

## Madagascar Joint Review Report October 17-18, 2008

### 1. Introduction

The Seventh Joint Review of Madagascar's Education for All (EFA) Plan implementation was held on October 15-17, 2008. Its objectives were (i) to review progress in 2008 activities, (ii) to assess the initial implementation of the Education Reform, and (iii) to discuss the 2009 Annual Work Plan and 3-year Work Plan for 2009-2011. The technical and financial partners conducted brief field visits to three sites prior to the review meeting: two sites where the new educational reform is implemented and one non-reform site<sup>1</sup>. The agenda is provided in Annex 1.

The partners appreciated the participation of Ms. Stangeline Ralambomanana Randrianarisandy, Minister of Education and Mr. Ying Vah Zafilahy, Vice Minister for Higher Education and TVET. The sessions were chaired by Mr Romain Ndrianjafy, Secretary General of the Ministry of National Education (*Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* (MEN), with the assistance of the Director General of Basic Education and Literacy, Ms Tahina Razafindramary. The review was also assisted by representatives of the Ministry of Finance, senior MEN officials, a few regional and district education directors as well as a mayor and municipality leader. Representatives from the Prime Minister's office and the Madagascar Action Plan (MAP) office attended the joint review meetings (JRM) throughout.

The Joint Review was based on the MEN September 2008 draft Monitoring Report on the implementation of the EFA Plan. The partners submitted comments and questions to the report in advance (Annex 2). Many of these were addressed during the review meetings, while others still need further analysis during coming reviews.

As usual, the partners appreciated the MEN's thorough and transparent assessment of both the strengths and challenges of the implementation of EFA in Madagascar.

As initially scheduled in the 2007 revised EFA plan, the Government of Madagascar launched the transformation of primary education in September 2008, including the extension of the primary cycle from five to seven years, a comprehensive revision of the curriculum and the decentralization of educational management. While the partners recognized that the implementation of the Reform was in an early stage, the Review permitted a discussion on the preparatory phase as well as the initial implementation at school level in targeted districts. Key concerns and recommendations were raised on the way forward to successfully implement the Reform.

The Joint Review confirmed that the implementation of the Madagascar EFA Plan is still on track, although classroom construction in particular is behind schedule. The JRM highlighted the need to ensure that the understanding of the major changes taking place through the Reform is deepened and widened among stakeholders and the public in general. The challenges and persisting problems in the sector are well understood by the MEN and those highlighted in this report are considered by the partners as shared concerns in a well-functioning partnership. The partners continue their engagement to accompany the MEN in seeking solutions to these problems.

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<sup>1</sup> The Reform will be implemented progressively, starting with 20 school districts during the 2008/09 school year.

## 2 Summary

In general, the main finding of the Joint Review is that the MEN has made good progress in implementing its EFA Plan in only a very short period of time (in approximately six months since the Endorsement Mission – beyond the range of preparatory activities in 2007). Significant progress has been made in a number of areas: the introduction of the new language policy, curriculum development, production and distribution of new textbooks and manuals, and procedures for and implementation of the “Local Catalytic Fund” (LCF) to increase resources to vulnerable regions, districts, pedagogical zones and schools. Progress was also made in the areas of school feeding and the establishment of training schemes for the FRAM teachers and the “semi-specialised” teachers for grades 6 and 7. Increased resources have been allocated to school level through the school funds (*caisse école*), increases in FRAM salaries, the LCF and school manuals and supplementary reading materials.

In the implementation of the reform, local mobilisation is visible through local-level pragmatic responses to problems. In the reform districts visited, parents expressed a positive attitude to the increased educational opportunity offered through a lengthened primary cycle. The use of Malagasy as the language of instruction was experienced as leading to improved understanding of the school programme among parents.

The MEN recognizes the challenge inherent in simultaneously pursuing solutions to persisting problems of access and retention, on the one hand, and the educational reform on the other hand. There are still key problem areas where progress is slow: The reform has brought new construction needs, while many communities are still without schools altogether and others only offer an incomplete primary cycle. The objectives on classrooms are not yet met, mainly because of continued delays in the implementation of the construction program and considerable cyclone damage.

