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The Pôle de Dakar Newsletter - **AUGUST 2010**

## EDITORIAL

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Lack of information, lack of Education for All

The study recently commissioned by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa on teachers' awareness of the EFA goals brought to light highly useful information that EFA promoters and human resources managers within African ministries of education could take advantage of in their upcoming activities.

The main finding of this study, in Senegal, is that teachers appear not only to be poorly informed about the EFA goals but also to be very clearly more optimistic as to the performances of the educational system they implement on a daily basis (see our report). Although these two perceptions complement each other, one needs to be aware of the fact that they render much more difficult to understand by these main actors on the education stage, the ongoing general mobilisation for the expansion of the educational system and, even more so within this mobilisation, the need to resort to new teacher statuses.

Prior to anything else, mobilising teachers around EFA requires not only objective information on the actual situation of their system's main results, but also comparison to the situation of other leading countries. Otherwise, the EFA goals – provided that they are effectively disseminated among those actors – will remain barely perceptible and merely function as slogans. How then can teachers understand, in such conditions, the efforts said mobilisation requires from them themselves, especially the acceptance of key changes happening in their professional environment and profession? Teachers' subscription to these large-scale reforms, that concern them directly, requires at least, that they be informed of the situation and the difficulties those reforms are supposed to remedy.

This is therefore not only about bemoaning Senegalese teachers' low awareness of the EFA goals, ten years after the World Forum on Education precisely in the country that hosted such a founding meeting. By listing the channels through which those among the teachers that were aware of the EFA goals became aware of them, and in most cases only superficially, one clearly understands that no real information campaign has been carried out since 2000. Yet, one is allowed to believe that clear information on the situation of the system they contribute to operate, a situation that is precisely the basis of the mobilisation around the EFA goals, would have rendered more acceptable, many of the elements of this major mobilisation. Providing this information to them would also have helped devise, in the framework of EFA, more consensual teaching policies that meet communities' schooling goals as well as the minimal expectations of those who implement them.

**Jean-Pierre Jarousse**  
Pôle de Dakar Coordinator

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## The Gambia moves on to sector analysis

The Gambia is conducting the first comprehensive analysis of its educational system, with the assistance of Pôle de Dakar and the World Bank. All the levels of the country's educational system, including early childhood education and vocational training, are thoroughly being examined so as to reveal recent progress made, as well as the constraints and challenges to be faced over the years ahead. Since March, three support missions have already been carried out, and the commitment of the national team in charge of the analysis is particularly strong.

"We are highly motivated and determined to complete this mission successfully for it is a great challenge", said Sherif Yunus Hydar, deputy project manager of the projects coordination unit at the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education. "For us this sector analysis is a new and rigorous task that we intend to complete in a short time so that we could directly use the results to review our education policies. In every sector indeed, we need to agree on the education and training topic."

Consequently, a national team, made up of representatives from various ministries, has been constituted and depending on their respective field of expertise, its members are in charge of one of the seven aspects of the situation of the Gambian educational system which are under scrutiny: demographic and macroeconomic context, enrolment patterns, education costs, internal efficiency and quality, social and economic impacts, equity, and management issues.

A presentation of the first findings to the ministries and partners involved was held in July. The sector analysis should be completed by December 2010. ■

## Launch of first review of the teacher issue

Benin became last March, the first African country to embark on a comprehensive review of the teacher issue. In the framework of the new type of support provided by UNESCO, the country will carry out an analysis of the prevailing situation at the national level with regard to various crucial aspects related to teachers: from the number of teachers needed to career and professional development, through the aspects of recruitment, training, deployment and management. With the support of Pôle de Dakar, Benin is planning to, by the end of the year, identify various paths in an aim to improve its teacher policies.

"Through this technical support which comes within the UNESCO Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), we wish to support Benin, as well as other interested countries, build a dialogue on teacher policies", stated Ann Thérèse Ndong-Jatta, director of UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa. "Our view is that this national dialogue must be facilitated by a factual analysis of the situation."

