

# Overview of Final Evaluation Survey Results

**Dept. in Charge:** Basic Education Division II, Human Development Dept.

<b>1. Outline of the Project</b>	
<b>Country :</b> Republic of Niger	<b>Project Title :</b> Support to the Improvement of School Management through Community Participation (“School for All”) Phase II
<b>Issue/Sector :</b> Basic Education	<b>Cooperation Scheme :</b> Technical cooperation project
<b>Division in Charge :</b> Basic Education Division II, Group 1, Human Development Dept.	<b>Total Cost (evaluation point) :</b> 368 million yen
<b>Period of Cooperation (R/D):</b> 3 years from August 1, 2007 to July 31, 2010	<b>Partner Country’s Implementing Organization :</b> Ministry of National Education
	<b>Supporting Organization in Japan :</b>
<b>1-1 Background of the Project</b>	
<p>Republic of Niger (hereafter referred to as Niger), one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan African countries, is aiming to improve the gross enrollment rate of primary education from 41.7% in 2002 to 94% by the year 2012 under the Ten-year Educational Development Plan (PDDE) 2003-2012". In this plan, transfer of the school management authority from the central government to School Management Committee (COGES) in each primary school has been listed as one of the important pillars of the decentralization policy. This policy outlines that the authority of planning school management, administration of operational cost and teachers should be transferred to community residents living in the vicinity of schools, and assigns a responsibility on awareness raising campaigns for the promotion of school enrollment by placing community residents as central actors in school management. Initially, however, COGES was not fully functioned due to the absence of the implementation strategy to realize the policy into practice. The government of Niger therefore requested the Japanese government for a technical cooperation project to realize the COGES policy. Based on the request, the Project on Support to the Improvement of School Management through Community Participation (“School for All”) Phase I (hereafter referred to as Phase I) was carried out from June 2004 to July 2007.</p> <p>In Phase I, the COGES model was established to promote the efficient community-based school management. The effectiveness of this model has been proved in the target regions of Tahoua and Zinder, and then the model was approved as an official model at the COGES implementation strategy seminar held by Ministry of National Education (MEN) in April 2007. Responding to this approval, the government of Niger decided to disseminate this model over all schools (originally for around 9,000 schools, but around 10,000 schools at present) and a technical cooperation project to disseminate and improve this model was requested to Japan. As a result, the Project on Support to the Improvement of School Management through Community Participation (“School for All”) Phase II (hereafter referred to as Phase II) was initiated for three years from August 2007. Four long-term experts (Chief Advisor/Education Advisor, COGES Monitoring, Development of COGES Initiatives, and Capacity Development/Coordinator) have been dispatched so far (the assignment of the expert of Development of COGES Initiatives ended in December 2009).</p> <p>Phase II is aiming at (1) developing capacity of government officials, school principals, teachers and community residents to disseminate functioning COGES nationwide, (2) building the monitoring system for installed COGES, and (3) establishing a model of school improvement activities conducted by COGES in pilot areas (Tahoua and Zinder regions).</p>	

## 1-2 Contents of Cooperation

### (1) Overall Goal

The quality of and the access to basic education are improved by school management through community participation

### (2) Project Purpose

Structure to establish and sustain COGES is reinforced to make COGES effective nationwide

### (3) Outputs

Output 1: The capacity of actors related to COGES is developed at all levels

Output 2: A COGES monitoring system is established

Output 3: A model of school improvement activities conducted by COGES is established

### (4) Input (up to the point of Final Evaluation)

Japanese side: Total 368 million yen

Long-term experts (4 persons) (112M/M) Provision of equipment 29 million yen

Short-term experts (1 person) (1.83M/M) Operation cost 169 million yen

Counterpart training in Japan (2 persons)

Nigerien side:

Counterparts (12 persons) Provision of equipment: n.a.

Provision of land and facility: n.a.