There has been a range of capacity building efforts at regional (DREN), district (CISCO) and pedagogical zone (ZAP) levels, primarily in the 20 CISCOs of the first phase of the reform and those benefiting from the first phase of the LCF. However, decentralized education personnel still have difficulties in understanding the reform and their role in it, as well as the vision and objectives of the educational transformation.

A sophisticated communication strategy has been finalised and launched, addressing both internal and public communication, but much remains to be done to enhance understanding in school districts other than those initially targeted for the reform, as well as to involve civil society and create partnerships with private education (including faith-based school directions, NGOs and commercial providers). Other strategies are still works in progress, including those for post-basic education. Delays in some areas suggest that the Plan should be reprioritised for 2009, with obstacles identified and remedial strategies adopted.

Following a change of Minister and a reorganisation of central MEN departments in May 2008, political leadership and commitment to education remains strong. The proportion of GDP for education has continued to increase from 3.3% in 2006 to 3.6% in 2008; the MEN share of the national budget continues to be relatively stable at 17.6%<sup>2</sup>. The overall budget execution rate is slightly higher in comparison to 2007.

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<sup>2</sup> This represents a small overall decrease of 0.4% since 2007. Approximately 44.4% of the total funding for education in 2008 is provided by internal resources; the Catalytic Fund covers 22.7% and the Norwegian fund represents 10.6% of the total resources in 2008.

The review was conducted in good spirit and demonstrated an amicable and constructive relationship between the MEN and its partners (and a high degree of consensus between the partners themselves on key issues). In view of the limited time and full agenda, it was not possible to agree on the annual work plan for 2009, priorities for 2009 or an eventual adjusted timeframe for the reform. These factors, together with other matters related to the Budget for 2009 and a reconsideration of the repetition rate indicator, were addressed in the weeks following the meetings. In the future, it is important that the annual work plan is ready for assessment and approval by the second annual JRM each year.

There is room for improving the review format, to optimize the usefulness of the positive existing dialogue for both partners and the MEN.

### **3. Quality**

The technical reforms aimed at improving quality are well underway, including the language policy, teacher training strategies (for semi-specialized and parents' association recruited (FRAM) teachers) and the curriculum revision. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum is being used in the 20 school districts embarking on the reform this year. International assistance and advice from the Scientific Counsel<sup>3</sup> have been applied to the development of the curriculum, associated programmes of study and related textbooks and manuals.

The field visits indicated appreciation among teachers and students with regard to the availability of manuals and texts in schools, although some teachers found the new curriculum materials difficult to understand. Further teacher training will be necessary to ensure that the new curriculum will bring the desired results in terms of students' learning. The field visits also revealed weaknesses in language mastery, especially among teachers in rural areas. This is likely to affect their capacity to deliver the new curriculum. Assessment of language competencies followed by training should be organized urgently for FRAM teachers as well as for semi-specialized teachers.

In spite of the implementation of a competency-based approach to primary school teaching at full scale since 2007, teaching is still often didactic and disciplinarian. The renovation of the teacher training system is a positive step towards improved teaching practices through systematic in-service teacher training and upgrading, but the pool of qualified trainers who can effectively and convincingly introduce new teaching practices into the classroom is limited. The mobilization and training of younger trainers and pedagogical councilors could be a way to break with more traditional methods. The partners await clarifications during future JRMs on how the various training strategies are further developed and integrated, including distance learning through innovative technologies. Scaling up distance education approaches will help reach a maximum number of teachers throughout the country, especially FRAM teachers and those located in difficult to reach locations.

The expansion of the teaching force through recruitment of community (FRAM) teachers is critical to the success of the EFA Plan and its associated reforms. It is therefore important that high priority be given to the resourcing, management, monitoring and evaluation of teacher recruitment and training. Without a well-functioning training and career development system, there is a risk of a high attrition rate among FRAM teachers. The training scheme that has been developed for FRAM

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<sup>3</sup> The counsel was established to provide external professional advice on the reform, and consists of both external and national experts with a range of specialties.

teachers still poses some challenges. While it is innovative and adaptive to the reality of a teaching body with considerable variations in existing levels of training, its innovative nature also means the level of risk is relatively high. Successful implementation will depend on how well the system is resourced and managed, as well as on well-trained counsellors and clear and appropriate pedagogical concepts.

