

French external action for  
education in  
developing  
countries  
2010-2015

2010



**E**ducation is a major priority for French development aid and constitutes one of the key pillars of development. The States with which France cooperates have also made this choice: nineteen out of thirty-two Partnership Framework Papers signed in 2008 have made education a priority sector, while the promotion of French as both a written and spoken language is a cross-cutting sector for cooperation. This is a **choice in favor of solidarity**, allowing individuals to exercise their rights while benefitting from access to knowledge, languages, know-how and ideas. It is also a **strategic choice** in support of sustainable growth and the fight against all forms of poverty, a condition for the demographic transition of developing countries and a factor contributing to the improvement of populations' health. This choice, based on **diagnostics and priorities shared** with partner countries, **increases the effectiveness of French aid** (in the spirit of the 2005 Paris Declaration and the 2008 Accra Agenda).

In light of this, France has decided to promote two major goals between now and 2015:

- Significantly contribute to **universal primary education** and to the goal of achieving **equal access to education for girls and boys**;
- Promote an **integrated vision of education**, including primary and secondary education, vocational training and tertiary education, to meet the challenges relating to youths' future through a new strategy encompassing the entire educational sector.

The achievement of these goals goes hand in hand with policies to promote French, a language that enables access to knowledge, particularly in French-speaking Africa where French is the language of instruction. France is therefore updating and renovating current educational instruments and methods and is building capacities in the countries that receive aid to steer their educational system.

### 2010-2015 STRATEGY

In 2005, French strategy fully corresponded to the international context, placed under the auspices of programs developed by the United Nations: Universal Education and Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This strategy also coincided with the transfer to the French Development Agency of all education-related projects formerly managed directly by the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE). The new 2010-2015 strategy is more than a mere update. It deliberately widens the former scope and offers a new approach to respond to challenges relating to youths' future and their contributions to development in Southern countries: what academic path, training courses and languages should be learned to ensure proper economic and social integration?

The foundations of the Education, Training and Integration Strategy (2010-2015) and the values on which it is based were adopted by the Inter-ministerial Committee for International Co-operation and Development on 5 June 2009.



Schoolgirls in Ethiopia - © IRD/Aing



# The benefits of French international action in education

● **Recognized expertise in the educational field:** closely associated with a longstanding, sound and diversified educational system, French research is highly productive in this area, particularly in economics and educational sciences.

● **Francophony, an asset in this sector:** thanks to their history and language of instruction, French-speaking countries have common ground and interests with the French educational system.

● **Strong operational capacities:** given the extent of its network, France has levers of action in every education-related domain, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

● **France's political role as a facilitator of access to international funding, especially in Africa:** France is often the leading donor at the local level and knows how to efficiently mobilize expertise.

## KEY FIGURES FOR EDUCATION

### PROGRESS

- Between 1999 and 2006, the average net enrolment ratio rose from 54 per cent to 70 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Two thirds of developing countries have achieved girl/boy parity in basic education.

### CHALLENGES

- 75 million children still do not attend school.
  - 55 per cent of them are girls.
- UNESCO estimates that \$11 billion per year are needed in external aid to achieve universal education (high of \$5.5 billion reached in 2006).

### FRANCE'S POSITION

Over the last years:

- France contributed an average of €130 million per year to basic education in bilateral aid.
- France contributed €20 million to the Fast Track multinational initiative (FTI) between 2005 and 2008, and has promised €50 million for 2010-2012.



School in Laos - © IRD

# The challenges

Considerable progress has been made since 2000 in terms of enrolment. In eight years, the number of children attending primary school has risen by 30 million. However, 75 million children worldwide still do not have access to school, and serious shortcomings remain:

- **The student dropout rate is still too high in many countries.** In sub-Saharan Africa, nine out of ten children attend their first year of primary school, but only two out of three complete the cycle. (The primary school completion rate – the percentage of a generation that completes the full primary cycle – is the true indicator of universal education in MDG 2.) This low

proportion drops further in rural areas, among the poorest households, and affects girls more than boys.

- **The quality of teaching and language proficiency is generally insufficient,** with a wide variety of situations in each country.

- **Training programs are not in line with economic needs,** making it necessary to review the relevance and content of such programs.

