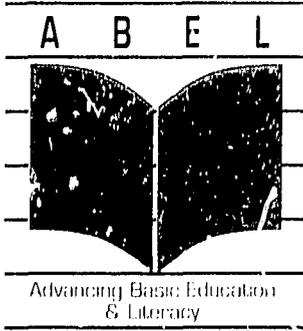


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PROJECT ABEL IN MALI: A PLAN



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PROJECT ABEL IN MALI

A PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Project ABEL is a project of USAID/Washington that operates in cooperation with USAID missions abroad. It is intended that ABEL will be utilized to improve basic education and literacy through:

- efforts to improve Ministry level management,
- assistance with policy reform and implementation,
- help to institutions that provide services to public education,
- assistance with management improvements for schools,
- assistance with pedagogical improvements for schools, and
- promotion of broad support for basic education.

Project ABEL was designed to make its contributions to improved opportunities in basic education through technical assistance, training, research and pilot programs. With sponsorship by USAID, the project is operated by the Academy for Educational Development in collaboration with Creative Associates International, the Harvard Institute for International Development and the Research Triangle Institute.

In Mali, USAID is using Project ABEL for a portion of its basic education expansion project. USAID/Mali is conducting a part of BEEP activities in other ways and in addition has a companion basic education program assistance effort underway. All of this is being done in cooperation with the World Bank and other donors in an articulated effort to improve the efficiency of the Government of Mali's basic education system.

The following sets forth a plan for the work of project ABEL within the larger context of initiatives. The work done through ABEL will be focused on improving basic education opportunities at the primary school level (1-6).

II. INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO THE ABEL EFFORT

1. Effectiveness or Productivity and Coverage

Mali's literacy rate is just 15 percent. Some 87% of males and 94% of females in the country have received no formal education. Parents are discouraged with the quality of education and many are either holding their children out or letting them leave school at a very early age. It is estimated that only 23% of the young people in the age groups that would ordinarily be in grades 1-6 is enrolled in school, with the average in rural areas at just 14%. Only 25% of pupils who enter primary school complete six grades. Less than half of these pass the school leaving exam that is given at the end of grade 6. The traditional teacher centered program of instruction coupled with lack of financial resources and instructional materials yields an extraordinarily high rate of grade failure.

Grade repetition is so high in fact, that on the average it takes 24 student years to produce one graduate of the six year primary education cycle.

2. Relevance

A Minister of Education from another country facing some of the challenges

that Mali has put it this way. "Our ultimate goal it seems to me, and indeed common sense dictates, is economic independence and human dignity."

The Mali system of education continues to be largely academic in orientation. And even at the primary level it is vertically organized, e.g., with subjects being taught in isolation from each other and in isolation from the challenges of living and working. This orientation continues even though there are far too many academically qualified people in the labour force. It is estimated that the nationwide demand for post-secondary graduates per annum over the next several years will be just 625 people. This is less than 20% of annual labour market entrants. There are probably in excess of 10,000 secondary and higher education graduates unemployed even now with some 3,500 new graduates on line to enter the labour market each year. And those young people who either do not begin school or who drop out in the primary years have not been instructed in living or work skills. In fact, a great many of them do not have basic academic skills, which of course, are practical and necessary to successful living and working, in themselves. The economic situation in Mali makes it especially urgent that schools find a way to give young people practical (enabling) skills and attitudes. Further, it is critical that basic academic skills be taught in such a way that young people (and their parents) see the relationship of what is learned to everyday life. Going still further, the socioeconomic situation in Mali indicates that increasingly, young people will need to have basic education married to vocational skills and a certain amount of entrepreneurial acumen in order that they may become their own employers. The present program of the schools can only lead to further frustration, estrangement from community and even alienation from society.

3. Equity and Access

Girls in primary cycle 1 in Mali, represent only 37% of the total enrollment. Given that overall enrollment is just 23% of those who could be in primary school, this is a discouraging picture. Research demonstrates that the education of girls ultimately has very positive effects in terms of family and community health care, nutrition, business operation, economic productivity, ecological awareness, population growth and the readiness of children for learning. Beyond this use, there is the matter of overcrowding in fast growing urban areas and difficult educational programming in sparsely populated and declining rural areas. And with respect to equity, there are the thousands and thousands of adults left behind, e.g., those who do not have even basic literacy or numeracy skills.