The JRM and annual Progress Report did not reveal any major changes (since February 2008) in the systems or capacity to evaluate performance in the sector, overall, nor to set standards for or measure learning attainment. Indicators for measuring performance are still largely input-based (e.g. net and gross enrolment) and completion and dropout rates serve as proxies for determining quality. Generally, the culture of performance management and reporting (using learning attainment and other student outcomes<sup>4</sup> as key indicators) has yet to be developed.

### *Repetition Rate*

The repetition rate has increased and was discussed during the JRM. To effectively address the underlying problems and regain progress towards the EFA Plan objectives, it was agreed that the MEN would provide an analysis of the causes and define remedial measures to get progress back on track. The short-term annual objectives on repetition should be adjusted in order to remain realistic, but the objective for 2012 should remain the same. One week after the JRM, the MEN made a preliminary presentation (see Annex 3) on the analysis, new targets and measures to be taken. The new proposed targets are presented in table 1 and a more comprehensive action plan will be transmitted to the partners.

Table 1: Proposed revised targets for the indicator on percentage of repeaters

	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
Original target	19.7	16	14	12	10
Adjusted target		19	17	14	10

## **4. Access**

### *Classroom Construction*

As agreed during the May 2008 JRM and in view of the educational reform and increase in prices, Ministry efforts in 2008 are focused on the construction of classrooms for the new 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> year of primary school. Moreover, the construction programme for 2008 was reduced as a result of price increases. The plan at the start of the year was to construct 2,938 classrooms. After the May review, this number was reduced to 1,888. The revision resulted in a delay in the signing of contracts with implementing partners.

Nevertheless, the programme has now been launched. The agencies contracted to manage the programme (*Maîtres d'Ouvrage Délégué*) have all launched their call for bids, and those working through the community approach have started preparatory training for communes and communities. The work has started in some school districts implementing the reform, and the construction could still be completed by May 2009.

<sup>4</sup> For example: numbers progressing into further stages of education; outcomes of those leaving the system; improvements in household income and health, decrease in early marriage and maternity.

To keep track of progress and address issues efficiently, it will be important to immediately put in place a monitoring system. This system should permit performance comparisons for the different approaches and the documentation of lessons learned for the 3-year programme 2009-2011. In particular with regard to the community-based approach, regular meetings will be necessary with the agencies and beneficiaries to facilitate progress and capitalize on experience. This monitoring should be accompanied by technical audits and beneficiary surveys. Finally, it is necessary to harmonize statistics and indicators to enable a comprehensive understanding of progress.

In general, the success of the construction programme will be determined by the strengthening of capacity in operational piloting at the central and decentralized levels of the education system. Construction management needs to be more responsive to changing situations and obstacles as they arise. This requires the implementation of three actions: (i) reinforcement of the technical teams at the central level, including the UAT; (ii) training and support to school districts and appointed *Maîtres d'ouvrages* and the allocation of resources to permit them to effectively carry out their role; and (iii) reinforced information exchange between central and decentralized levels (on programme decisions, progress, etc.).

In terms of the priorities originally established in the construction strategy and the deviation from these in 2008, it is necessary to rapidly re-establish the equilibrium between the three construction priorities: communities without schools, schools with an incomplete primary cycle and the reform. Otherwise there is a risk of accentuating disparities among school districts. It must also be kept in mind that the primary objective of the EFA Plan is universal primary education within the current 5-year cycle.

The efforts to harmonize construction under the consultative committee have permitted the agreement on standard plans (*plans types*) and exchange of experiences. This should be continued both at the technical level (maximizing use of local materials, bidding process, etc.) and in terms of the different implementation and management approaches. The consultative committee should analyze procedures and constraints of the different implementing partners on a regular basis.

Harmonization efforts could be completed by the extension to nation-wide coverage of the role of certain partners with specific competencies. For example, the programme implemented by ILO (training of local operators) is relevant for all the enterprises involved in the EFA programme. UNICEF's experience in water and sanitation is another example, both in terms of provision of access to potable water and hygiene training. Finally, it will be important to standardize community construction interventions (training in respecting norms and standards).

#### *Actions to promote children's enrolment*

The partners have noted the efforts at different levels by various entities (government and non-government) to increase enrolment. Taking into account factors preventing enrolment and retention, a number of actions have been taken, including (i) reducing parents' direct costs, (ii) identifying out of school children and sensitizing communities through the LCF, (iii) school feeding in areas of severe food insecurity, (iv) reflections on the adjustment of the school calendar, (v) training of children for school reinsertion. In some instances, a result of these actions has been an increase in over-sized classes, which will be addressed through the actions defined in connection with the adjustment of repetition rate targets (Annex 3).