- **Constant degradation of secondary and tertiary education** caused by the pressure to improve access to primary education under tight budgetary restrictions.

## EDUCATING GIRLS

Worldwide, 55 per cent of the 75 million children deprived of access to school are girls, and 75 per cent of illiterate persons are women.



Campaign poster (Benin) - © IRD

The under-enrolment of girls can be explained by reduced access to school and by a higher dropout rate. Girls must face specific obstacles throughout their schooling such as tuition fees, early marriage, safety conditions (particularly in public transportation) and sexual violence. More generally speaking, the enrolment of girls still comes up against biases and inequalities caused by differing social roles, which deny them access to the same opportunities as boys.

Girls' access to education is a key component of their emancipation and of their country's development. Studies have shown the positive impact of female enrolment on access to health services, especially for mothers, on the decline in early marriage and on economic growth.



# Our priority goals

## Contribute to resolving educational challenges for all

This commitment, made as part of the MDGs, requires major efforts in favor of teacher recruiting and training in order to face growing enrolment levels and conduct actions to ensure universal access to education. The use of new technologies is a particularly effective tool, especially for teacher training purposes. To achieve this goal, various resources must be called upon, including: resources resulting from the cancellation of bilateral debt; the search for innovative funding sources through debt relief and development contracts; targeted subsidies; AFD loans; participation in the Fast Track initiative; decentralized cooperation; support to NGOs.

## Reorganize post-primary education by diversifying educational and training paths

Professional training courses must be available after each level of general education: primary (in sub-Saharan

Africa, most adults stopped attending school after the primary level), secondary and tertiary education (university-level courses combined with vocational training in a professional setting). To increase the relevance of vocational training and promote social integration, certification processes must also be set up for these training programs with economic players, in the formal and informal sectors.

## Support improvements in the quality of teaching, in particular through better teacher training

French cooperation must take account of the significant changes that have affected teacher recruitment methods and levels as a result of the strong rise in enrolment as well as budgetary restrictions. A new balance must be sought between teachers' level of education, their initial training and their continued education, including linguistic factors. In addition, teachers must be given access to pedagogical tools to compensate for shortened initial training periods.



Multimedia library of the French Institute in Port-au-Prince (Haiti) before the 12 January 2010 earthquake - © MAEE/Frédéric de La Mure

### Contribute to improving the quality of French-language teaching

The key role of languages and their relationship to a given region based on the population's language needs must be taken into consideration. There are no ready-made solutions (each sovereign choice must be based on the specific context to which it is being applied). Therefore, in the countries that have chosen French as their language of instruction, improving the quality of French-language teaching is an essential condition for academic success at all levels and for the sustainability and professional usability of learned skills. The resources of French cultural centers, Alliance Française organizations and all French-language teaching establishments of the Agency for French Teaching Abroad (AEFE) network shall be used to improve French proficiency among youth and adults.

Whenever possible, institutional partnerships should be formed with the national authorities in charge of primary, secondary, vocational, technical and tertiary education and training, as well as with those in charge of combating illiteracy. Partnerships should also be established with local and regional bodies, associations and NGOs. French-speaking initiatives in this area shall be sponsored by French cooperation, like

the IFADEM (Francophone initiative for the remote training of teachers) project, implemented with the International Organisation of la Francophonie and the Francophone University Agency (AUF).

- Encourage countries to implement a standard method for **measuring academic skills** and promote the creation of bodies dedicated to quality-related issues. With a view to progressively harmonizing worldwide standards, France will support the development and/or creation of networks and expert teams devoted to issues relating to the quality of instruction in primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational education in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Reduce the digital divide** by supporting initiatives to train teachers and equip African schools.

### LINGUISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES BY THE FRENCH INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR PEDAGOGICAL STUDIES

The International Center for Pedagogical Studies (CIEP) is a French public establishment run by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. It associates different professions – expertise, training and evaluation – to meet the needs of target countries and in response to donor orientations, in collaboration with a network of partners and within the framework defined by French foreign policy. It offers an integrated proposal and, in its role as operator, delivers French solutions for linguistic and educational cooperation, evaluation and certification, diploma recognition, and so forth. In the education sector, the CIEP intervenes in basic education, professional teaching, teacher training and higher education, and helps raise the quality of French-language teaching.

