

# Burkina Faso: Ten-Year Basic Education Development Plan

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## Executive Summary

According to the 2005 Human Development Report, Burkina Faso ranks 175th on a total of 177 countries and the adult literacy rate was a few years ago 12.8 percent (18.5 percent for men and 8.1 percent for women). In spite of this low record, education indicators are getting better: the gross primary enrolment ratio, which was 41.8 percent in 1998/1999 (49.6 percent for men and 34 percent for women), was 46.2 percent in 2002/2003 (53.1 percent for men and 39.2 percent for women) and reached 56 percent in 2004/2005. These are the first results of the 10-Year Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB) launched in 2002, which aims at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. It is entirely based on a managing for development results approach. As of September 2005, the World Bank, Netherlands, France, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, and Belgium had contributed a total of €71 million to the first phase of this program through common financing procedures. Requirements for results reporting have been aligned with national systems and harmonized between international donors.

## Problems/Issues Addressed by the Program

In Burkina Faso, where five out of ten children enroll in primary school, only three of them complete the sixth year of basic education, considered to be the minimum level required to make literacy irreversible. Although the country's gender parity index moved from .71 in 2000 to about .86 in 2004, it is still one of the lowest on the continent. Girls score worse than boys in most indicators. The completion rate rose from 19 percent to 31 percent between 1991 and 2003 but it also remains one of the lowest in African countries. The low completion rate is due to a high level of repeaters in primary public schools and to the fact that many schools do not offer six grades of schooling.

Before adopting the PDDEB, Burkina Faso had one of the weakest education systems in the world. In the 2001 EFA Development Index, it rated dead last. Since that time there has been some truly impressive growth. Because of the solid response to these challenges, Burkina Faso is on the leading edge of program-based approaches in this sector, and thus provides valuable experience with MfDR to share with other countries and donors.

## Objectives Pursued

Burkina Faso adopted an education policy statement in May 2001 and in 2002 launched the 10-Year Basic Education Development Plan (PDDEB, 2002-11) included in the PRSP. The PDDEB has three components:

- Increasing the supply of basic education, including alternative education, and reducing socio-economic, regional and gender disparities;
- Improving the quality, relevance and effectiveness of basic education and developing coherence and integration between the various levels and styles of education;
- Building capacity to lead, manage and assess centralized and decentralized sectoral structures as well as the ability to coordinate external assistance.

The PDDEB appears to be realistic and feasible, and according to evaluations, there is solid country ownership. Macro-economic constraints have been taken into consideration and trade-offs made between objectives and resources; conditionalities for macroeconomic budget support are consistent with the PDDEB. The cost of implementing phase I of PDDEB was evaluated in 2004 to be 252.5 M€ and about 20 percent of that amount came from the seven donors belonging to the pool. In addition to those mentioned above, there are a few other technical and financial partners.



Burkina Faso is part of the Education For All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA–FTI) launched by representatives of the international donor community on November 27, 2002. It was agreed on that day to help seven developing countries in Africa and Latin America – Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Mauritania, Nicaragua, and Niger – make their education plans a reality. Work is now proceeding with these countries to build the required capacity and to close a financing gap. This agreement under the EFA–FTI will begin the process of ensuring that developing countries reach the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal to provide every girl and boy with a complete primary school education by 2015.

### Design and Implementation

The PDDEB is a sector program and as such has set up an M&E system that allows for regular reporting of performance. The M&E system is acting at two complementary levels: (i) on an international level through global evaluation of progress made by FTI, (ii) at the national level, through regular sectoral joint reviews. To make their financial commitments, donors were required to align their approval and disbursement processes. Donor reporting on performance relies on the same set of indicators as the ones defined in the PDDEB:

#### Resource mobilization indicators: (short-term)

- Education expenditure as a percentage of the gross domestic product
- Education expenditure as a percentage of the government budget
- Primary education expenditure as a percentage of total education budget

#### Output indicators:

- Number of new contract teachers recruited within the last year
- Matching between new contract teachers and new schools
- Construction of new schools
- Pupil-teacher ratio in publicly financed primary schools
- Books-pupil ratio

#### Outcome indicators (short to medium term)

- Primary enrolment (girls' intake rate/boys' intake rate)
- Percentage of repeaters among primary school pupils

#### Impact indicators (medium to long term):

- Primary completion rate: ratio of the total number of students successfully completing (or graduating from) the last year of primary school in a given year to the total number of children of official graduation age in the population
- Gender equality (most major indicators are disaggregated).