This review is indeed seeking to paint an accurate picture of the teacher issue in Benin, at all levels of education. In order to ensure that every essential aspect that must be taken into account is addressed, an analytical methodological guide has been devised by UNESCO's Section for Teacher Education and Pôle de Dakar. This guide will be used as a basis for the review.

Since March, the national thirty-person team in charge of this task has been familiarizing themselves with the

different analytical themes and collecting data. This data will not only be used to assess the current situation but also how much room for manoeuvre there is for defining new teacher policies. Since the beginning of this process, Pôle de Dakar has made three field visits to Benin in order to support the national team.

### Involve all relevant parties

However, the most noticeable aspect of this undertaking is still its desire to involve every stakeholder in the process. To this effect, special attention has been devoted to the composition of the team: in addition to members from various ministries and specialised teacher training institutions, the Beninese team also includes representatives from three teachers unions<sup>1</sup> as well as two representatives of development partners. Moreover, several meetings have been scheduled so as to share the review's findings with ministries, unions and technical and financial partners.

As Beïfith Kouak Tiyab, education policy analyst at Pôle de Dakar, emphasized: "All these measures are a testimonial to Benin's commitment to reaching a shared vision on the teacher issue." ■

<sup>1</sup> These representatives are the same who had been appointed as members of the sectorial council for mediation and social dialogue in Benin.

## Senegal and Cameroon set quality target

After being firmly rooted in both countries, the new, Pôle de Dakar's quality initiative is gathering momentum. Launched last year with a view to supporting African countries seeking to improve the way their schools are managed, the "Initiative for a local management of the quality of learning" seems to be living up to expectations. That, at least, is the case for Senegal and Cameroon, which, in upcoming months, are planning to optimize, with the support of Pôle de Dakar, their national evaluation system. Their goal is: to be able to spot those primary schools in their respective countries that perform poorly and help them perform better.

"It is a real change of approach that we are talking about here", explained Etoua Azo'o, inspector in charge of early childhood, primary education and teacher training in Cameroon. "Evaluation is often designed and perceived as a monitoring and punishment tool. We want to turn it into a support tool for all Cameroonian schools. Moreover, by increasing the involvement of the educational community in the school management assessment process, we are aiming at an increased sense of responsibility from all those involved."

Two key principles constitute the core of this new approach to evaluation. Firstly, quality here refers mostly to the students' learning level, what they really get to learn in class. Secondly, the supervisory staff – inspectors, school principals, teaching staff – should be

able to better study schools performances in order to facilitate supervision and monitoring on a daily basis.

### Make better use of existing information

As Mathieu Laroche, an education policy analyst with the Pôle de Dakar pointed out: "Many questions are being asked today about the quality of education in Africa." How to assess the pupils' learning level in each primary school? How to bring to light quality problems? How to identify the areas or schools which need urgent intervention? On which factors should stress be put in order to improve quality? "Yet, he adds, maybe the answers to many of these questions are already available to us. The strategy that is being used in the framework of the Initiative for a local management of the quality of learning is to make a better use of available data, beginning with the results gathered from national exams, and to better disseminate information on learning."

As a result, Senegal has set itself the target to mobilize, by the end of this year, all the data available on the educational system likely to shed some light on the real situation of learning in primary schools: databases available on the

various types of exams, distribution of state-run schools in every area, various types of monitoring papers. The people involved in the new national evaluation mechanism implemented by the Ministry of Education will also be responsible for assessing, not only the way this data is gathered, but also the route it follows within the educational system. In order to get an accurate picture of the data available on quality within the country, Cameroon is taking similar steps; a national team composed of half a dozen specialists has been formed to carry out this task.