Operation cost: Training cost financed by the World Bank

## 2. Outline of Evaluation Study Team

Members of Evaluation Team	Leader	Mr. Masahiro Hara	Senior Advisor, JICA
	Education Planning	Mr. Naoki Umemiya	Assistant Director, Basic Education Division II, Basic Education Group, Human Development Department, JICA
	Cooperation Planning	Mr. Shinji Maruyama	Staff, Evaluation Division II, Evaluation Department, JICA
	Evaluation and Analysis	Mr. Haruo ITO	Consultant, Social System Department, ICONS International Cooperation Inc.
Period of Evaluation	From January 18, 2010 to February 11, 2010		Type of Evaluation: Final Evaluation

## 3. Outline of Evaluation Result

### 3-1 Verification of Outputs (results, degree of achievement of overall goal and project purpose)

#### (1) Output of the Project

Output 1: The capacity of actors related to COGES is developed at all levels

The capacity of local officers has been enhanced through the workshop and seminars for Regional Office of National Education (DREN), regional COGES supervisors (PFs), district inspector and district COGES officers (ORs). 6,579 school principals (99.5% of planned number) have participated in the training on democratic election of COGES members, and 13,267 COGES members (98.5% of planned number) have also participated in the training on the development of school action plans in the six regions which have been newly targeted from Phase II of the project. Training expenses have been supported by the World Bank.

Output 2: A COGES monitoring system is established

A model of FCC was formally approved at a workshop organized by the MEN in July 2008, and the

ministerial ordinance was promulgated in October 2002. For the establishment and activation of FCC functions, 99 FCC have been established in the Tahoua and Zinder regions in Phase I of the project. Although the slow-down of COGES monitoring, the reduction of frequency of general assemblies and committee meetings were identified as some problems due to delays in disbursement of the Counterpart Fund, the monthly meetings have been held as planned after the recommencement of the Counterpart Fund disbursement in February 2009.

In six newly targeted regions except Agadez in which the training for the FCC establishment has been postponed due to the deterioration of the security situation, FCCs have been established in all the 151 communes in those five regions except two communes in Diffa with access difficulty.

In terms of the monitoring by local government officials, the district COGES officers are in charge of the regular visits monitoring on FCC activities. Meanwhile, the monthly meeting for COGES officers has been regularly carried out. Through these activities, district COGES officers are directed and supported by the regional COGES supervisors. Since FCC in six target regions of Phase II was only founded in the middle of 2008-2009, it is too early to make analysis of the project outcomes. However, 82% of FCCs have been held at least three general assemblies and 6 committed meetings in Zinder and Tahoua regions in which FCCs were established in the early stage of the project period.

#### Output 3: A model of school improvement activities conducted by COGES is established

The community pre-schools run by communities, initially introduced to three COGESs in Tahoua in the year 2006, have been rapidly expanded and 165 pre-schools in both Tahoua and Zinder regions have been established to date under the cooperation with UNICEF. The number of pre-schools pupils in both regions is expected to be more than 10,000. The establishment of community pre-schools has also contributed greatly to the access to primary education because most pupils, for example, tend to enroll in primary schools after finishing these pre-schools in both regions. In August 2008, the community pre-school model run by COGES was approved as an official model. In addition, "the guideline for the establishment of community pre-school" was developed through pilot activities in Zinder and Tahoua, and the guideline was approved formally at the workshop held in December 2009 and in this workshop the information was shared among project stakeholders. In addition, more than 95% of the FCCs in each of Maradi, Tahoua, Tiraberi and Zinder region has held a general assembly for the propose to elicit a commitment to the educational theme decided at the forum. In Dosso region, the monitoring is still working progress as the forum was held just one month before the final evaluation.

## **(2) Project Purpose**

### Structure to establish and sustain COGES is reinforced to make COGES effective nationwide

6,577 schools (97.1% of the planned number) in th six newly target regions have democratically established COGES and submitted minutes on the establishment of COGES to district inspection offices. As a result, the indicators which show the establishment of COGES nationwide through democratic processes have been achieved. In terms of the submission rate of a school action plan which indicates the function level of COGES, 7,333 schools (70.2% of the planned number) across the country have submitted an action plan to district inspection offices. On the other hand, only 5,195 COGES, which is 49.7% of all COGES, have submitted an annual report. Thus, more effort is required because the target submission rate has not been achieved yet in most of the regions.

