

Summary of Final Evaluation Survey Results

I. Outline of the Project	
Country: Republic of Niger	Project Title: "School for All" : The project on support to educational development through community participation
Issue/Sector: Basic Education	Cooperation Scheme: Technical cooperation project
Division in Charge: Basic Education Division II, Group 1, Human Development Dept.	Total Cost (as of evaluation): 400 million yen
Period of Cooperation (R/D): May 2012 to May 2016	Implementing Organization in Niger: Ministry of Primary Education and Ministry of Secondary Education Supporting Organization in Japan: JICA
<p>1-1 Background of the Project</p> <p>Since 2002, the Nigerien Government has promoted the establishment of school management committees (SMCs) composed of the school director, teacher representative(s), parent representatives, mother's association representative, and a student representative, to regain the community's confidence and trust in schools through community participation putting in place 240 SMCs. Despite a 2005 ministerial ordinance to establish school management committees¹ (then called COGES, further on changed to CGDES) in all of the nation's primary schools, many were not actually functioning.</p> <p>JICA supported development of a model of school management committee (SMC) through Phase I of the "School for All" or School Management through Community Participation project. In Phase II of the Project, the model was scaled up nationwide to all primary schools. As a result, SMCs started to implement school improvement activities. The SMCs played a major role at the school level, in education management improvement, not only planning and implementing school activities but also securing extracurricular study time, mobilizing community resources to improve school facilities and generally contributing to improving education. At the same time, the dropout and retention rates remained high, with the primary completion rate staying at approximately 60%, and the problem of education quality persisted due to the lack of teacher qualifications, limited teaching time, lack of fund decentralization and materials necessary for educational development, leading to the very limited education budget at the school level among other factors.</p> <p>Thus, the Nigerien government requested the Japanese government for Phase III of the School for All Project in order to improve the quality of education and access to education. The 3rd phase started in May 2012 for 4 years and aims to enhance the capacity of the SMCs and develop a system so that resources at the school level could be appropriately utilized.</p> <p>1-2 Project Overview</p> <p>(1) Overall Goal The quality of and access to basic education are improved by school management through community participation.</p> <p>(2) Project Purpose</p>	

¹ School management committees were called COGES (Comité de Gestion des Etablissements Scolaires) in Phase I and II. However, before launching Phase III, the committees at the primary education level were renamed CGDES (Comité de Gestion de Décentralisation d' Etablissements Scolaires). Those at the secondary education level are still called COGES.

The function and capacity of school management committees (called CGDES in Niger) is strengthened to contribute to educational development (access and quality) in Niger.

(3) Outputs

Result 1: A system allowing sustainable CGDES activities for educational development (school access and quality) is established.

Result 2: The following models are developed to improve access to and the quality of education through CGDES activities.

- 2-1. Sustainable forum approach
- 2-2. The minimum quality package²
- 2-3. Resource management and utilization
- 2-4. A functional secondary school COGES

(4) Inputs

The Japanese side invested approximately 400 million yen (or 2000 million fcfa), the Nigerien government executed 100 million yen (500 million fcfa) and the community raised and contributed an estimated total of 1860 million yen (9300 million fcfa).

Japanese side: Total 400 million yen

6 Long-term experts	Provision of equipment	5.78 million yen
2 Short-term experts	Local costs	200 million yen
5 Counterparts trained in Japan	Other costs	176 million yen

Nigerien side:

26 Counterparts
Local cost 100 million yen (government), 1860 million yen (community)

II. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team	Team Leader	Hideharu Tachibana	Basic Education Team II, Basic Education group, Human Development Department, JICA
	Cooperation Planning	Shiori Tokugawa	Staff, Basic Education Team II, Basic Education group, Human Development Department, JICA
	Evaluation Analysis	Mika Kunieda	Tekizaitekisho LLC Consultant
	Ministry of Primary Education Representative	Halidou Maimouna Bana	Staff, MEP CGDES Coordination Training Initiative Division
	Ministry of Secondary Education Representative	Fatima Bayero	Staff, MES COGES Promotion, Partnership Coordination Division
Period of Evaluation	30 November – 16 December 2015		Type of Evaluation: Final evaluation

3. Evaluation Results

3-1 Project Performance

² This is a model that aims to improve learning quality at minimal inputs. The package is made up of three elements: 1) scholastic ability tests and results sharing (information sharing on learning quality), 2) extracurricular study supported by local communities (increased learning time), 3) math exercise books and facilitators for supplementary study (improvement of learning environment and teaching quality).