This quality-focused review will lead, early next year, to a more operational stage during which national indicators will be set to help measure primary schools performances in each country. Besides, steps will be taken in experimental areas with a view to improving the information channel and designing tools through which supervisory staff will easily access relevant information in order to schedule equally relevant support and monitoring activities. To date, two other countries have voiced their interest in receiving Pôle de Dakar's support with a view to implementing the same initiative. ■

*So far the data gathered on exam results are sent all the way up to the Ministry of Education, which uses them to issue certificates to pupils. A better use of this information at other levels of the educational system, as set forth in the new, Pôle de Dakar's quality initiative, could help identify and support schools with difficulties.*

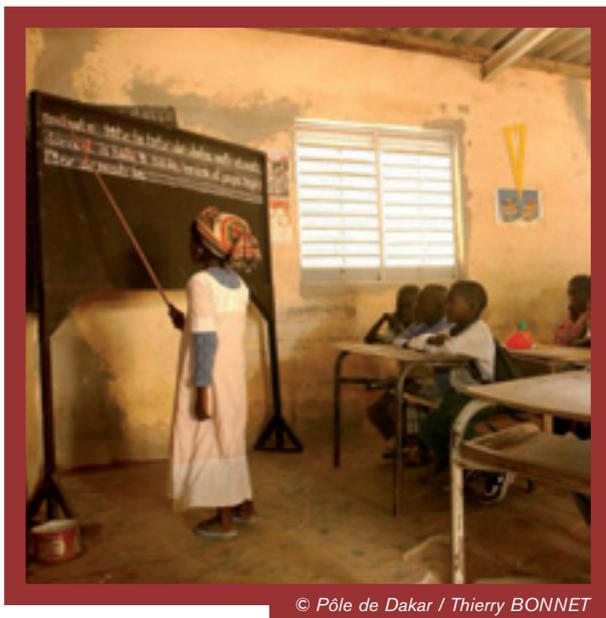


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## What do teachers know about EFA?

**We rarely ask ourselves this question. Yet, beyond the need to have sufficient numbers of trained and motivated teachers, their commitment towards making this new vision, a reality in schools, is indispensable in order to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA) in Africa. Some of these goals must indeed be directly put into practice by these teachers in daily teaching practises. But in order to implement them, said teachers must not only be aware of, but subscribe to them... Ten years following the Dakar Forum, have the EFA goals reached these front line actors on the education stage?**

In order to find this out, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa has commissioned a first national study on the issue. **This investigation took place in Senegal in April 2009 and involved a representative sample of 1044 primary school teachers<sup>1</sup>.** Three main aspects were covered by the study: do teachers know about the EFA goals? Do they subscribe to EFA's main principles? Do they have an accurate image of the educational reality of their country with regard to said goals? This report outlines some of the results of the analysis carried out by the Pôle de Dakar.



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### **One third of primary school teachers in Senegal had never heard of the EFA goals**

"Have you ever heard of the EFA goals as defined by the Dakar Forum in 2000?" At the national level, about one third of primary school teachers replied no to this question. This rate turned out to be twice as high in some of the regions of the country and it is worth noting that it is not always the most remote regions from the capital city (Dakar) or those mainly located in rural areas that performed less in terms of their knowledge about the EFA goals. Moreover, a significant contrast was noted between privately and publicly owned schools. Whilst it is a bit less than a third of public primary school teachers that did not know about the EFA goals, more than half of their counterparts in the private sector are in the same situation.

What about those who declared that they had already heard about the EFA goals? Their knowledge turned out to be very little. In fact, almost one fifth (21%) among them are not capable of listing a single one of those goals. At best, 80% of this group could only list one or two out of the six goals of Education for All. Very few (7.5%) could list more than two goals and providing free and compulsory primary education for all was the most popular goal among the teachers (57%), followed by gender parity and equality (32%), whereas very few of them (16%) knew about improving the quality of education (see table 1).

This situation is cause for concern for an efficient implementation of EFA in such schools. It is estimated that 600.000 Senegalese pupils are being taught by a teacher that never heard of the EFA goals and are therefore, *potentially* deprived of teaching practises that comply with EFA principles.

