

# External Evaluation of the Pôle de Dakar

C2G Conseil

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# Mandate: relevant

- Educational sector analysis in sub-Saharan African countries (CSRs/RESENs, ++):
- Assist in the drafting of sector strategies in the region;
- Provide technical support to the national teams responsible for their drafting;
- Gather and process data for comparative analyses of African education policies

# 3 main activities

## 1) Direct technical assistance for countries

- Advice/support for sector analyses, financial simulations, national strategies & programme documents, as well as other programme and monitoring tools;
- the CSRs (Country Status Reports; RESEN in French) account for most of this activity: 18 Francophone, 5 Anglophone; 2 Lusophone reports in 24 countries (several updates)
  - Often in collaboration with World Bank, UNICEF or other agencies
  - **They constitute much of the analytical work underlying the “credible plans” required for FTI/GPE funding**

2) Indirect support aimed at spreading the culture of the economic analysis of educational systems by training managers and decision makers in technical and leadership positions: training, through the PSGSE (sector policy and education system management) programme

- Begun in 2007; 121 trainees from 16 countries

3) Production of statistical and analytical work related to the monitoring of EFA (“Dakar +5, +6, +7”), plus thematic studies

# Methodology

- Documentation
- Direct interviews (n = 125)
- 3 case studies (Bénin, Mauritania, Sénégal)
- 3 questionnaires
  - former PSGSE students (n=121 from 11 countries + UN agencies & NGOs; 66% responded)
  - policy-makers (n=65 in 13 countries; 29% responded)
  - technicians involved in CSRs (n=119 in 20 countries; 25% responded)

# Effective

- Pôle has met expectations; broad satisfaction with its activities/outputs
  - 28 sector analyses (TTISSA included)
  - 23 simulation models
  - 32 technical notes
  - 6 regional reports
  - Training (4 cohorts, 121 graduates, cooperation with UCAD)

# Apparently efficient

- Difficult to assess (lack of clear standards; Pôle has internal analytics for this only since 2012)
- Average cost of CSR+model = \$215,000
- Estimate of efficiency improving: we estimate a 25% efficiency gain between 2001-04 & 2009-12.

# Impact

First, the counterfactual question: What if there were no Pôle?

- Would the analytical work underlying the “credible plans” submitted to FTI/GPE have been of sufficient quality? → implications for FTI/GPE
- What would country capacities for CSRs be without the training program?
- Who would have done it?
  - The Senegal case & the question of substitution.
- Would it have been done “on time”?
- Would the plans have been as credible?



# Impact of CSRs + simulation model

- Interviews with PTF → clear impact
- Interviews with country decision makers → high level of appreciation & sense of ownership
- Overall, highly appreciated
- BUT, is it sustainable without continual support from the Pôle?

# Limits of CSRs & role of Pôle

- Thanks to training program, increasing country capacities for CSR & models (Best case: Mauritania)
- Absence of the 2 huge “black boxes”: the learning process (schools, classrooms) & implementation/service delivery (institutional capacities)
- Implementation capacities: a major issue, often neglected
- Are CSRs too standardized?
- Same level of analysis to all sub-sectors
- Overly academic (mostly, a communication issue)
- Overly donor-driven?
- Participation in joint reviews?
- Take local knowledge into account

# Recommendations on role of Pôle

- Decide on degree of focus: limited to economic analysis or expanded to other areas
  - Institutional capacities (service delivery)
  - Learning assessments/quality (PASEC, SACMEQ)
- Implications of increased country capacities for CSRs
  - Pôle could provide advice & scientific legitimation

# Impact of training program

- Greatly appreciated by participants & by UCAD
- Contribution to UCAD institutional development
- BUT, impact on country capacity to produce CSR is variable, depending on country-specific institutional factors

# Recommendation for sustainability: Learning by doing

- No CSR without tight links to training
- Reduce age at entry (current average = 48)
- Admit candidates with guarantee of participation in national CSR teams → articulate country cohort admissions with CSRs
- Only do CSR where there is a critical mass of trained staff
- Improve tutoring
- Masters II
- Expand program to Gambia, Cape Verde, Morocco → development of critical mass of capabilities for sector analysis

# Governance & management

- Reasonably effective
  - Recommendation: greater functional autonomy for Pôle is essential
- Steering committee was effective, but composed only of upstream stakeholders
  - Recommendations: (i) include “clients” as well as agencies; (ii) Scientific committee

# Recommendations

- Preferred option: remain within UNESCO, but with clear understandings (MoU) of functional autonomy
- Status similar to that of GMR or of ADEA when it was within IIEP (pay attention to all the details)
  - Coordinate with IIEP, UIS & with relevant academic institutions

# The future

- EFA post 2015 remains to be defined
- Avoid policy myopia: ensure the country-specificity of sector analysis → ownership
- Sector analysis group, such as the Pôle makes sense & contains real value added, but only if its work is intimately linked to strategies for capacity development



# Recommendations

- Need to decide if
  - Pôle sticks to its “core business” (economic analysis, PSGSE) → easier, straightforward, little adaptation
  - moves to broader approaches to sector analysis → more difficult, doable, requires intellectual & organizational adaptability
- Pôle’s work should become capacity development-driven at least as much as it has been donor-driven
- Broader disciplinary perspectives
- Identify preconditions for successful (capacity development) Pôle work
- Capitalize on Pôle’s proximity to the field
- Bring local knowledge into the processes

# Policy is as implementation does

*If you want to go fast, you go alone. If you want to go far, you go together*