The original results framework used by donors was actually a monitoring framework of expected targets, not results in the true sense. The principles of managing for development results have been adopted and targets have been defined for each indicator. Missing key targets is a signal for donors and government to analyze together why things have gone off track and which adaptations should be made in implementation.

Indicators and targets are now used extensively to monitor the progress in the sector and inform its review. Sector reviews heavily rely on indicators and data to assess the progress made in the different components of the program. The biannual joint monitoring reports are stronger in terms of performance information. The assessment of progress against targets allows for the identification of weak points, and for placing more emphasis on components of the program that have registered less progress.

#### Problems Encountered

1. **Targets** – Targets were not updated after Burkina Faso was admitted into the FTI. In spite of considerable new funding, quantified targets set up in the PDDEB were not revised upwards as they should have been.

2. **Expected Results and Achievements** – There is a persistent gap between expected and actual results.

3. **Links between programming tools and budget** – Programming tools (and among them the action plan) and budget are poorly articulated. No link is established between human and financial resources, or between activities and expected outputs. The fact that the final allocation of a given expenditure to an activity is unknown makes it difficult to elaborate the budget according to priorities.

4. **Using results for decision making** – Results are not fully integrated into the decision-making process. In 2002, a Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy (MEBA) document stated that the “logic of MfDR still had to be integrated in order to assure that reports on results were used for decision making and drafting action plans at local level.” According to some donors, there is a lack of appropriation at the local level, particularly in the regions: results are not used as a tool for programming; adaptations in programming are not



made according to results-driven objectives; they do not take into account lessons for better future action.

**5. Access vs. quality** – The emphasis that has been placed on access may have led to some imbalance in program implementation. For example, the last sector review indicated that improvements in quality were slow to materialize. This led the government and development partners to place more emphasis on measures that aimed at improving this aspect.

### Adaptations Made in Implementation

(Note: The following adaptations are discussed in relation to the five ‘problems encountered’ noted above.)

**1. Targets** – In terms of adjustments to the targets, this question has not been tackled yet.

**2. Expected Results and Achievements** – As the MfDR principles are instituted, the gap between expected results and achievements is slowly narrowing. For example, the gross enrollment rate, which was 47.5 percent in 2002, reached 56.8 percent in 2004, whereas the target for 2004 was 56 percent. When actual results do not match expected ones, this can be explained by two factors: (i) the PDDEB was only recently launched in its current results-based form (after its evolution from earlier programming) and thus it is normal that no improvement can yet be recorded in long-term indicators, and (ii) institutional inertia and administrative difficulties slow the process of implementing institutional and human changes.

**3. Links between programming tools and budget** – There has been a gradual integration of MfDR by both the MEBA and the partners. In 2002 the MEBA established a Dash Board of 20 key indicators to act as an operational framework to guide the PDDEB results. Although not fully operational, it has been adapted to PRSP and PDDEB indicators. The level of resistance to this new approach is not unusual relative to other countries, and progress has been made in appropriating the principles. The key factor is time, as one cannot expect major management changes to be appropriated in a year or so.

In order to improve the consistency between budget and activities, a new accounting methodology will be implemented, and in 2006 an expert team will be in charge of issuing proposals on order to improve the programming calendar.

**4. Using results for decision making** – Things are slowly improving with the strengthening of “bottom-up” planning tools.

**5. Access vs. quality** – The need for a balanced approach emphasizing both access and quality has been reiterated at the annual sector review. This is a typical

example where data analysis can be used to correct imbalances in policy implementation. As a result, surveys on quality will be regularly carried out.

The capacity constraints that have impeded scaling-up the implementation of the PDDEB are also slowly being reduced. Throughout the whole process, donors have responded to requests to build the required capacity. Following the principles of the Paris Declaration, the approaches used were, for the most part, coordinated and consistent with national development strategies. The methods generally used were accompaniment, mentoring, and learning by doing – often using local experts instead of substitution and the classical approach of technical assistance. This has assured that the MEBA remains clearly in the driver’s seat.

The tight donor pool was built up to prevent donors from working outside the program-based approach. Even in the current evolution of this program, it is necessary for the lead donor to monitor the situation closely. It has taken a great deal of effort to align approval procedures; to maintain simple, consistent indicators; and to reduce the monitoring and reporting burden on the host government. It will always be necessary to adjust to hiccups when new donors come in. All programs must accept this reality and take the time to allow for such adjustment.