**Table 1: The EFA goals most listed by primary school teachers in Senegal**

Proportion of teachers who had already heard of the EFA goals, as per stated goals	
	Proportion (%)
Expand early childhood care and education	1.5
Provide free and compulsory primary education for all	57.3
Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults	1.8
Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent	19.0
Achieve gender parity and gender equality	32.3
Improve the quality of education	16.2

Source: Calculations by the Pôle de Dakar

### A great number of teachers do after all subscribe to the EFA principles

A great proportion of primary school teachers in Senegal subscribe to the EFA guidelines. About 92% of them share the principles of gender equality and gender parity in accessing school, without necessarily recognizing these as EFA goals. On the contrary, few of them share the principle that consists in making practical knowledge, a priority. Only 22% among them think that knowledge useful to pupils in their daily lives, should be a priority. For the majority of them, teaching must instead be aimed at reaching excellence and repeating a year is an efficient way of selecting the best pupils or showing those forced to repeat a year, that their efforts were insufficient. Such conception of an elitist school by the teachers may have to do with their perception of the situation of their educational system.

The majority of them, indeed, have an inaccurate picture of the educational reality in Senegal<sup>2</sup>. Only about 40% of primary school teachers knew about the proportion of children attending primary school throughout the country, as well as the percentage of pupils reaching the last form. This percentage decreases further (24% and 17% respectively) when it comes to girls attending primary school and illiteracy among adults in Senegal. As to primary pupils' average level, more than half of their teachers depict an image that is better than reality. ■

To read the whole report, please visit [www.poledakar.org](http://www.poledakar.org)

### Targeting communication about EFA more properly

The first channel for information on EFA in Senegal is the mass media. It is indeed through television, radio channels, and the press that primary school teachers often hear about the EFA goals. Only less than 12% of teachers became aware of these goals through dedicated channels such as schools, training, unions, specialised magazines, which would have allowed them to have a better understanding of these goals. These findings imply that very few communication and information actions are taken towards teachers about EFA goals. On top of this, there is also the fact that teachers do not have an accurate picture of the educational reality in their country, which also implies lack of information.

On the whole, the study on primary school teachers and EFA in Senegal shows that the level of knowledge of the EFA goals is low. This finding is quite significant and stresses the need for a communication campaign among teachers on this initiative and its goals. A selection of the most suitable communication channels, and of the most relevant messages, will turn out to be an essential condition in order to mobilize these direct actors on the educational stage in favour of EFA.

<sup>2</sup> In 2004/05, the gross schooling rate at primary school level was 78% and only 50% of such pupils completed primary school; literacy rate among adults was approximately 39%.

## A reply from the Senegalese Ministry of Education: Interview with Abdou Diao

*Abdou Diao is the head of the elementary education department in Senegal. He is reacting to the findings of the study on primary school teachers' knowledge of the goals of Education for All in Senegal.*

### **In which ways can these conclusions on primary school teachers' knowledge of the EFA goals contribute to the reflection on attaining EFA in Senegal?**

I think teachers must have an idea of political choices as well as the community's commitment regarding education. In my opinion however, this does not mean that they need to have an in-depth knowledge of such things. We effectively have, within our educational system, bodies whose role is precisely to orient, act as a trigger for and implement education policies regarding elementary education. The system's purposes and intentions come more within the responsibility of such bodies than that of teachers.

But let us stick to the question. Teachers' knowledge of the EFA goals can be an extremely useful tool since it helps them realise what they themselves, as well as the State, do on a daily basis. As essential actors on the education stage, they should have an idea about the policies which explain, clarify and justify their activities in classrooms as well as in their communities. Of course having a good knowledge of the EFA goals can have a positive impact on a teacher's teaching methods, behaviour and even on its efficiency. But should we jump to the conclusion that a teacher who is not aware of anything about these goals will inevitably perform less? That, in my opinion, is another matter.

Besides it is quite frequent here in Senegal to find teachers who say they do not know about our ten-year programme on education and training. Yet it is this very programme that implements orientations set for the development of the educational system and the achievement of EFA. Furthermore, at the inspection level, many blueprints are established in which the fundamentals of EFA are addressed. Bringing these strategic choices to teachers' knowledge could, may be, make us realise that some of these orientations would be more efficient if they were better targeted so as to better suit the real situation in our schools.