The JRM included a discussion on continued obstacles to greater access to public primary education. These include (i) delays in the procurement of school kits as compared to the 2007-08 school year, (ii) continued contributions by parents to FRAM teacher salaries and school operational costs, (iii) the absence of appropriated criteria for support to vulnerable children, and (iv) a failure to optimize the use of existing infrastructures (for many public primary schools; it seems that classrooms are only used for half a day, suggesting possibilities for increasing access within existing structures).

## 5. Equity

Increased support and resources to vulnerable schools is vital for extending opportunities to the especially vulnerable and those under-represented as a result of gender, income, region and special learning needs. The building of extra classrooms and the extension of the primary education cycle is to some extent increasing equity in access, although the distances some children have to travel to reach their school is still a major deterrent.

There has been encouraging progress in identifying and targeting the most vulnerable school districts, in particular through the Local Catalytic Fund (LCF). 34 districts in 14 regions benefited from the LCF in 2008, and an additional 31 districts in the same 14 regions will be targeted in 2009. The partners appreciate this effort to decentralize resources, especially to school level. The LCF is an excellent financial instrument permitting schools, communities and decentralized education services to implement activities for improved access and quality. It is one of the major innovations in 2008 that could facilitate the implementation of the reform. However, criteria and procedures should be communicated better to facilitate optimal use of the initiative by the beneficiaries.

The continuance of fees in one shape or another means that the policy that *No child will be excluded from the education system due to lack of financial resources* is not yet being enacted. The direct and indirect costs of education (FRAM fees, school materials, etc. as well as opportunity costs) mean that many parents still cannot afford to send their children to school. This could be partially alleviated through the use of the LCF in targeted districts, increasing school resources with the intention of reducing parents' direct financial contributions. School canteens is another means to alleviate the effect of poverty on enrolment and retention, but this is still relatively small scale and sustainability is a challenge. Linked to poverty, child labour (some of it dangerous and illegal) is a main factor for poor enrolment, attendance and retention; girls still have onerous domestic chores that affect their performance and boys often leave school early in order to earn money. Children with disabilities are virtually invisible—though action is being taken to reach them. Teachers' attitudes, capacities and resources are important to address in this regard.

A large number of school-age children remain out of school or drop out before literacy and basic competencies are acquired. At the level of the school district the JRM evidence suggests that insufficient information (and to some extent understanding) exists about those out of school and the reasons for their exclusion. But parents are clearly committed to education for their children and there is evidence of their greater involvement in school matters.

## 6. Extension of primary and reform of Lower Secondary (*collège*)

The MEN is actively carrying forward the reform and is phasing the implementation of activities. Delays have been inevitable and not all have been within the powers of MEN to prevent; where they have occurred they have been responded to with mitigation strategies. The supply of adequate materials to schools and adequate training for teachers who will be working with the new curriculum should be prioritized as the reform moves forward.

Specifically, as planned in the revised EFA Plan, the MEN added a new 6th year of primary education in 20 school districts in September 2008. The partners noted that this introduction was possible through the recruitment and training of 2,719 semi-specialized teachers, the development of the curriculum and production and distribution of part of the manuals. Local responses to difficulties contributed to permit the timely launching of the reform at school level. In the majority of reform districts, local communities found temporary classroom solutions or constructed classrooms with local materials while awaiting the new classrooms.

Apart from the delays in school construction, certain aspects of implementation need improvement. In particular, a better local planning process is necessary to (i) reduce the distance for students to the school offering the 6th year and (ii) manage the number of sections to optimize the number of students per section.

One aspect of the impact of the reforms, which may require careful analysis, is the effect on teachers who currently consider themselves secondary school teachers but who in the future will be teachers within an extended primary cycle. Major changes tend to create a degree of uncertainty and, often, resistance. It is early in the implementation stage to ascertain what the response is at junior secondary level, but it is a matter which the communication strategy might usefully target, or even one for which a special survey should be commissioned.