## **(3) Overall Goal**

The quality of and the access to basic education are improved by school management through

### community participation

Since Phase I of the project started in 2004, as results of the cooperation with the donors and MEN, the basic indicators of educational quality and access in Niger have been improved. JICA and MEN shared the perception that the establishment and activation of COGES has contributed greatly to improving these educational indicators.

## **3-2 Summary of Evaluation Result**

### **(1) Relevance : Very High**

As the enhancement of the community-based school management as part of the decentralization of educational administration is stipulated in the "PDDE", the project purpose corresponds to the national education policy in Niger. Community-based school management is also consistent with the Japanese aide policy as Japan pledged at TICAD IV to expand the school management projects to 10,000 schools in Western Africa through applying the "School for All" model. The Improvement of community-based school management based on the local needs meets the needs of children and community residents. The educational development with community participation is the appropriate approach in Niger considering limited resources of the government. The democratic election process of COGES representatives improves the motivation of COGES members and contributes to ensuring the activation and transparency of COGES.

### **(2) Effectiveness : High**

COGES have been democratically established in 97.1% of the schools nationwide. On the other hand, the submission rate of an action plan and annual report which is influenced by the capacity of COGES members and monitoring quality has not been achieved to the targeted level. However, holding the general assembly will reach a peak from now on. Thus, the achievement of project purpose by the end of the project period is expected through increase of the submission rate of an action plan and annual report.

### **(3) Efficiency : High**

The project well utilizes limited resources to produce the expected outputs. Though some outputs have not been realized due to delays in disbursement of the Counterpart Funds and supply of motorbikes for COGES officers in the early stage of the Project, the overall outputs have been smoothly generated.

The efforts to minimize training cost by reducing length and components of the training have been stressed in the project. This makes it possible for the project model to be disseminated nationwide. Though, the project targets all regions, the number of Japanese experts and local staff was minimized, so that the project enhances the efficient operation. In the meantime, it causes overload of the project members. The project should prevent this overload task to ensure the quality of the project activities.

### **(4) Impact : Very High**

According to the national statistic on the basic education, the indicators of the overall goal have been improved since Phase I of the project started in 2004. Although there are many factors that have influenced this improvement, it is identified through the interview to the Nigerian stakeholders that the establishment and activation of COGES by the project have contributed to this improvement of educational indicators.

Moreover, under the forum approach, Zinder region has conducted the girls' enrolment promotion campaigns in May 2007, and Tahoua region has also conducted the girls' enrolment promotion

campaigns in April 2008 and the retention campaigns for enrolled girl students in March 2009. As a result, positive impacts have been seen as the number of girl's registration has remarkably increased and the gender disparity rate (girls/boys) has been improved in both regions.

Besides, the pre-school enrollment rate has also been greatly increased due to the expansion of community pre-schools. While the improvement of the pre-school education access especially in rural areas of Niger is stressed in the objectives of PDDE, the project contributes to the realization of national education policy. The positive impacts of the expansion of pre-school education on promoting girl's education and improving school management at the primary level have also been reported through the introduction of community pre-schools.

#### **(5) Sustainability : Medium**

The enhancement of community-based school management as part of decentralization of educational administration is stipulated in PDDE. As COGES and FCC models have both been adopted as official models at the national level, the sustainability of the government policy is considered as high.

Concerning institutional and financial aspects, the section for promotion of COGES (CP/COGES) at the central level, COGES supervisors at the regional level, and COGES officers at the district level have been deployed. Thus, the organizational framework to promote sustainable development of COGES policies has been established. While the monitoring costs are paid out of the Counterpart Funds at present, it is necessary to consider the availability of the monitoring budget after the completion of the Funds.