Closely associated with the French education system and higher education, the CIEP benefits from in-house expertise as well as from access to a pool of external high-level experts. As a platform for debate on educational issues, it contributes to the on-going analysis of the quality of teaching.

By participating in projects, conducting studies and performing missions, the CIEP helps support the public policies of partner countries, in cooperation with MAEE.



International Center for Pedagogical Studies (CIEP) in Sèvres, France - © CIEP



# Intervention methods that promote national capacity building and partnerships

## Build national capacities and partnerships

Capacity building is a vital aspect of improving educational and training system governance. French cooperation intervenes at three levels:

- **Build the capacity to steer change** by helping achieve consensus on reform-related goals and by supporting the implementation of the appropriate mechanisms for educational system reforms at both the centralized and decentralized levels.
- **Support the creation and implementation of instruments adapted to the reformed governance** of educational and training systems, open to all national partners: creation/adaptation of a legislative and regulatory framework; production of standards concerning teaching conditions; improvement of

teacher management, evaluation and inspection systems; delegation of management to territorial collectivities; strengthening of educational management tools; fund for vocational education and certification.

- **Support capacity building for system management** at the central and local levels by supporting an “evaluation culture” to enable steering based on result indicators.

Building institutional capacities necessarily implies developing dialogue and exchange among all stakeholders. France is particularly intent on delivering support to bodies that promote consultation and cooperation – at all levels of the education sector – between public authorities (national, regional and local) in charge of education and territorial collectivities, communities, parents, NGOs, economic and social partners and research organizations.



French school, cultural center (Tbilisi, Georgia) – © MAEE/Frédéric de La Mure

## Working through partnerships

The bilateral partnership with developing countries receiving French aid for education and training increasingly operates within the framework of an international partnership that is highly organized and structured around values and principles designed to increase aid effectiveness (Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda). France has been instrumental in promoting these values and principles.

The proactive role of French cooperation comes into play in three areas:

### International partnerships in the education sector

- France wishes to actively participate in all competent bodies in this area, by contributing either funds or expertise. Concerning the Fast Track initiative, France will continue to advocate and take action to ensure that the majority of international funding for education goes toward reinforcing State sectoral policies based on the specific context of each country.

- Locally, France will continue to be a driving force in the harmonization of donor practices through the creation of consultation frameworks. France will promote the division of work between European Union partners, delegations of the European Commission and beyond, and will contribute to the improved delegated management of funds.

### Support to multilateral organizations

France will increase its human and financial contributions in several multilateral programs and projects that it has initiated or plans to develop to benefit vocational training and tertiary education (need in Africa to implement platforms for collaboration between the players of these sectors and their partners).

### Bilateral cooperation

French cooperation, in strict compliance with the principle of the untying of French aid, shall strive to more broadly mobilize French players' expertise and to develop a true partnership with recipient countries



Students from the Algerian Higher School of Business (Algiers) - © MAEE/Frédéric de La Mure



whenever possible. This concerns five categories of partners:

- **Public administrations and educational establishments** directly involved in education and training at the central, regional and local levels (the line ministries have recognized the role of the CIEP [French International Center for Pedagogical Studies] as overall coordinator).
- **Higher education and research establishments**, which often have longstanding relations with their counterparts in developing countries.
- **NGOs**, whose involvement in this field and resulting closeness to local players ensures complementarity with the other sources of expertise.
- **French social partners** – unions and employers' organizations – whose relations with their counterparts and whose experience in vocational training-related social dialogue can be used to the benefit of projects.
- **Territorial collectivities**, which have acquired expertise through their actions as part of decentralized cooperation.
- **Consultancies and independent experts**, to assist in the development, structuring and standardized referencing of private and competitive French proposals in this sector.

## Geographically focalize French aid

As in all sectors, the need for more geographically concentrated aid and a more suitable choice of instruments and forms of aid was clearly identified through the recent peer review of the Development Assistance Committee (OECD 2008). This recommendation is in line with the orientations defined by the French President and with the conclusions of the Inter-ministerial Committee for International Co-operation and Development, which met on 5 June 2009. The Education, Training and Integration Strategy will focus on the first two categories.