(1) Achievement of results

After examining the situation of the indicators 1 through 5 for the “Result 1: A system allowing sustainable CGDES activities for educational development (school access and quality), is established”, we conclude that the Result 1 is almost fully achieved.

Indicator 1: “A monitoring system of SMCs is established and made official”, will be achieved by the end of the Project. An external consultant evaluated the proposed CGDES monitoring system (June to August 2015). In August, the monitoring system was approved through a workshop and a draft of a Ministerial Ordinance was prepared. Currently, this draft Ordinance is being examined by the Ministry’s Legal Affairs Bureau. Monitoring costs such as motorbike maintenance and gasoline, which is central to a functional system as well as CGDES monitor meeting costs, have been integrated into the Ministry’s action plan since 2013-2014 and is budgeted for, from the national budget.

Indicator 2: “Meetings for CGDES monitoring (experience sharing seminars (twice a year), CGDES monitor meetings (three times a year) and CGDES federation meetings (three times a year) are held 80% of the time nationwide”, has been achieved.

Indicator 3: “A minimum 90% of CGDES annual activity summaries are collected”, has also, by and large, been achieved. Every year since 2012-2013, the collection rate has reached approximately 90%. Indicator 4: “The annual action plan of CGDES Coordination is allocated funds from the national budget”, has been achieved. The activities of the CGDES Coordination have been integrated into the Ministry of Primary Education annual plan from 2013-2014 onwards. In addition, approximately 70% of CGDES activity monitoring costs have been covered by the national budget.

Indicator 5: “Over 70% of teacher training schools gives a lecture on the CGDES module”, has been achieved. The training of trainers of the teacher training schools and the CGDES training for teacher trainers held in May 2015, the special lecture on CGDES module for the 8 teacher training schools was delivered to 6290 participants in May to June 2015. All content was monitored.

The Indicators 1 to 3 for Result 2: “The following models are developed to improve access to and the quality of education through CGDES activities.

- 2-1. Sustainable forum approach
 - 2-2. The minimum quality package
 - 2-3. Resource management and utilization
 - 2-4. A functional secondary school COGES”
- have been achieved as follows.

Indicator 1: “Over 75% of pilot communes’ budget for their actors’ participation in forums”, has been achieved. For the Third Tahoua Regional Education Forum held in November 2015, 100% of the 44 communes self-financed (93% of the commune representatives paid for by the commune) their participation. In addition, 50% of the costs for holding the Forum was financed by the host region, district and commune.

Indicator 2: In over 90% of the pilot schools, the results of the math exercise book improve”, is also achieved. In 98% of the pilot schools in 2013-2014, an improvement in results was noted. In 2014-2015, in 100% of the schools where the school grant model³ and the minimum quality package combination model were piloted, the average improved.

Indicator 3: “Development of the resource management model and its application in over 80% of CGDES which receive school grant”, was achieved where pilot activities took place in 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. In pilot activities, school grant was delivered to 60 schools, and another 60 schools received school grant and training on planning for effective use of financial resources. A community audit on resource management was done in the 120 piloting schools of the resource management model, with the school grant reception,

³ This is a model developed for well-management and effective use of school grant to improve learning quality with community involvement. The model consists of capacity building of school-related parties such as local communities.

school grant use planning, the actual school grant use, results sharing and joint evaluation taking place at community meetings. In addition, as a result of a collection and analysis of receipts and accounting documents, all resources were appropriately utilized. Activities which lead to student learning such as supplementary classes, night study sessions, exercises, purchase of textbooks, exercise books and other educational materials and supplies were also planned and executed by the CGDES.

The impact evaluation by the JICA Research Institute found that in the pilot 60 schools in which the Project's models were introduced, more supplementary classes and night study sessions were conducted, compared to other groups studied.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funded project "Support to Quality Education (PAEQ)" will allocate school grant based on its official recognition of the 2 models developed by the Project: resource management and resource planning.

(2) Project purpose

The performance indicators of the Project purpose: "The quality of and access to basic education are improved by school management through community participation", are almost fully achieved.

Indicator 1 (access indicator) "An adequate number of school classrooms across the nation, which meets the needs of school aged children is ensured", is achieved with 25,233 classrooms⁴ built by CGDES (2.1 classrooms per CGDES) in the 2014-2015 school year, bringing the average number of students per classroom to 41 students.

Indicator 2 (quality indicator) "A minimum 150 hours (per CGDES) of extracurricular study time (supplementary teaching and night study time) in a school year is maintained through CGDES activities", is achieved with, for example, an average of 166.5 hours in 2014-2015 and an average of 173.76 hours in the 3 school years from 2012 to 2014.