### **As the head of elementary education, how do you react to the fact that primary school teachers do not have an accurate idea of the real situation of the educational system they are working for?**

One can say that the study's findings revealed a gap in the system. In teacher training establishments today, we often make sure we put more stress on practical and concrete aspects of teaching. Issues such as education policies, educational system orientation or economic and demographic contexts are usually not dealt with. This is also the case for decentralised programmes established by inspection bodies regarding continuing education for teachers. Every issue related to educational system orientation and educational policies are viewed as theoretical issues. Yet these are important issues for teachers. One more time I am not stating that teachers must have an in-depth knowledge of education policies but just an idea. To fill this gap, the issue that needs to be addressed is therefore the following question: how can the educational system deal with this aspect so as to be able to include it somewhere?

### **Precisely, how can your department take advantage of these conclusions for its upcoming activities?**

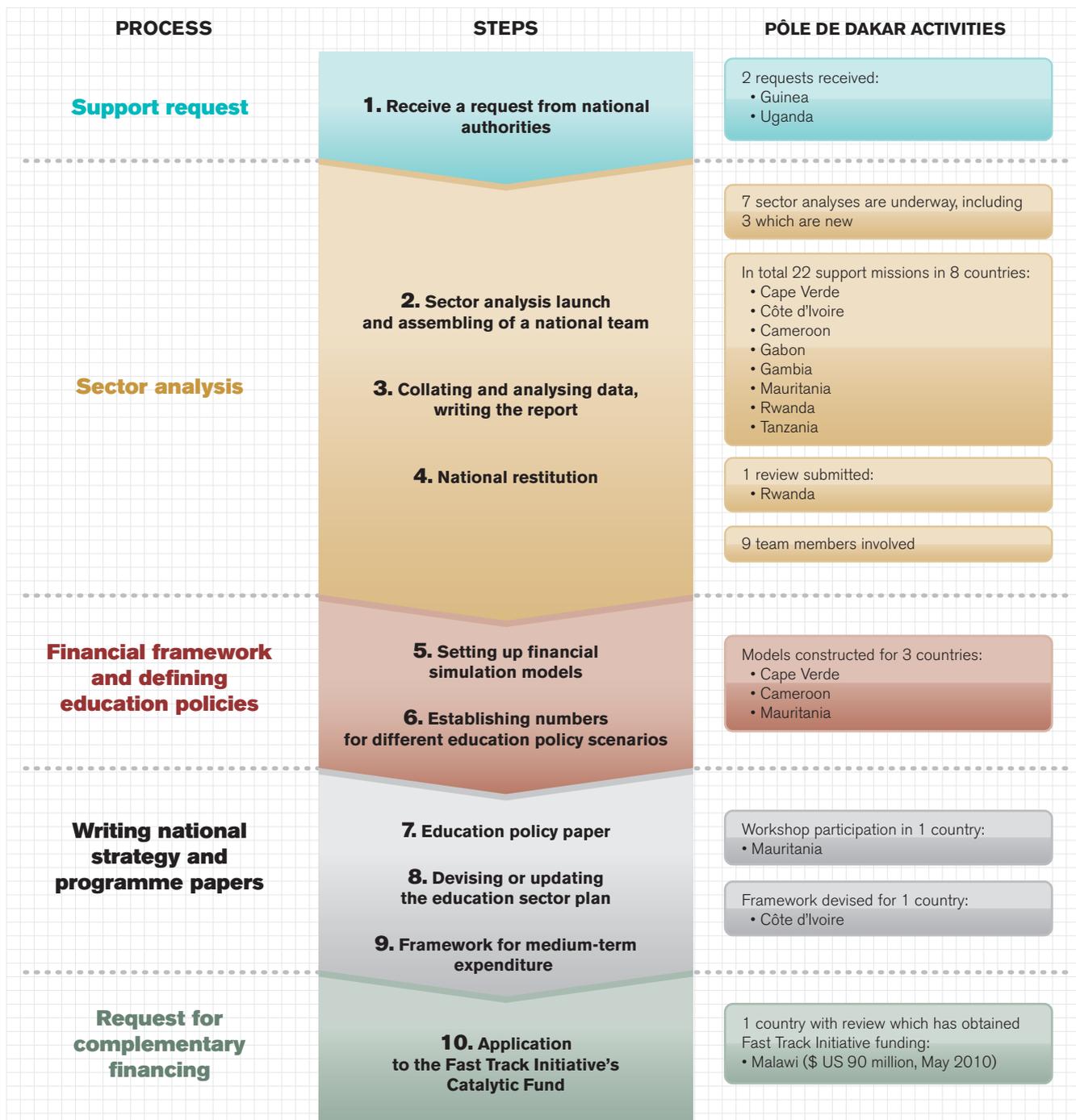
What my department can do is to act as a trigger for the establishment of strategies aiming at providing relevant information on these issues to headmasters and teachers. Establishing such strategies is not our responsibility but that of the inspection department which has relevant means to do so. There are meeting opportunities today for inspectors, headmasters, teachers and the community. We could use said opportunities to explain what justifies the decisions made in the strategic blueprint of the Senegalese educational system, and consequently many of the things we request from teachers.