For the technical aspect, regional COGES supervisors and district COGES officers demonstrated their sufficient capacity to conduct training through the successful implementation of training on the establishment of COGES and FCC nationwide. More than 1,000 primary schools are established each year in Niger. Regional COGES supervisors and district COGES officers have also responsibility to train these newly established COGES members. The capacity of monitoring and technical assistance for FCC and COGES has been strengthened through monthly meetings of COGES officers. In order for effective use of limited resources and the establishment of sustainable monitoring system, the capacity development of the inspectors has been implemented through the monthly meeting in the regions which had already held a forum. The capacity development of inspectors and incorporation of the COGES monitoring into a primary duty of the district educational administration will secure the sustainable COGES system.

### **3-3 Factors that Promoted the Realization of Effects**

#### **(1) Factors Concerning to Planning**

Not available.

#### **(2) Factors Concerning to the Implementation Process**

After holding the forum, tangible results of the project activities have been produced. The visualization of project results is the most important factor to stimulate the active participation of the community, teachers and education administrators in the COGES activities. The project successfully nurtures the ownership of community members through discussing educational issue of their schools in the COGES meetings, and through the discussion the members develop capacity to identify their needs and conduct activities to fill those needs by themselves. The forum approach which encourages the commitments of all inspectors and regional leaders, and assigns their responsibilities for school activities based on the specific educational themes also greatly contributes to generating project results.

### **3-4 Factors that Impeded the Realization of Effects**

#### **(1) Factors Concerning to Planning**

Not available.

#### **(2) Factors Concerning to Implementation Process**

The monitoring activities by Japanese experts have been restricted since December 2009 due to the deterioration of the security situation in some regions. Though significant negative impacts have not been seen so far, the measures against the security deterioration should be discussed for the future activities.

### **3-5 Conclusion**

In Phase II, the project enforces the capacity of stakeholders related to the COGES administration and makes a continuous effort to establish a new monitoring system which is carried out by COGES officers and FCC. This monitoring model has been formulated based on the verification, authorization and dissemination of the model. The project developed the forum approach as a model of school improvement activities based on the cooperation between community residents and government. The approach has generated a significant contribution to the educational development in Niger through its implementation. In addition to this, the project suggested to hold the inspector meeting at a regional level in order to promote the educational development at the community level. The inspector meeting is now institutionalized and it has generated major impacts on the project activities. The community pre-school which was initiated and supported by COGES has been modeled by the project, and it was approved as an official model of Niger. The community pre-schools currently accommodate more than 10,000 pupils. Although Phase II has produced several positive impacts, objectives with regard to the activation of FCC and its monitoring system have not been achieved due to the short trial period. Therefore, the government of Niger and the final evaluation team agreed to make a recommendation to extend the project period for one year based on the discussion.

### **3-6 Recommendations (specific measures, suggestions and advice)**

#### **(1) Clarifying and strengthening the roles of different players for monitoring COGES**

##### **(Recommendation for MEN)**

COGES officers and FCC have played a central role in COGES monitoring. However, different players in the decentralized educational administration body including DREN, inspectors, academic advisors, principals etc. are supposed to play important roles in monitoring as well. Thus it is highly required to define their roles in monitoring and the relevant policy.

#### **(2) Continuous efforts to establish a system of functional FCC (Recommendation for Project)**

The nationwide establishment of FCC was completed in 2009 and monitoring by FCC was started. However, the project still need to make a continuous effort to establish the monitoring system due to insufficient duration of the nationwide trial period. Therefore, the further reinforcement of the COGES monitoring system conducted by FCC is needed.

#### **(3) Securing budget for COGES monitoring (Recommendation for MEN)**

The expenses for the COGES monitoring including transportation expenses of COGES monitoring and expenses to hold monthly meeting have been allocated from the Counterpart Fund. It is needed to secure the budget for monitoring before Counterpart Fund ends.

**(4) Consolidation and documentation of experiences of the Forum Approach (Recommendation for Project)**

The forum approach is a unique and effective means for educational development in which the MEN supports community-driven activities based on the needs of both the MEN and the communities. Experiences of the forum approach should be consolidated and documented.

**(5) Strengthening project implementation (Recommendation for JICA)**

Since the workload of the project experts has been increased due to the nationwide dissemination of project effects, it is required to strengthen the implementation structure through the dispatch of short-term experts.