Indicator 3 (role) "80% of CGDES federations receive financial support from their respective communes", is achieved with, 255 CGDES federations out of 266 (95.86%), receiving financial support from their communes in 2014-2015.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance: Very High

The Project Purpose: "The function and capacity of school management committees (CGDES) is strengthened to contribute to educational development (access and quality) in Niger", remains one of Niger's education policy pillars. In Niger, where financial, physical and human resources for education are limited, there is an increased need for SMCs to mobilize funds and materials, to utilize and manage its limited resources properly. This has been the impetus for promoting decentralization. Therefore, the approach used by the Project, that of recognizing the role of SMCs (CGDES in Niger) and enhancing their capacity to improve education access and quality is not only appropriate but also conform to the needs of the Nigerien population.

In addition, the Project is in line with Japan's educational aid policy "Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth" as announced in September 2015 and which embodies the educational goals set during TICAD IV and V.

(2) Effectiveness: High

Indicators which show improvement of educational environment as a result of CGDES constructed classrooms, increased time for supplementary study secured by CGDES, and budgetary measures taken by the commune, in particular, have been highly performing, leading to a smooth accomplishment of the Project purpose.

If a system where CGDES activities can be continued is established as a result of Result 1,

¹ Classrooms built are mostly made from straw mats and must be rebuilt after every harvest, just before the new school year.

and if under this system, the models developed under Result 2 are applied, the Project Purpose will be achieved. This also means that the Project Purpose and the Results which contribute to the achievement of the Project Purpose, were appropriately designed.

(3) Efficiency: High

All results (outputs) are achieved. More specifically, a monitoring system for SMCs has been established, there has been efficient knowledge and skill transfer to the CGDES Coordination and its activities are now under the national budget. As a result of the 27 activities from activity 2-1-1 to 2-4-7, the a) forum approach model, b) minimum quality education model, c) school grant model and its application the combined model have all been developed by the end of the Project. This allows the Project team to use the remaining Project period to improve the models.

Some of the factors which contributed to the success of the model is a) mobilization of communities, implementation of a variety of activities throughout the country, and the visualization of the results obtained, b) the provision of a learning (training) opportunities using the effective and efficient training approach of role playing, c) building a good relationship with Project consultants and being able to retain and use effectively Project consultants.

On the other hand, inhibiting factors include a) the restriction of Japanese expert movement within the capital, b) the almost routine delay in national budget disbursement for CGDES monitoring activities.

Overall, the quality and quantity of inputs was appropriate. CGDES of 18,000 schools nationwide contributed to better access and improved educational quality. These inputs allowed This means that the Project invested approximately 27,800 yen (or approximately 140,000 fcfa) per school, making this a highly cost efficient Project.

(4) Impact: Positive

The Overall Goal of “The quality of and access to basic education are improved by school management through community participation”, reached within 3 to 5 years after the end of the Project. More specifically, it is expected that the enrollment and completion rates will rise, the retention and dropout rates will decrease and education quality will be improved. Niger’s educational indicators show a slow but steady improvement trend since the Project’s Phase I, which is partially attributable to the Project. CGDES activities for the improvement of the educational environment and to support educational quality, not only contribute to a better completion rate and better academic development but also, according to interviews, changes parents’ attitudes towards education, nurtures trust between the school and the community and in turn promotes enrolment.

The impact evaluation which used a randomized control trial to evaluate the impact of the school grant model found that the test results of the group of schools which were trained on resource management and planning before receiving the school grant, had results above compared to other groups on average. It was also found that, in groups trained on capacity building, more supplementary classes and night study sessions were provided, and children received more time and support for home learning from their parents in comparison to groups with school grant only. These differences are considered to have led to higher test results.

Three other spillover effects are noted as follows: a) development of a sub-regional cluster stemming from JICA’s first West Africa school management improvement Project: Niger’s School for All which has become a model case for neighboring countries. Through visiting each other country and sharing experiences, a community of practice network is being created. b) scale-up by other donors: the Project took into consideration at an early stage, decentralized school management and developed a functional, community participatory school management model, which led to other donors such as the World Bank integrating elements of the School for All Project in their own Projects, c) the participatory community Project model being replicated in other sectors such as water and sanitation (water resource

management committees and clean-up committees), health (participatory malaria control committee) and agriculture (agriculture management committees) are some examples.

