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Education and training policy for disadvantaged youth and adults in Senegal

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EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH AND ADULTS IN SENEGAL

Brief study report by André Delluc, consultant (May 2005)

Goals 3 and 4 of the Dakar Framework for Action (2000) in the context of Senegal

The Senegalese education system is interesting in more than one respect in the context of the follow-up of goal 3: to date, it has had very little or no practice with regard to educational provision for the wide public of out-of-school youth and adults, early dropouts, or those completing training in literacy centres.

In 2004, there were 1,382,740 children in elementary education in Senegal, corresponding to a gross ratio of 79.9% which has been rising steadily for several years (65.5% in 1999), but the dropout rate is very high; primary completion rate is only 52% and the gross enrolment ratio has dropped to 29.4% in middle school (source: *Ministry of Education, DPRE, National Level, educational statistics, 2003-2004 indicators, available at www.education.gouv.sn*).

This delay in achieving the goal of Education For All does not seem recoverable in the short term and numerous country officials and experts are seeking ways to develop further education/ training, which would target these excluded groups, in the name of the principle of equity and with a view to promoting socio-economic integration.

There is a public debate on the issue (many review articles appear in the press) and this reflects a strong demand which resulted in 2004 in the recognition of this issue by the public authorities in the framework of the *Programme Décennal d'Education et de Formation* (Ten-Year Education and Training Programme – PDEF) of what is commonly referred to as the “*Education Qualifiante des Jeunes et des Adultes*” (programme of skills development for youth and adults – EQJA).

EQJA and poverty reduction

Opportunities for economic integration of the groups concerned exist essentially in the rural economy and, in urban areas, in the “informal sector”. While the latter had long been overlooked by both economic and training policies, it is now the subject of growing interest in the fight against poverty, and EQJA provides a particularly well-suited intervention approach.

This recognition of the informal sector involves recognition of apprenticeships in small craft businesses, of the need to improve its traditional forms, and of envisaging forms of pre-apprenticeship for those who are not fortunate enough to be apprentices.

This particularly involves, with respect to training, having to manage multiple partnerships with craftspeople representatives, administrations, local authorities, associations, donors. This aspect of economic and social openness is fully integrated into the Senegalese EQJA strategy.

Alongside its recognition and budgeting within PDEF, EQJA receives funding in the framework of PRSP, which exceeded one billion CFA for 2005-2006.

EQJA and Goal 3

The adoption of goal 3 contributed to legitimizing the dual task of

- educational equity, by providing for those excluded from Education For All (EFA),
- and poverty reduction, by improving opportunities for social and professional integration of these same groups.

By widening the scope of action of EFA through this goal, the Dakar Forum promoted the search for training provision adapted to the excluded. It thereby met a demand which had remained latent for too long and facilitated the emergence of the current political commitment.

The concept, issues and implementation strategy of EQJA

EQJA thus began to be addressed recently and this has intensified since 2003 through collaboration between the *Direction de la Planification et de la Réforme de l'Éducation* (Department of Educational Planning and Reform – DPRE) of the Ministry of Education of Senegal, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education.

The aim has been to:

- define the concept of EQJA (since the wording of goal 3 did not appear to be sufficiently explicit)
- specify the overall issues relating to its introduction in Senegal
- choose an implementation strategy.

For this purpose, a national study, entrusted in 2003 to two officials from the Ministry of Education and to a BREDA expert (UNESCO), in cooperation with an IIEP consultant, was validated by a national seminar held at the end of 2003 in Dakar under the chairmanship of the Minister of National Education, which brought together the main potential partners. The study was then presented at the Inter-regional Seminar on “Assisting the Design and Implementation of EFA Skill Development Plans: Skills Development to Meet the Learning Needs of the Excluded” held in Paris on 22 and 23 January 2004. This study provides a framework document for the development of EQJA.