The MEN has determined the strategy for reforming the college (to be implemented in four phases between 2009 and 2011<sup>5</sup>) and has elaborated a work plan. In 2009, ***collèges of excellence*** clustered with public and private *collèges* will be implemented in 10 of the 20 reform districts. This reform involves the preparation of the new curriculum for 8th grade by 2010/11, the production of didactic materials and the recruitment and training of teachers. Piloting and supervision will be managed by the *collège* unit within the DGEFA.

The ***open schools*** are aimed at increasing capacity and offering an alternative to formal education at the lower secondary level. The offer will be equivalent in its content to the *collèges* but adapted to the needs of those out of school. Before finalizing the strategy, a pilot study will be launched on the types, characteristics and varieties of open schools to meet the country's needs. A public-private partnership will be vital in this regard.

The partners would like to receive the action plans for both the *collèges* of excellence and the open schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Pilot stage from January 2009 (in 10 CISCO); second phase in August 2009 (+20 CISCO); third phase in August 2010 (50 CISCO), last phase in August 2011 (31 CISCO).

## 7. Budget and human resources

### *Budget execution 2008*

In one sense, the budget execution has improved compared to previous years. At the end of the third quarter, the overall engagement rate was approximately 85% for primary. However, the rate for internal investments was relatively weak, at 55%.

In fact, the engagement rate for internal investment is weak for all the sub-sectors of education. For primary education, this is due to the delays in the implementation of the construction programme. For the other sub-sectors, low expenditure is related to challenges in the definition of strategies and actions.

Low budget execution rates are also observed in the majority of the regional education offices (DRENs). It seems that within the framework of the regionalization of the PIP, the decentralized sectoral authorities are confronting problems of coordination with regional authorities in terms of budget management. The LCF could have a positive effect on improved budget execution at decentralized levels, as an engine for transformation at school level to improve quality.

The impacts of the quarterly regulation of budget engagements have been mitigated in the education sector. At the central level, the MEN has been able to schedule engagement in accordance with the ceilings established by the Ministry of Finance, whereas at the DREN and district levels, the difficulties persist.

### *Preparation of the 2009 budget*

The partners recognize the efforts of the Government in improving the budget preparation process for 2009. The negotiations between the MEN and the Ministry of Finance have led to the decision to reduce the salary budget allocation in favour of transfers. This decision is in line with the concern to align the MEN salary budget allocation with the number of teachers and staff registered with the MEN, and the need for increased transfers to decentralized structures and schools.

The JRM analyzed the preliminary information on the 2009 budget to evaluate the domestic resources allocated to the education sector. Based on the figures presented during the review and additional information from the Ministry of Finance, it appears that (i) the fiscal revenue ratio will increase to 12.5% in 2009, which is in line with the projected increase of 0.5 GDP percentage points per year in the EFA Plan and (ii) in the 2009 budget, the education share will be about 24.4% in relation to total Government domestic resources (exclusive of interest and mandatory expenditures<sup>6</sup>). This is slightly lower than the 25% announced in the policy statement submitted by the Government to the technical and financial partners in connection with the endorsement of the revised EFA Plan in February 2008. The partners emphasize that it will be in the Government's interest to keep to the set objective to ensure that the Catalytic Funds are considered an additional contribution and not a substitution for internal resources.

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<sup>6</sup> Mandatory expenditures refer to expenditures for the national water and electricity provider, the sterilization costs of the Central Bank, the African Union Summit, the replenishment of the civil servant pension funds and the payments arrears.

Table 2: Share of education budget in 2009

	Amount in billion Malagasy Ariary (MGA)	
Total Government Budget (Domestic and External Resources)	3,630.26	(1)
Government Domestic Resources	2,393.80	(2)
Available Government Domestic Resources available (Government Domestic Resources excluding exceptional mandatory expenditures)*	2,116.90	(3)
Total Education Budget (Domestic and External Resources)	644.09	(4)
Education Domestic Resources	515.73	(5)
<b>Education Domestic Resources as percentage of Government Domestic Resources **</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>(6)= (5)/(3)*100</b>

\*Note: For the budget 2009, there will be exceptional mandatory expenditures of amounting to MGA 276.9 billion.

\*\* If the exceptional mandatory expenditures were included in the total government domestic resources, then the share of education domestic resources would be about 21%

### *Human Resources*

For the 2008-2009 school year, the MEN has recruited the required 2,719 semi-specialized teachers for the new 6th and 7th grades of primary in the 20 districts targeted for the initial implementation of the reform. The partners have noted improvements in the dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, particularly in the use of numerical replacements<sup>7</sup>.