Within my department, we are fighting so as to make access to education a reality for all, to reduce drop-out rates and increase completion rates, all of which are priorities related to the attainment of EFA. By providing us with some feedback on the educational system, studies like this one help draw our attention on some of the weaknesses of the educational system, which in this case is the need to improve dissemination of strategic information. ■

IN THE COUNTRIES

## From January to July 2010

Since the beginning of this year, **nine African countries have received Pôle de Dakar's direct support** with regards to sector analysis in education, financial frameworks and defining education policies. By assisting them in establishing credible plans for developing education systems, these activities will enable many of these countries to prepare an application to the Fast Track Initiative's Catalytic Fund. Below is an outline of the process followed by Pôle de Dakar as well as activities undertaken by the team over the period of January to July 2010.



## New publications

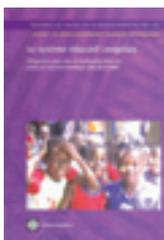
Available online: [www.poledakar.org](http://www.poledakar.org)



### What do teachers know about Education for All in Senegal? A review of the knowledge and perception of the EFA goals by primary school teachers

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa, Pôle de Dakar

The latest publication by Pôle de Dakar presents the findings of a study carried out in Senegal on the knowledge and perception of primary schools teachers of the goals of Education for All. Commissioned by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa, in an aim to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Dakar's World Forum on Education, this review provides answers to three major questions: do teachers know about the EFA goals? Do they subscribe to the EFA's main principles? Do they have an accurate picture of the educational reality of their country with regards to these goals?



### Three new sector analyses in education: Congo, Malawi and Mali

*Le système éducatif congolais*, *Le système éducatif malien* and *The Education System in Malawi* are the fruit of collaborative work between a national team and an external support team made up of Pôle de Dakar, the World Bank and GTZ (in Malawi). Each one of the reports, written in the form of a photographic picture of the corresponding educational system, is a comprehensive assessment of all levels of the education system in the country and aims to highlight recent successes as well as the main constraints and challenges which it will face in years to come.

## Midterm assessment for PSGSE students



*The third promotion of candidates to the PSGSE training will complete their training in December 2010. As the modules and country group sessions go by, the students lay the foundations for a national sector analysis.*

"The management and planning tools that we are learning to master in the course of this training are directly related to our professional activities. That is why, despite all the inevitable power cuts and the problems we face in accessing the Internet in our respective countries, we are still motivated." That is Congolese student, Rigobert Banzouzi's assessment of the distance learning Sector Policy and Education Systems Management (PSGSE) training, during their second in-class gathering in Dakar. From June 21 to 25, students and tutors gathered at the Dakar francophone digital campus for a training on setting up financial simulation models. Mr Banzouzi emphasized that: "The gatherings are an opportunity to clarify the notions we have tackled during the distance learning sessions and exchange with the other participants."

## Pôle de Dakar

EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

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