The concept:

EQJA should be understood “as an education and training process – often a part-time process – which enables young people and adults to complete their instruction through the acquisition of *further basic education*, in particular in the area of communication, and of *basic scientific and technical skills related to professional know-how*, with special emphasis on the principle of “*alternance*” (sandwich system), with a view to promoting or strengthening their integration” (excerpt from the EQJA presentation text available on the Ministry of Education website: see below). The consensus reached on this definition led to establishing the elements of a national policy which has been integrated into PDEF;

The issues:

As the public sector of Technical Education and Vocational Training (ETFP) is still ill-suited to take charge of EQJA, in particular at basic qualification level, it is clear that essentially “non-formal” solutions will have to be adapted, drawing on multiple

partnerships, bringing together representatives of administrations, civil society, the labour market and the voluntary sector. It is therefore an important challenge, in a country in which the relation between training and employment is underdeveloped and in which public/private partnerships will have to be sufficiently structured to ensure their sustainability.

Another challenge lies in educational **and training** contents and their quality (goal 4). Much remains to be done to effectively address the socio-cultural level of these new groups and meet their expectations. Certain programmes underway in other countries (such as Mali, for instance) may be used as a basis for reflection.

Finally, the choice of institutional positioning from a “focal point” enabling organized mobilization of partners has come to be determining for the launching and success of a programme based on a public/ private partnership.

Implementation strategy:

The agreement was made within the Ministry of Education to place a coordination centre at DPRE, with the provision of one its agents to manage the secretariat. UNESCO has provided logistical support for the functioning of the centre. Within the latter, the “focal point” works under the supervision of a Guidance and Steering Committee which gathers the opinions of the various partners (administrations, local authorities, decentralized authorities, professional organizations, associations and donors). Its activity is essentially based outside DPRE.

The agreement was also made with the Ministry in charge of ETFP to take into account its *policy document*, adopted in 2003, which provides for greater recognition of learning.

In order to avoid defining contents too hastily, the decision was made to perform three prior studies, in relation to particular groups, which served to elaborate a methodology for analysis and intervention. They concerned:

- female professions (in the food and agricultural sector)
- young people in “daaras” (Koranic schools)
- apprentices and pre-apprenticeship of young non-apprentices.

The following have not yet been studied:

- youth and adults in rural areas (nevertheless, the preparation of a project submitted to FAO provided the basis for an initial investigation)
- economically active adults
- the disabled.

These various groups have already been addressed in small projects, most often conducted by the voluntary sector, but whose contents vary widely and whose funding is erratic, which does not convey the image of a sustainable national policy promoting quality.

The studies were performed during the last quarter of 2004 and were presented at a seminar which brought together representatives from all the potential partners, in Thiès in March 2005. It was also decided at this gathering to prepare pilot projects, in particular in the regions. “Focal points” have already been designated in School Inspectorates for the organization and follow-up of these local initiatives.

Furthermore, an EQJA database is already accessible on the Ministry of Education website (www.education.gouv.sn/politique/eqja/index.html). It must:

- list the actors involved and initiatives underway or in preparation
- draw up a documentary base
- record statistical results regarding trained groups

Finally, a communication policy has also been determined and a specific cell will be in charge of it.

Results of the initial investigations: grid of criteria for the analysis and follow-up of EQJA

The studies were based on current programmes, where they existed (for example the learning support programmes) or on prospective surveys (such as for “daaras”). Completed by workshop activities, they helped to specify the basic criteria to assess the relevance of initiatives which must respond to a wide variety of situations.

Age:

The main distinction concerns further literacy training. This may be scheduled over longer periods for young people than for adults, which often favours the choice of *functional literacy* for the latter (focused on professional needs).

Gender:

Apart from food and agricultural processing jobs, there has been no recommendation to make a specific distinction for young girls and women, but to ensure, within the groups **addressed**, that they are given priority access, in order to reduce current disparities.

The language:

No dominance may be envisaged, and French, just as Wolof or other national languages should be used, according to the local conditions of the groups, exclusively, simultaneously or consecutively for the purpose of effective appropriation of contents.