The efforts to stabilize the budgetary posts continue and are showing results. The situation of 10,676 teachers and MEN officials identified as non-active is now under control<sup>8</sup>. This should permit improved programming of recruitment and salary budgets. It is expected that the liberated posts can be used for the numerical replacement of posts or that the freed allocations can be used for the payment of FRAM teachers.

### **8. Performance Plan 2009-2011<sup>9</sup>**

A strength of the 3-year plan presented by the MEN is the attention to financial sustainability in the implementation of the EFA Plan. The 3-year plan includes the gradual increase in the salaries of the FRAM teachers, as well as the progressive inclusion of the FRAM teachers' salaries in the education regular budget (approximately 97% of the total FRAM teachers salary will be paid through the regular education budget in 2011).

Nevertheless, some adjustments have been made compared to the EFA Plan. As a result of the impact of general price increases, the MEN plans to reduce the number of classroom constructions for the three years and only progressively increase the

<sup>7</sup> The recruitment of 2719 semi-specialized teachers was realized, with 156 new posts in the 2007 Finance Law, 1800 new posts in the 2008 Finance Law and 759 numerical replacements.

<sup>8</sup> Out of the 10,676 teachers identified as not active, the situations of 257 irregular cases remain to be resolved, administrative acts are being issued for 3593 who are no longer paid, and final verification is underway for 5387 who are still being paid. The remaining 1439 have been solved.

<sup>9</sup> To unify the different sectoral ministries' procedures, performance plans will replace work plans.

number of school manuals per student. These measures should not affect the original objectives of the EFA Plan.

Hence, instead of the 9,000 new classrooms planned for the 2009-2011 period, 6,450 will be constructed (2,450 for grades 1-5 and 4,000 for grades 6 and 7). This seems more realistic with regard to the implementation capacity and is based on the plan to improve the use of existing infrastructures through double shifts. For the school manuals, the goal is 2 manuals per student in 2009, 3 per student in 2010 and 4 per student in 2011.

The partners would appreciate receiving the 3-year plan and the annual performance plan for 2009 in order to integrate these plans in their respective reports.

## **9. Preparation of the next Catalytic Fund allocation**

During the review, the World Bank presented an overview of the preparation of the next CF allocation. The MEN and partners were reminded that the preparatory procedures are aligned with the internal World Bank procedures. For the moment, decisions have been made with regard to two key issues: (i) the instrument applied will be Sector Investment Lending (SIL) and no longer Development Policy Operation (DPO); and (ii) the status quo with certain improvements in terms of the management and particularly the flux of the funds.

The JRM was informed that the Project Concept Note (PCN) has already been published and that the World Bank team is currently elaborating the Project Appraisal Document (PAD). This will be subject to an internal review in the course of December 2008. The consultants recruited through the EPDF presented their reports during the review. The grant agreement is expected to be signed in the beginning of February 2009.

## **10. Institutional Reinforcement at central and decentralized levels**

In relation to the study on institutional capacity, the partners suggest adding a more participative dimension to the analysis. The partners consider it necessary to consolidate the mechanisms and action plans of the EFA Plan and review the management of the Plan in its entirety in order to give the appropriate responsibilities to actors at different levels of the system:

- Re-energize the Piloting Committee (for the EFA and Reform) and improve delegation to the central Ministry Departments
- Improve communication and information, as well as support to decentralized entities within the sector to help them efficiently implement their new responsibilities
- Improve delegation to decentralized entities of the education sector: redefine priority missions and the level of delegated responsibilities, provide more authority and resources to decentralized levels
- Simplify the management mechanisms, procedures and tools so that decentralized structures can focus on essential tasks and efficiently implement innovations
- Implement quarterly reviews of the annual action plans (or performance plans) at the level of the decentralized structures and take results of these reviews

properly into account, to improve integration in plans and strategies of analyses and proposals of field-level actors.

## **11. Progress towards a sector-wide approach**

The JRM meeting included discussions on literacy training and school reinsertion through catch-up programmes. Scattered provision for out-of-school children has been made by various organizations, though there is as yet no coherent strategy or structured partnership with NGOs working in this area. Officers at school district level seem unaware of which organizations are working in their districts and what the procedures are for establishing linkages.