4. Resources for Education

According to the background document for the World Conference on Education for All, the per pupil expenditure for primary education in Mali was 72 dollars in 1987, down from 80 dollars in 1980. In 1987, education's share of the total recurrent budget was 25%, down from 29% in 1983. By level of education, cycle 1 which represents 81% of enrollments receives less than 35% of the sectoral recurrent budget. Allocations for materials have also been reduced, from 3.9% of budget in 1985 to 3.4% in 1989. When the materials cost for center administration is taken out, the materials provision for classrooms is only 2.4% of the budget. This is happening at a time when unit costs are rising. This is largely due to falling student/teacher ratios in secondary schools and in post-secondary education. Further, the lack of budget provisions for facility maintenance is resulting in significant capital loss. Given Mali's weak resource base, increasing population and accumulated debt load, it does not seem likely that Government will be able to appreciably increase national spending for education in the foreseeable future.

5. Efficiency (and Cost Effectiveness) of Operations

In terms of cost effectiveness, it is an expensive proposition that on average it costs the Government 24 student years to get one student through the first six years of schooling. Neither is it cost effective to produce graduates for non-existent positions. It is not cost effective to lose students from school before they are adequately prepared. And, it is not effective to have early school leavers poorly prepared with respect to living and working skills. Looking at efficiency in terms of regular operation, it is important to note that:

According to a 1989 World Bank paper, roles and functions in various parts of the Ministry of Education tend to duplicate.

Almost none of the professionals in DNEF (Department of Fundamental Education) have special training in administration, pedagogy peculiar to elementary education, primary level curriculum development, or evaluation.

Formal communication and coordination linkages below the level of Director between departments are deficient.

There seems to be limited capability in the Ministry in such things as personnel management, operations planning, long range school system planning, instructional materials design, instructional materials production, instructional materials distribution, horizontal curriculum construction, foundation program planning and budgeting, test construction, statistical reporting and analysis, primary level teaching methodologies, practical studies curricula and teaching methods, program supervision, ruralization, monitoring/evaluation, the administration of professional upgrading and financial organization and operations.

III. A FRAMEWORK FOR ABEL EFFORTS IN MALI

1. Project Purpose

To improve Ministry of Education capacity to effectively provide equitable and effective education that is relevant to the nation's needs.

2. End of Project Status

Effectiveness (productivity) and Coverage

An increase in the overall entrance rate into primary school in at least one of the intervention try out schools, with an analysis as to the cause.

A decrease in the grade failure rate in at least one of the intervention try out schools, with an analysis as to the cause.

An increase in the percentage of youngsters who enter grade one that go on to successfully complete grade 6 in at least one of the intervention try out schools with an analysis as to cause.

Relevance

A positive change in parental attitudes about the relevance or utility of the primary program in at least one of the intervention try out schools, with an analysis as to the cause for this.

Equity and Access

An increase in the female enrollment rate in at least one of the intervention try out schools with an analysis as to the cause.

An increase in the overall entrance rate into primary school in at least one of the fundamental try out schools with an analysis as to the cause.

Resources for Education

A ten percent increase in the resources raised by the community for its primary school in at least one of the intervention try out schools.

Efficiency (and Cost Effectiveness) of Operations

A decline in the drop out rate in at least one of the intervention try out schools.

Existence of at least four brief issue papers emanating from an analysis of information in the annual statistical report of the MEN

An overall increase in the pupil to teacher ration at the secondary education level.

MEN share of the Government recurrent budget maintained at least at the level it was at commencement of BEEP

An overall increase in the amount per pupil that is dedicated in the MEN budget, to primary school instructional supplies.

Existence of newly prepared role and relationship descriptions for personnel in at least one of the MEN departments.

Teacher satisfaction that school supplies are more reliably reaching at least one of the intervention try out schools.

3. Subpurposes

Subpurpose A

Curriculum, methods and materials developed to promote effectiveness, productivity, relevance and equity.

Subpurpose B

Teacher (and other field personnel) skills improved to promote effectiveness, productivity, relevance, equity, resources for education and efficiency of operation.

Subpurpose C

Community/school links established to support basic education effectiveness, relevance, access and resource generation.

Subpurpose D

MEN infrastructure strengthened to support school effectiveness and the efficiency of operations in the education sector.

4. Outputs Subpurpose A

Curriculum, methods and materials developed to promote effectiveness, productivity, relevance and equity.