### Priority poor countries

Mainly in French-speaking sub-Saharan African countries with close ties to France (Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo).

### A PROJECT IN GUINEA (2002-2008)

In 2002, a €6.5 million subsidy was granted to three prefectures in northern Guinea chosen from among the least advanced in the primary enrolment process. Thanks to this project, carried out under harsh conditions (isolated mountainous regions previously neglected by partners) and completed in June 2008, 180 classrooms were built, 29 others were renovated, 210 classrooms were equipped with school furniture, and 59 offices and stores, 59 dispensaries and 37 watering points were built. The project also financed new buildings for the three prefectural headquarters, continuing education for teachers and supervisory staff, additional funds for the operation of services combined with the application of good management rules, the implementation of a school mapping tool and three annual student evaluation surveys. Lastly, the project helped finance training for members of local government and parent associations involved in school management, and enabled the creation of six centers for youth integration, 658 school projects and the purchase of educational materials for 700 schools.



The NGO Aide et Action helped finance the project and acted as delegated project owner. At the end of the project, enrolment statistics from the three districts showed a significant increase in the gross enrolment ratio, higher completion rates and improved student evaluation results.

### Moderate income countries

Essentially African countries with moderate income levels and close ties to France, where French aid will primarily aim to support economic growth and promote cultural diversity, training of elites, governance and co-development projects.

#### DEBT REDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (“C2D”) FOR EDUCATION IN CAMEROON (SINCE 2007)

In May 2007, France donated €40 million to the Cameroonian education sector as part of a “C2D” debt reduction and development agree-

ment. This was chiefly provided in the form of degressive financial assistance over a five-year period, combined with the creation of a policy to stabilize the status of substitute teachers and teachers formerly paid by parents. At end 2009, two thirds of the amount was paid in recognition of the smooth implementation of the target policy. In all, 30,600 teachers earned civil service Category 8 status (60 per cent of primary teachers). Audits show good overall compliance with procedures, improved geographical distribution of teachers (despite a decrease from 45 in 2005 to 37 in 2009) as well as satisfaction among teachers, pedagogical supervisors and parents. The Fast Track Initiative catalytic fund also donated €39 million to support this reform.



Democratic Republic of the Congo - © Nicolas Teindas



## EIGHT COMMITMENTS

### Commitment 1

Commit, in international bodies (high-level G8 and G20 meetings) and to civil society, to continue advocating education in support of development. In 2010, France will be particularly active, along with Britain, in a campaign for education during the football world cup, after which it will strive to optimize the campaign's effects.

### Commitment 2

Strengthen and broaden the French-British partnership, in particular by including it in a European process.

### Commitment 3

Refocus our efforts on the least developed countries (especially in French-speaking Africa) by using digital technologies to improve the quality of education and training.

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### Commitment 5

Promote the goal of male-female equality in education by combining a cross-cutting approach with specific actions.

### Commitment 6

Resolutely pursue our action in favor of reinforcing State sectoral policies, which involve all the sub-sectors of education and training.

### Commitment 7

Support French centers of expertise dealing with education and French as a foreign language, and help create vocational training certification programs, particularly in the informal sector.

### Commitment 8

Strengthen French technical assistance in international bodies (UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF, European Union, African Union, World Bank) and help structure both public and private French expertise.



University of Ouagadougou campus (Burkina Faso). Outdoor study session. - © IRD/Rival

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## The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Directorate General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships

The missions of the french ministry of foreign and european affairs are:

- summarize information on the changing global economy and put it into perspective, prepare decisions on the French government's foreign policy,
- draft France's foreign policy,
- coordinate France's international relations,
- protect French interests abroad and assist French nationals outside France.

The creation of the Directorate General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships (DGM) in April 2009, as part of the reform of the Ministry, enables diplomacy to anticipate, identify and respond to the challenges of globalisation more effectively.

Confronted with global issues that have a direct impact on the lives of our citizens and multiple actors, the Ministry intends, through the DGM, to emphasise the need to tackle global issues, in the firm belief that every major economic, cultural and societal issue calls for collective action with more outward focus, anticipation, interministerial coordination, responsiveness, interdisciplinarity and a resolutely European approach.



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