### Factors for Success

- External funding is well aligned with national priorities, objectives and results, successfully applying the Paris Declaration indicators.
- There has been stronger risk management. This has given a sense of confidence as donors move toward more-and-more effective forms of aid.
- Strong national and international commitment in favor of the education and gender-related MDGs. This commitment needs constant reinforcement.
- The significant progress made to date is due in part to the fact that ambitious targets have been set by the Government of Burkina Faso. These may have imposed heavy demands on all parties, and some may seem unlikely to be reached, but they appear to have increased the level of motivation to achieve them. Being a signatory to the MDGs and the EFA, Burkina Faso would, of course, be hard pressed to set a lower level of objectives.
- It is essential to maintain an effective and continuous dialogue among donors and between donors and partner countries in order to disseminate information and maintain an up-to-date flow of information within the partnership. In spite of the fact that biannual PDDEB reviews provide a framework for this dialogue, the need for dialogue must still be reinforced among all parties.



## Lessons Learned

- When appropriation is weak and reports on results are not used for strategic planning or for identifying necessary midcourse corrections, long-term capacity building becomes essential.
- Short-term training sessions for administrative staff must be complemented by long-term support in the administration in order to strengthen country capacity to manage for results. There has been a general movement away from short-term training.
- Ad-hoc activities need to be targeted according to expressed need. The most effective approaches use methods such as accompaniment for capacity development, and are results-based. This process is reducing defensiveness and leads to a valuable dialogue based on results, although it is an activity that requires constant monitoring among the donors.
- MfDR has to allow for results below targets and provide a way of dealing with situations where key targets have not been met. Learning and a focus on continuous improvement must guide this process, and MfDR demands a comprehensive dialogue between government and partners and between donors themselves in order to jointly make adjustments as needed to achieve expected outcomes.
- Integration of MfDR takes time and effort as all parties move from a project-based attitude toward the new joint approaches to development effectiveness.

### Summary: How the PDDEB Program Embodies the Five MfDR Principles

*1. At all phases – from strategic planning through implementation to completion and beyond – focus the dialogue on results for partner countries, development agencies, and other stakeholders.*

- Dialogue on results has been at the core of the PDDEB strategic planning. The PDDEB review, which takes place twice a year, is another opportunity for government and donors to have a dialogue on results and to make necessary midcourse corrections.

*2. Align actual programming, monitoring, and evaluation activities with the agreed expected results.*

- As described in a procedures manual and justified according to a central government framework, each province is requested to draw yearly action plans in order to achieve quantified targets. Central government funding is sent to the provinces to fund the yearly action plans. The allocations are based on what is eligible according to established, transparent procedures, not on expected results.

- As of 2005, there will be a six-month lag between budget submission and the vote by the National Assembly. This encourages an established management and planning exercise. Adjustments can be made, respecting the overall envelope, to allow for unexpected activities that will improve results attainment.
- Experience has shown that the government can improve its planning capacity by working within its own systems and reinforcing the acquisition of a results-based approach. This learning-by-doing approach has resulted in gradually improving action plans, although there is still room for improvement.

*3. Keep the results reporting system as simple, cost-effective, and user-friendly as possible.*

- PDDEB indicators are consistent with the MDGs and with FTI indicators and the PRSP. This has taken effort to achieve, and requires constant monitoring and conviction to retain the joint donor framework and thus prevent new requirements being imposed from individual donors.

*4. Manage for, not by, results, by arranging resources to achieve outcomes.*

- The program has moved from a situation of management of activities to management for results.
- The old methods of conditionalities allow results to drive the system; the new participatory approaches are nonpunitive and lead to a fruitful policy dialogue.
- The regions and the central directorate must defend their action plans to the PDDEB secretariat. Accompaniment, facilitation, and other capacity building exercises are still useful in this area.

*5. Use results information for management learning and decision making, as well as for reporting and accountability.*

- The biannual joint missions have produced substantial movement and in some cases the government has reacted very constructively to the pressure.
- The Minister still stresses that the strength of the partnership between the State and the donor partners was due to the progress of the MfDR approach, particularly in the area of gender equality.
- We are seeing substantial achievements at the outcome level.



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