Antecedent Conditions

The primary curriculum is comprised of isolated subject oriented (vertical) parts.

The primary curriculum is tradition academic (without integration of basic skills and practical application).

Teacher guides and student texts are often outdated and reflect the vertical, isolated and traditional program. They do not guide basic academic skills and knowledge acquisition through practical application.

There are no supplementary teaching materials like weekly or monthly readers, abacus, general guides to Mali resources, gardening wall charts, education games, language experience or breakthrough to literacy materials or small business case studies.

There are no instructional materials in the classrooms which have been expressly developed to promote gender issue considerations.

Teachers do not have access to diagnostic testing and placement materials (necessary to multi graded grouping and continuous progress).

Curriculum and materials are designed by subject committees composed of specialists in an academic discipline.

The production of materials is done in an antiquated print shop where trained machinery maintenance personnel are not available and where critical machines are unused because spare parts are not available.

There is no organized school supply unit (with a budget, inventory control, revolving fund, warehouse, delivery capability or evaluation of use procedures).

There is no schedule of book replacement

Dissemination is dependent on the overburdened inspectorate. There is no training attached to the delivery of new materials. (Delivery and training equal true dissemination). At best, there is only delivery of materials.

Geographic remoteness inhibits equity of distribution of school supplies.

Lack of class size control also inhibits equity of distribution.

Outputs

(ABEL Outputs Relative to Subpurpose (A) Antecedents)

- A1. A community support matching fund in place and fully operational that can facilitate the provision of supplementary instructional materials.
- A2. An EMIS in place that can inventory and monitor school instructional materials.
- A3. A monitoring and evaluation capability in place. Special intervention materials and methods evaluated for (a) actual placement and operationalization and (b) impact in the experimental schools.
- A4. Research completed on the desirability of maternal languages instruction.
- A5. An EMIS in place that can maintain and update an inventory of teachers who have had special instruction in new materials and methods.

- A6. An EMIS in place that can maintain and update an inventory of schools where special interventions are tried (e.g., ruralization, maternal languages or women in development interventions).
- A7. An EMIS in place that can support the monitoring and evaluation of intervention schools.
- A8. An EMIS in place that can support the implementation and operation of community matching fund schools.
- A9. Recommendations made to appropriate MEN authorities on desirable policy and procedural changes as a result of the evaluations of interventions in test schools.
- A10. Key student skill checklists developed for the cycle 1 curriculum.
- A11. Recommendations made to appropriate MEN authorities on ruralization literature and research that should be used as primary education curriculum is developed.
- A12. Feedback regularly provided to appropriate MEN departments as test interventions proceed.
- A13. Appropriate MEN professionals trained in methods and materials monitoring and evaluation and involved in the ABEL M & E program.
- A14. Appropriate MEN professionals trained in the EMIS system developed under ABEL.
- A15. Appropriate MEN professionals trained in all aspects of the community matching fund and involved in ABEL activities related to it.
- A16. Inspectors trained in ABEL M & E activities related to their responsibilities and to the sustainability of interventions.
- A17. Inspectors trained in ABEL EMIS activities related to their responsibilities and related to the sustainability of information processing necessary to the continuation of interventions and reforms.
- A18. Inspectors trained on the community matching fund program in order that it may be sustained after PACD.
- A19. Appropriate DNEF and IPN professionals trained in the interpretation of data from test sites for future use at classroom, school, conscription, region or central office levels.
- A20. USAID advised about intervention progress. Recommendations made to USAID about desirable alterations to project design, if any.
- A21. Reasonable measurable objectives developed for regular use in formative monitoring of pre-service and in-service training that is related to BEEP outcomes, e.g., lower drop-out and repetition, increased enrollments, improved student achievement, school to life linkage, more participation by girls and increased community support for schools.
- A22. A yearly report to appropriate MEN personnel embracing progress of MIA, MISA and M & E efforts relative to ABEL work under subpurpose A.

5. Outputs - Subpurpose B

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Teacher and other field personnel skills improved to promote effectiveness, productivity, relevance, equity, resources for education and efficiency of operations.

Antecedent Conditions

The project area contains approximately 876 female and 1,493 male teachers in primary cycle 1. Within the project area there are also approximately 831 female and 3,326 male teachers in primary cycle 2.

Teachers are not paid reliably on a regular basis.