(5) Sustainability: Medium

From the policy perspective, as the role of CGDES and the need for their capacity strengthening is clearly indicated in Niger's education policy (PSEF 2014-2024), CGDES is likely to continue even after the Project ends. The models developed by the Project have all been officially approved and the Ministerial Ordinance on CGDES and CGDES federation activity monitoring and support system which comprehensively supports CGDES activities, will be issued soon. Therefore, institutional sustainability is high.

Organizationally, as community capacity and understanding for school level activity plans has been enhanced, the school plans are realistic and thus sustainable. CGDES federations, district and regional CGDES focal points and the CGDES Coordination capacity has been built to support school-level activities, thus ensuring continuity after the Project.

Financially, basic budgetary measures for monitoring are functional. School grant by the education sector common fund (World Bank and French Development Agency) for 2800 schools in 5 regions will be distributed for 4 years from 2014-2015. However, as concluded by the impact evaluation, in order for school grant to succeed, it is recommended that planning and resource management training is conducted before the allocation of school grant. For the minimum quality education package, budgeting the cost of printing educational materials such as the math exercise books, is key to sustainability. However, at the central level, despite national budgeting for the project activities, delay in national budget disbursement hindered appropriate financial allocation at the planning phase, affecting smooth implementation of activities (for example, regional CGDES activity monitoring by the CGDES Coordination).

Technically, capacity building efforts for the Ministry of Primary Education (MEP) CGDES Coordination has borne fruit as the Coordination is now fully self-reliant and functional. The Coordination now is able to train and transfer know-how to regional officials (mainly the regional and district CGDES monitors) and monitor their work.

The CGDES training of trainers of colleges of education is an effort to further understanding of the CGDES policy before teachers are dispatched to the field and is a measure to ensure further development and sustainability of CGDES.

For the Ministry of Secondary Education (MES), manuals on how to establish COGES in secondary schools as well as manuals on monitoring and evaluation processes are seen as evidence of basic knowledge transfer and the basis of sustainability.

3-3 Factors promoting better sustainability and impact

(1) Factors Concerning Planning

a) Development of a model which maximizes minimal inputs

The model developed by the School for All Project allows the community to participate in education development and is applicable to any school environment, depending on minimal input for maximum output. This model enables the sharing of information between the community and the school, better planning and implementation of activities which reflect the needs of the community, and the creation of a better learning environment for children. Trust is also nurtured between actors. This led to a constructive partnership between education administration and the school, largely contributing to Niger's education development, and allowing the Project to have a high score on effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

b) Implementation of impact evaluation

The efficiency and effectiveness of the model was proven using objective statistical data on intervention effects. This was made possible by the fact that the randomized control trial was planned from the conceptual stage of Project formulation. The results of the impact evaluation, led to partnership with other donors, the scale-up of the model(s), and the high impact rating.

c) Effective use of training opportunities in Japan

Key persons were invited to Japan, through the training in Japan scheme which enabled the timely sharing of the Japanese experience and promoted understanding of the Project. The Secretary General of the MEP following participation in this training, pushed through the budgeting of monitoring expenses during the National Budget exercise. Support from key persons contributes to better effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

(2) Factors Concerning the Implementation Process

a) Dedication by the Nigerien people

The high impact of the Project cannot be achieved without the contribution of the Nigerien people. The community mobilized 1,860 million yen (9,300 million fcfa) to improve the educational environment during the Project period, which is why the Project attained an extremely high cost efficiency.

b) Practical and effective tools and training method development, appropriate capacity building

The School for All Project developed over the years, practical and effective tools and training methods, and conducted appropriate capacity building for community members including those who are unable to read and write. This allowed for residents, administrators to further their understanding on the Project proposed models, transparent financial resource use, basic learning capacity enhancement based on community participation, as well as localized education development based on partnership amongst stakeholders. The use of role play and simulation methods based on actual circumstances and activities in the various training sessions allowed the successful transfer of knowledge.

c) Dedication of field counterparts in a harsh environment

The dedication of field counterparts in a harsh environment, contributed largely to the realization and monitoring of Project results, enhanced effectiveness, higher efficiency and larger impact.

d) Promotion of sharing of training content

The Project encouraged training session participants to share and feedback the content of training sessions to their respective communities, which contributed to an information sharing culture and higher sustainability.

3-4 Factors inhibiting better sustainability and impact

Although the government allocated national budget for the Project activities, the disbursement delayed, and the activities were not implemented as planned. More specifically, CGDES Coordination monitoring of regional CGDES activities, which was supposed to be conducted with finance from the National Budget, has not been realized. This is largely the reason why sustainability was evaluated as medium. In the long run, however, the dedication of Project staff and field counterparts have made up for this obstacle and enabled attainment of the Project purpose.

