

AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH: NIGER

GOOD GOVERNANCE LESSONS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

In 2003 Niger adopted a 10-year plan outlining its goals in education. This helped increase enrolment by 37 percent in 2000 to 62.6 percent in 2008 with a large growth in the number of girls in school. School budgets are not decentralised in Niger. Teaching is in French, Arabic or other languages, depending on the type of school.

As part of the three-year Africa Education Watch programme, the Association Nigérienne de Lutte Contre la Corruption, the national chapter Transparency International in Niger assessed whether the education management systems are effective in controlling and preventing corruption in the country. The study examined whether school administrations are genuinely accountable and whether participatory governance systems bring public service closer to the user, particularly parents.

The key objectives of the programme are to:

- identify approximate levels of resource leakages or delays in resource transfer from the central government to school level
- determine the extent of (illegal) fees and other costs to parents, and
- assess decentralised accountability structures and determine how effective they are at controlling resources and preventing corruption.

AFRICA EDUCATION WATCH RESPONDENTS: NIGER

General Public (parents/guardians)	1,200
Head Teachers	75
Parent Teacher Association Chairs	75
Inspectors of Education	9

COUNTRY FACTS*

Primary Education in Niger	FREE
Length of study	6 years
Population 2007	14m
GNP per capita 2007 (PPP US\$)	627
Percentage of Population living on Less than US\$1.25 per day	65.9%
Public current expenditure on primary education as % of GNP (2006)	1.7%
Net enrolment ratio primary school (2007)	45%
Primary-age children (2006)	2.3m



FINDINGS

- Less than one in five parents said they had access to their school's financial information.
- 100 per cent of schools had either no or incomplete financial documentation.
- 11 per cent of parents reported paying registration fees (which are illegal).
- 92 per cent of head teachers received no financial management training.
- 49 per cent of School Management Committee members received no financial management training.
- The most pressing problems in the school system cited by head teachers are, in order:
 - Lack of textbooks and school supplies
 - Insufficient classroom furniture
 - The poor state of school buildings
 - Low teacher salaries
- There are limited school inspections because of transportation problems.

“ 100 per cent of schools had either no or incomplete financial documentation ”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ministry of Education should address the following to improve standards:
 - increase teacher training and pedagogical support
 - recruit competent and qualified teachers
 - replace straw hut classrooms with concrete schools
 - provide schools with toilets and clean drinking water
- School management structures, including finances, human resources and school supplies, should be decentralized.
- The government should introduce appropriate anti-corruption legislation, promoting transparency and information flows within the system.
- School Management Committees should receive adequate financial and management training.
- There should be well-publicised campaigns to support and encourage parent participation in school management.
- Ensure head teachers receive financial and management training.

Contact

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