**(6) Strengthening the relationship among FCC, commune and different players in decentralized education administration body (Recommendation for MEN)**

In the perspective of regional development in education and decentralization, it is far desirable for FCC, commune and different players in education administration body to collaborate together for regional education reforms. Though the relationship between FCC and commune was clarified by a decree in 2008, its partnership varies in each region or commune. From now on, it is required to reinforce the partnership among the three by setting up a regular meeting.

**(7) Securing the sustainability of the Forum Approach (Recommendation for MEN)**

The forum approach has contributed to the regional educational development by bringing out the potential of community residents, and eventually to the educational development of the whole country. However, it is implemented intermittently, which would cause a problem of sustainability. Thus, the mechanism to secure the sustainability of this approach should be considered.

**(8) Further support for COGES (capacity, finance, material) (Recommendation for MEN and Project)**

The functional COGES model developed by the project Phase I and II has been established and spread out all over the country and greatly contributed to the educational improvement in Niger. Due to the limit of financial and material resources available in a community, however, introduction of external resources is to be taken into account for the coming future. Training for further strengthening planning and resource management skills is required before external resources are introduced. Moreover, training module on COGES should be included in the pre-service training program.

**(9) Making a strategy for the nation-wide establishment of the Community pre-schools (Recommendation for Project, UNICEF, MEN)**

The model of community pre-school developed jointly by the project, UNICEF and MEN has brought about remarkable outputs. The model has been approved and institutionalized by the Nigerien Government. Though continuously they are supposed to work together in order to establish and spread it nationwide, a strategy and approaches for the nationwide establishment have not yet been in place. Thus, it is needed to establish the strategy.

### **3-7 Lessons Learned (reference cases derived from the project for finding, planning implementation and management of other similar projects)**

#### **(1) Formation of a diffusion model**

In Phase II, the project successfully diffuses a COGES model developed in Phase I across the country. A COGES diffusion model called “Minimum package”, which is characterized by efficient training (use of local languages, introduction of simulation and reducing the number of participants), minimization of training period and rationalization of the monitoring by regional officers was established. In terms of developing a COGES model, the model which can be applied across the country has been developed as a result of the application of PDCA cycle<sup>1</sup> including the steps of the implementation, vilification, monitoring and improvement of a diffusion model.

#### **(2) Clarification of development needs and application of strengths of technical cooperation**

The activation of COGES across the country as an aim of the project addresses the needs based on the promotion of decentralization of the educational administration in Niger and other African countries. The project was able to improve educational indicators and differentiate itself from the cooperation of other donors through the utilization of advantages of Japanese technical cooperation which is focusing on local inputs and encouraging community initiatives. In the planning stage of a project, cooperation strategies should be developed considering the advantage of Japanese technical cooperation and analyzing the principle of development issue in order to carry out appropriate cooperation which meets the development needs of beneficiary countries.

#### **(3) Application of successful experience of forum**

Through the forum in each region, the ownership of each actor has been promoted by not only identifying educational issues but also solving these issues. In order to obtain a successful experience, each actor of the project should be aware of their educational issues and produce the impacts through the visualization of generated positive results.

#### **(4) Cooperation with the World Bank**

This project is a valuable case study of the nationwide dissemination of COGES model by the cooperation between Japanese technical cooperation and the World Bank. The project has shown valuable lessons learned through this experience. The cooperation with the World Bank which has a strong impact on the national education development strategy has promoted commitments of the MEN and effectiveness of project financial aspects. On the other hand, some negative external assumptions have appeared to obstruct the project progress such as delays in building the monitoring system due to the postponement of procurement of motorbikes by the World Bank and difficulties in securing quality of COGES training funded by the World Bank. In case of using external resources for the essential project activates, it is necessary to develop the project design with full understanding of the procurement system of other organizations and consider the risk hedge for unexpected situations.

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<sup>1</sup> PDCA cycle is a continuing improvement composed of 4 steps such as plan, Do, Check, Action.