 subject matters, based on an in-depth study of the lower secondary school curriculum.
- On the curriculum reform side, the project carried out 2 major studies – one focused on curriculum reform in general secondary school, and the other on technical and vocational training.
- The reforms supported included the privatization of restaurants, the health insurance system and the increasing of university fees, the implementation of a cost recovery policy on secondary education, the continued reduction in social subsidies, the promotion of girls' education, capacity building activities focused on the improvement of the ministry's financial management and data collection and planning capacity.
- The project also trained 50 administrative staff from the decentralized levels and 90 school supervisors and school headmasters in statistics, data collection and analysis.

Lessons learned

- Building capacity requires more than resources and technical assistance – it also requires a motivated and stable set of staff.
- Civil works managed by the government need an independent oversight mechanism to ensure transparency, and to ensure that entrepreneurs comply with the planning and related norms.
- Partnership and decentralization are alternatives to enhance post-primary education with low recurrent costs to the government.
- Involving municipalities is an innovative way to decentralize post-primary education French-speaking SSA countries. The project has demonstrated that municipalities are capable of operating secondary schools with few subsidies from the government, and low student fees.

- Public-private and public-NGO partnerships can contribute significantly, with a shared mandate with government to the development of the post-primary education sector. The government helps expand access, set the strategy and supervise, while the private sector and NGOs manage facilities with no recurrent costs to the government.
- These combined approaches make the delivery of this level of education affordable to parents.

This Infobrief was excerpted from Implementation Completion Report no. 31668. For more information, please e-mail Pierre Joseph Kamano : pkamano@worldbank.org

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