3-5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Project highly achieved its purpose and results. 4 models promoting better school management, were developed, proposed, tested and officially approved. This was done largely due to the dedicated efforts of the community, the Nigerien government and the Japanese actors.

In regards to the 5 evaluation criteria, the Project was evaluated as very highly relevant, highly effective, and highly efficient. It is noted that this high efficiency comes from the fact that inputs were minimal and innovative, leading to efficient execution of activities, which in turn produced results. Positive impacts were found. Sustainability in terms of the possibility of the Project results being continued and finding root was evaluated as medium.

At the primary education level, community efforts will ensure sustainability at the school level. In order to ensure the sustainability of the results of the Project, monitoring should be continued, the results should be actively communicated, so that more CGDES supporters be obtained and appropriate budgetary measures and execution be secured.

For the secondary education level, appropriate budgeting and disbursement for a strong monitoring system, further capacity building of central and regional level actors need to be implemented.

Project Purpose is almost fully achieved, so the period of cooperation is not extended.

3-6 Recommendations

3-6-1 Recommendations for the Ministry of Primary Education

(1) Use and promotion of the models developed through the Project

The various models were developed in the field; schools went through trial and error so that the models would conform and be adaptable to the realities of schools. The effectiveness of the model(s) were then proven by an impact evaluation. Therefore, it is now up to the policy decision maker's strong initiative to use and apply the developed models.

(2) Self-financing of CGDES activity monitoring

The budgeting and disbursement of CGDES monitoring funds from the National Budget has been partially in effect since 2013. However, considering the importance of maintaining the contribution of CGDES in Niger's education development and the growing need for the Nigerien government to realize the model in other areas, monitoring school management becomes increasingly important. Thus, the nation is expected to make sure that the budget of monitoring CGDES activities is implemented.

3-6-2 Recommendations for the Ministry of Secondary Education

(1) Securing a budget for the COGES Central Promotion Unit

In October 2014, a Ministerial Ordinance established the COGES Central Promotion Unit, which is currently the execution body for its SMC policy. For the further development of SMC policy within secondary education, a more reliable budget measure is necessary from 2016-2016 onwards.

(2) Laws concerning SMCs

A Ministerial Ordinance was issued in April 2011 in regards to SMCs, but needs to be updated according to the current situation.

(3) Approval of the proposed functional secondary education SMC (COGES) and preparations for scaling-up

The functional model for secondary school management, which is currently being refined under the School for All Project, needs to make a roadmap for its scale-up at the national level.

(4) A vision for secondary school management (COGES) monitoring

There is a need for a vision for secondary SMC activity monitoring. This should be accompanied by efforts to build a monitoring structure and national budgeting for monitoring expenses.

3-7 Lessons Learned

(1) Analysis and dissemination of results

School Based Management (SBM) is defined as transferring authority from the central government to the school level, and has been globally promoted in the past 20 years. School grant is a common element of SBM with the authority of school grant management handed over to school management committees which includes the parents and community members.

However, recent studies show that the effect of school grant and decentralization is limited on student learning. JICA and Niger MEP conducted a randomized evaluation. In the 2 years since the intervention, it was found that, while school grant alone did not improve student test score, the grant had positive impact on test scores when it was accompanied

with capacity building of school committee members (on resource planning and management). This evaluation provided the government with clear evidence to make decision on scaling-up and further effective implementation for education development in Niger. In addition, the objective evidence encouraged other institutions including the World Bank to integrate these findings in their projects. The valuable lesson learned was that it is worth the effort to conduct an impact evaluation and to disseminate these results as widely as possible.

(2) Regional mutual learning and promotion of global learning

Niger's School for All Project is the pioneer for JICA-supported school management Projects in West Africa and model for neighboring countries. By conducting annual regional experience sharing seminars and through mutual learning between countries, results are being shared across borders. This is beneficial for Niger as well, by maintaining the motivation of Nigerien actors. In the future, there will be subjects Niger can learn from other countries and this type of mutual learning should be actively introduced in other Projects.

3-8 Follow-up

Tools to improve the quality of education are still at a piloting stage. Considering the fact that education quality improvement is in line with Japan's education cooperation policy, the continuity of Japan's support can be expected. Future cooperation should also consider Niger's large out-of-school child population, as well as persistent problems of high dropout, low continuation and enrollment for girls.