A number of teachers in the schools are not teaching but rather are assigned to non-instructional tasks outside the schools.

There are few promotion opportunities for Malian teachers.

There is very limited access to higher education opportunities for Malian teachers.

There is exceedingly infrequent contact with personnel from the MEN Inspectorate.

Cycle 1 teachers have very low status. It is a promotion in status to pass the exam which allows them to become cycle 2 teachers.

Teachers in urban areas are often subjected to an unmanageable student/teacher ratio (especially given the teacher centered instructional techniques that are used).

The supply of books and teaching materials is inadequate and the means to have these in schools is declining.

Opportunities for in-service education are sporadic.

In-service training is not connected to a career path.

There is little guidance on ruralization or the use of maternal languages in instruction.

Curriculum guidance is really just vertical subject matter material.

The curriculum has gradually become overloaded with subjects that a teacher should somehow fit in.

Time tabling and calendar guidance is inadequate.

Teachers are poorly prepared with respect to classroom organization and management, student diagnostic testing and grouping, student centered instructional methods, objectives development and teaching to objectives, horizontal integrated curriculum, school community relations, teaching basic academic skills through practical experiences or applying basic skills to practical living and working challenges.

Outputs

(NBEL Outputs Relative to Subpurpose (B) Antecedents)

B1. Reasonable measurable objectives developed for regular use in formative

skills to practical living and working challenges.

Outputs

(ABEL Outputs Relative to Subpurpose (B) Antecedents)

- B1. Reasonable measurable objectives developed for regular use in formative monitoring of pre-service and in-service training that is related to the BEEP outcomes, e.g., lower drop-out and repetition, increased enrollments, improved student achievement, more participation by girls, school to life linkage and increased community support for schools.
- B2. Feedback to in-service and pre-service trainers on the success and apparent conditions that are necessary to the success of school based interventions. (This to allow teacher education to adapt teacher training curriculum, materials and methods and be in line with country goals on access, equity, productivity, relevance and community support for schools).
- B3. Teacher in-service educators trained in the operation of the community matching fund in order to promote it at in-service sessions.
- B4. Teacher in-service educators trained in intervention monitoring consistent with project aspirations.
- B5. An EMIS in place that is supportive of the reasonable pedagogical information needs of teacher education.
- B6. An EMIS in place that is supportive of reasonable school management information needs of teacher education.
- B7. Training supplies and logistics in place as per contracted responsibilities and resources.
- B8. An in-service training program designed and operationalized to upgrade the managerial effectiveness of field based personnel in the project area. This in collaboration with the on-going pedagogical in-service effort.
- B9. MEN personnel recommended to USAID for short-term participant training in management and administration.

6. Outputs - Subpurpose C

(Community/school links established to support basic education effectiveness, relevance, access and resource generation).

Antecedent Conditions

- o Government does not have enough resources to pay for all of the critical upgrading needed in the education sector.
- o Although traditional education in Africa was a continuous process through family and community, the advent of schools during colonial times began to set education apart. The apartness has gone far in Mali. A Minister of Education speaking to the same dilemma in his country put it almost poetically. "It is our dilemma that the school remains an island in its community, desisting from harnessing the community and taking advantage of its resources in areas where it is relevant to do so. It is our dilemma that headmasters and headmistresses have not as yet perceived themselves as social leaders and accepted a teacher's motto of example, devotion and toil. We can only build with the mortar that we have. The

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school and community must match the goal for more and better education with a demonstration of unity, initiative, creativity and sweat".