Duration, pace and place of training:

In general, emphasis has been placed on training – often part-time – whose organization is subject to two types of constraints:

- pedagogical: further literacy training, in particular, must be of sufficient duration, at a steady pace of instruction,
- and material: in particular with respect to the implementation of a sandwich system in the framework of contracts with craftspeople upon whom the practical training sessions depend.

Conditions of access:

There should not be any restrictions to access based on level of education. Regarding the acquisition of skills, the participation of ETFP public centres is still limited and must be strengthened: they recruit at secondary level and, as a result, have little practical experience **to act** in this area. The long-delayed decision to create a department of learning within the Ministry in charge of ETFP could lead to progress on this subject.

Partners and the establishment of partnerships:

This is the most innovative aspect of the current policy. The development of decentralized projects requires maximum mobilization of material and human resources which are often not used to working together. The designation of EQJA “focal points” at School Inspectorate level should bring together and organize local skills within the framework of projects whose content quality and follow-up will be the responsibility of the technical secretariat of EQJA and its governing bodies.

Initial contacts have revealed significant interest on the part of the partners (administrative directorates, professional organizations, NGOs) on the subject and their will to work, often for the first time, together.

Articulating Basic Education or Vocational Training and quality of trainers:

As a supplement to EFA, EQJA uses Basic Education teachers and trainers.

With regard to vocational training courses, the master craftspeople who provide traditional training require pedagogical support which they may obtain from the public or private sector trainers involved in the projects. Reciprocally, the latter must obtain from the craftspeople the supplementary professional practice which they too often lack. The training of trainers *designed from the perspective of a sandwich system* is an essential guarantee for the *quality* of training.

Funding:

In addition to external assistance, to funding from the *Office National de la Formation Professionnelle* (National Vocational Training Office – ONFP) and from the newly established *Fonds de Développement de l'Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle* (Technical Teaching and Vocational Training

Development Fund – FONDEF), the public funds intended for EQJA will be provided in the framework of PDEF and PRSP.

Validation/ certification prospects:

Without seeking to legislate too quickly on certification, it is appropriate to consider such a prospect from the outset, in order to:

- ensure that trainees are enrolled on a well-defined course encouraging their mobility and the subsequent resumption of new training courses,
- progressively impose EQJA standards and quality across all the training initiatives undertaken in the territory.

The collection of statistical information:

It would be appropriate to reorganize the information system of the Ministry of Education so that it may take on board EQJA, including the conditions of integration of the trainees. In the short term, the option chosen is autonomous and progressive collection of significant data forwarded by the EQJA actors. These data will then be accessible on the website under construction.

In the longer term, the data on EQJA could be collected, processed, analysed and disseminated within *a general information system on Vocational Training*, currently under study. One of the challenges arises from the difficulty of processing, within a single framework and in a harmonized way, the data on formal basic vocational training and that on non-formal training.

Initial assessment and prospects for 2005-2006

Since the Dakar Forum, it should be noted that the training needs of disadvantaged populations are better addressed in Senegal. This political recognition must be accompanied by increased financial support.

The new guidelines governing Vocational Training policy should provide opportunities for this sector to play a more important – but not exclusive – role in the future of EQJA. Certain institutions, such as technical *lycées* or Vocational Training regional Centres have already taken interesting initiatives based on training provided by craftspeople.

It is too early to quantitatively assess the initiatives of EQJA underway. Entering quantitative data – on pupil numbers, funding, training organizations – is one of the main objectives of the site. An initial data collection exercise concerns initiatives in favour of apprentices; these are most often organized by professional guilds and funded by ONFP, or by the voluntary sector and funded through bilateral agreements.

These training courses have prompted the establishment of ties with the professional world of craftspeople. One of the components of IIEP/UNESCO support is aimed at strengthening and finding solutions for young people who are not apprentices, in various forms of pre-apprenticeships.

The year 2006 will be decisive in confirming the relevance of the chosen national multi-partner strategy, by multiplying contacts in order to help to launch the process and EQJA initiatives in the regions.