The wider EFA commitment to adult literacy still requires concerted attention, and the causal relationships between adult literacy and children's attendance and performance in school is not being systematically addressed (although it is tacitly understood). A strategy for literacy training has been developed by the MEN and in future JRMs the integration of this strategy into the EFA monitoring could help enhance the understanding of linkages. The early childhood education strategy is being gradually rolled out starting in 2008 and should also be better integrated into the EFA monitoring process. Budgeting of these sub-sectors should be reasonably linked to the objectives set in the strategies and Madagascar Action Plan.

Higher, Secondary and technical and vocational education strategies are being developed but there is as yet no evidence of meaningful inter-relationships between the sub-sectors. The potential for higher education to provide research and development services for the whole sector, and especially to play a part in teacher education, could be explored. While the Government plans to reform higher education, the budget balance between the different sub-sectors as outlined in the EFA Plan should remain unchanged. The broader interpretation of sector-wide thinking and planning, which would include the private non-governmental and private education and training commercial sector, needs concretization.

There does not seem to have been much progress in developing the regulatory and policy framework for public private partnership, and increased dialogue with private education providers seems a prerequisite for their full involvement in the education reform. Although the communications strategy addresses private providers, there are signs that their adherence to the new strategies could have been enhanced had they been included in the dialogue at an earlier stage. There is a danger that at least some private providers will try to opt out of the reforms (including those for the language of instruction), and this requires urgent attention and remedy.

## **12. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### *Quality*

- A survey of teaching practices should be conducted, with a view to assess the situation, identify good practices and strengthen teacher training schemes to transform the underlying pedagogical concepts and framework.
- Resourcing, management, monitoring and evaluation of the teacher training initiative should be given priority, including on linguistic reinforcement. This aspect is critical for the success and sustainability of the education reform.

- Assessment of language competencies followed by training should be organized urgently for FRAM teachers as well as for semi-specialized teachers.

#### *Access*

- It is necessary to rapidly re-establish the equilibrium between the three construction priorities: communities without schools, schools with an incomplete primary cycle and the reform.

#### *Equity*

- Initiatives to address the issue of out of school children need to be consolidated in order to develop a coherent strategy to address both provision and demand.

#### *Implementation of the Reform*

- It is necessary to implement the Communications Strategy M&E system as soon as possible, to evaluate the level of knowledge on the Reform at different levels of the system and adjust communication accordingly. Dedicated time needs to be spent at the decentralized levels in order to help regional and district education officers to support the reforms and understand and enact their roles accordingly.
- There is a danger that at least some private providers will try to opt out of the reforms (including those for the language of instruction) and this requires urgent attention and remedy.

#### *Institutional Reinforcement*

- A strength that the partners would like to highlight is efforts in strategic planning with coherence between objectives, activities and resources. The partners recommend further training to local level education officials for improved planning capacities.
- The culture of performance management (using learning attainment and other student outcomes as the key indicators) and reporting needs improvement.
- The LCF is an important strategy, but the criteria and procedures require further explanations and coaching to decentralized levels to ensure their understanding and optimal use of this opportunity. This could be done through information workshops to permit discussion and sharing of good practices between DRENS, CISCOs, Zaps and schools.
- The control mechanisms on utilization of funds transferred to decentralized levels and schools could be strengthened, to reduce fiduciary risk and leakage. Measures taken could be presented to the partners during the next review.
- The Education Management Information System (EMIS) continues to require strengthening, by building on current experiences such as AGEMAD and the survey sites (*sites observatoires*).

*JRM Format and Content*

- The JRM should continue to include discussions on ECD and literacy, including with attention to budgets.
- The MEN and its partners should take stock of the Joint Review methodology and reporting frequency - aiming for even more meaningful dialogue and for a reporting scheme which responds optimally to the different stakeholders' needs and reduces transaction costs. In this regard, it would be useful to update the JRM guidelines and to review the format and content of JRMs before the next review.
- In all JRMs, sufficient time should be allocated to clarifications in response to questions raised by the technical and financial partners prior to the meetings.
- The partners would appreciate receiving the final 3 year performance plan, the action plan for the development of the new *collège* and the comprehensive action plan for the revised targets for the repetition rate.