- o Teacher education in Mali does not expressly prepare teachers to mobilize community resources for education.
- o There is little community involvement in decision making about school matters in Mali.
- o It is not common for people from the community to be invited to talk or demonstrate in Mali schools.
- o Primary schools in Mali are not often involved in extra hour services to adults in the community.
- o There is increasing disenchantment by parents with the quality and relevance of primary education. As a result, more and more students (especially girls) are held back from school attendance or not strongly encouraged to remain in school once they have enrolled.
- o Many parents are dissatisfied with the very poor conditions under which their children must attend school. (These poor conditions include the poor professional morale of the pedagogues).
- o There is a paucity of simple learning materials in the primary schools that could be supplied by their communities.
- o There are facility improvements needed in Mali's schools that could be facilitated by communities if leadership toward this end could be encouraged.
- o Ruralization is in part dependent upon community participation in schooling. Much needs to be done to advance this understanding.
- o Instruction built on one's close at hand experiences has been immensely successful in other places, for example, the Sylvia Ashton Warner techniques in New Zealand, the Learning Experience Approach in English and Canadian primary schools, the Foxfire work in the American south and the Breakthrough to Literacy methods in several nations in southern Africa. Given that Malians are concerned about the long range social impact that schools could have on children and communities, it would seem natural that parents and communities become regularly and deeply involved to guard against untoward influences. Such involvement could generate resources that are sorely needed. And close community/school partnerships could help to facilitate the very successful and natural learning that the methods noted above embody.
- o In traditional academically oriented schools it is easy for parents (especially poorly educated parents) to get the idea that the education of their children is out of their domain.
- o Parent interest in education is critical to student learning. In various regions this seems to be declining in Mali.

Outputs

(ABEL Outputs Relative to Subpurpose (C) Antecedents)

C1. Plan operationalized for monitoring USAID/FAEF. (USAID/FAEF monitored)

- C2. Logistical support and procedures in place for training relative to USAID/FAEF (appropriate people trained).
- C3. Relevant antecedent baseline information in place on USAID/FAEF schools and their communities (database).
- C4. Plan of development in place for each USAID/FAEF School (objectives and transitional objectives/agreed upon; deliverables identified).
- C5. Plan of facilitation in place for each USAID/FAEF School (people responsible and accountable, arrangements for communication, organization for decision making, strategy for school and community internalization and institutionalization, i.e., sustainability).
- C6. Content on ruralization and community matching (FAEF) made part of in service teacher education program.
- C7. Inventory of FAEF inputs maintained in database, e.g., equipment, facilities, materials, training, etc., by school.
- C8. Relevant FAEF and ruralization skill checklists developed.
- C9. Recommendations made to curriculum developers and policy makers on skill and knowledge objectives that should be incorporated into primary curriculum and materials (furthering practical skills, ruralization and community/school linkage).
- C10. Library of literature on linking school to life established.
- C11. Ruralization initiatives at project schools monitored.
- C12. Issues papers on school/community matters developed (from M & E insights).
- C13. Issue papers (insights) provided to MEN authorities through appropriate channels.
- C14. Issues information provided to USAID on suggested design changes.

6. Outputs - Subpurpose D

(MEN infrastructure strengthened to support school effectiveness and the efficiency of operations in the education sector)

Antecedent Conditions

- o For the most part, senior officers in the MEN have been appointed because of superior performance as academics in the schools. It would appear though, that few of them have had the benefit of specialized training in administration.
- o As is the case across government service, officers of the Ministry of Education face the demoralizing factors that accompany inadequate national resources, i.e., relatively low pay, unpredictable salary payments and erratic and limited career paths.
- o There is no educational management information system in the MEN (although work is progressing on establishing one through ABEL under BEEP).
- o There does not exist a national plan for school development in Mali. Indeed, the school mapping that would be a first step toward such a plan

does not exist.

- n Neither is there an annual MEN action plan.
- o The annual statistical report that would ordinarily guide decisions about future action and resource priority allocations is not very helpful in this regard. It is not a very accurate account of the state of education. And it reports straight forward data as opposed to information (data being isolated and unrelated facts) whereas information is data so organized that it has meaning. The annual statistical reports are not issue oriented. One would not, e.g., readily conclude from them that there are demand and access dilemmas, that there are school to school resource imbalances, that there are significant disparities in teacher loads, that there are major differences from region to region and community to community in ability to help support education, that there are general population growth or decline trends by region or village which are very different from the national average, that there are special instructional needs from place to place determined by natural resources and regional economics, that there is unusual school age (or general population) migration from area to area, that there is uneven distribution of instructional supplies, that there are idiosyncracies in school governance from place to place, that dropout trends have greatly increased in particular parts of the country, that fewer students of a particular region continue schooling after completing primary school than the national average, that some schools have somehow been able to augment the standard program, that the qualifications of teachers are significantly higher, in an area, than the national average, that the acreage associated with some schools is more than others, or that there are special and unusual student grouping practices in certain schools.
- u There is no separate School Supply Unit in the Ministry of Education that keeps track of need, formulas for distribution, school inventories, fees charged and collected, MEN orders placed, items centrally warehoused, deliveries made, revolving/replenishment funds, materials, the possible use of instructional materials other than text books, etc.
- o There is no National Instructional Materials Production Center in the MEN. There is a small print shop. Unfortunately, the machinery is quite old and maintenance staff is not readily available. An Instructional Materials Resources Production Center would go much beyond a print shop and might well include professional designing and layout, video productions, educational broadcast preparation, school newspaper production, etc.
- o While there is subject matter development in the MEN, there is no central Curriculum Center as such where horizontal curriculum is developed based on considerations other than academic discipline, e.g., considerations such as readiness, maturation, learning styles, interdisciplinary problem solving, living skills, etc.
- o There is not a Test Development Center in the MEN, where diagnostic testing help is made available to teachers. Diagnostic testing in the interest of appropriate grouping, placement, progression, and instructional targeting is not a common concept in Mali. For the most part testing is still used to screen and judge. The concept of incremental pacing until all students master 100% without failing (albeit over different periods of time and using differing techniques) is not commonly held.

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- o There is no Teacher Personnel Service Unit (apart from the general government civil service organization) for the education sector. There is not then, a special professional image of teachers, improving the regularity of pay for teachers, further systematizing the credentialling of teachers, computerizing teacher personnel records, quickly processing changes in pay (based on changes in status, grade, experience or responsibility), improving non-financial teacher benefits, or improving regional allocation of personnel.
- o There are inconsistencies in MEN pronounced policy on ruralization. It does not square with the text-books made available or with the pre-service teacher training program. Also, the pronounced policy on the priority recently assigned to basic education does not square with the subject oriented training that continues to obtain for aspiring elementary teachers.

The MEN Inspectorate

As in many countries the Inspectorate in Mali is understaffed and over extended in responsibilities. It is central however to school level reforms that can yield greater effectiveness, relevance, access, efficiency and community support. The Inspectorate (regional Inspectors and Pedagogical Counselors) is ultimately responsible on behalf of MEN for the management of schools and for the program of instruction. Although inspectors have a great many schools to look after and are caught in growing bureaucratic paper work, they are seasoned and dedicated educators recruited from the ranks. They have a keen interest in somehow improving management procedures so that time and energy may be devoted to the improvement of program and instruction. As is the case with personnel throughout the MEN, Inspectors and Pedagogical Counselors are first of all subject specialists. This orientation inhibits the development of a comprehensive and integrated management vision. The type of training that members of the Inspectorate have had contributes to this. The understanding and support of the Inspectorate is key to the implementation, monitoring, success and sustainability of reform interventions. Taking the matter of ruralization as an example, it is most successful in those places where a vision exists and where Inspectors and Principals carefully prepared the way with teachers and communities. It is not successful where it is misunderstood, improperly applied as a segregated program, not supported by teachers and parents and not managed through materials and practices that are thoughtful integrations. As sometimes tends to be the case with donor backed efforts, ruralization was adopted as a broad national policy rather than established incrementally where there was readiness and painstaking preparation. Its failures are giving a needed and worthy program a bad name. The Inspectorate, if it could somehow be relieved of its logistical and bureaucratic burdens could be helpful in salvaging it. Incidentally, some of this situation pertains to school principals as well.

MEN Organization and Communication (Relative to the Challenges that are Hard Pressing the Sector)

Leaders throughout the MEN understand the challenges facing education. They need sustained help rather than fragmented capricious short-term assistance. They do not need a continuing plethora of imported panaceas. Rather, they need in depth sustained assistance with deep seated organizational problems (problems that will not succumb to research or the pontificating of short term experts). Problems that will require hard slugging from day to day at a very pedestrian level. Leadership in the MEN realize that education which is isolated from the day to day dilemmas of Malians, must end. No one understands better than MEN leaders that the system has become dysfunctional. And they realize that they

work in a setting which desperately needs:

- o Improved personnel operations thereby improving the capability of staff to manage programs and operations.
- o Improved information systems thereby increasing efficiency in planning, controlling and evaluating.
- o Improved financial management systems and operations.
- o Improved teacher personnel operations.
- o Staff trained in practical everyday management concepts and techniques related to the above.
- o The responsibilities of MEN have increased dramatically over the years. Accordingly, it is in serious need of strengthening. There is a need, for example, for updated organizational charts and position descriptions. There is a need for a clear cut and unbureaucratic procedures manual. There is a need for clear understandings about responsibilities and accountabilities. In fact, there is a need for a two fold organizational upgrading effort, i.e. (1) compilation of a snapshot of what actually obtains at present and (2) participatory development of what needs to be organizationally. The participatory approach to developing what needs to be could begin with seminars on the importance of organization and on the necessity of things like mission statements, objectives and functions (unit by unit) organizational charts, position descriptions and a statement of what is supposed to be facilitated or accomplished through each office. The most satisfactory approach to this effort would be through a series of guided sessions unit by unit. In that the intent is to ultimately facilitate much improved communication and coordination in the interest of facilitating the crucial work of the MEN, the very participatory process of doing what is sometimes referred to as an organizational scheme of service, may well be more important than the product. Both the process and the product would go a long way toward building morale, getting clarity of vision, building teamwork for critical implementation efforts, getting a more efficient use of human resources, reducing duplication and fragmentation, promoting unbureaucratic coordination between units, reducing inconsistencies between present assigned roles and pressing tasks and setting people (and units) free to take initiatives, albeit with an understanding of accountability.

Operations Planning

As always stated, there is a need for educational planning by the MEN. There is also need however, for operational planning. There needs to be a way for the MEN to plan the specified step by step operations necessary for moving from point (a) to point (b) to point (c) and ultimately to one of its major goals. Sometimes called action planning, this could in fact be tackled in the same participatory way as schemes of service after seminars on key concepts were held. Some of the participatory steps could be (a) agreement on a policy agenda, (b) arriving at policy positions, (c) setting policy implementation priorities, (d) developing standards, (e) developing accomplishment implementation strategies and assigning responsibilities.

Coordination and Communication Beyond the MEN

The reform effort in the education sector is a very major and complex undertaking. It involves several donors. Under leadership of the MEN and World Bank there exists structure for communication and coordination. It seems however, that there is further need in this area. Quite apart from the Bank led

consortium effort, the USAID led program is exceedingly significant in and of itself. As it turns out, leadership for the overall effort seems in many cases to have fallen to MEN and USAID rather than to MEN and the Dank. Perhaps USAID (with the help of its project personnel) might profitably consider further systematizing broad coordination and communication in the interest of the program. Four possibilities might be:

- o Establishment of a MEN and USAID led Interministerial Executive Council that would meet once every six months under the chairmanship of a senior MEN officer. The Council would consist of permanent senior representatives of the Ministers of Education, Government Civil Service (personnel), and Manpower and Labour and Finance. A senior representative from USAID would assist the chairman with agenda setting and would attend Council meetings. The intent of the Council would be to review progress and to facilitate necessary Government (clearing) action e.g., actions necessary on personnel policy and financial allocation.
- o Establishment of a MEN project initiatives Advisory Committee. It might consist of the heads of DNEP, IPN and DAF together with one very credible representative from the ranks of the Inspectors and one from the ranks of teacher educators. The MTA, MISA, META, Pedagogical Training TA and Women in Development Specialist would attend Advisory Committee meetings. But the chair would be Malian. The committee would meet once a month to review progress, suggest alternative strategies and clear the way for progress within the education sector. Representation from USAID might also be a good thing for such a Committee. It seems important that this be seen as a Malian Committee, controlled by them and representing their view. To this end, the Americans might want to consider how to keep the U.S. profile down at each meeting (e.g., not always attending, etc.). Hopefully, of course, over a period of time, TA personnel will come to be seen as Malian team members. This is no doubt already the case with the Pedagogical Training Advisor.
- o A project work group consisting of USAID and the American TAs. This group would meet weekly to facilitate business matters and to review general progress. It would not be an administrative body.
- o TA Committee meeting at least weekly on substantive and logistical matters.

Outputs

(ABEL Outputs Relative to Subpurpose (D) Antecedents)

- D1. In-country management training plan done and operationalized.
- D2. Short-term management consultant plan done and operationalized.
- D3. Plan for MEN organization and personnel clarification and performance upgrading done and operationalized.
- D4. Management upgrading initiatives monitored and evaluated.
- D5. MEN personnel redeployment facilitated.
- D6. MIS database necessary to education and operations planning, established.
- D7. MIS necessary to education and operations planning, established.
- D8. MIS necessary to development of foundations policy planning established.
- D9. MIS necessary to monitoring and evaluation of the above outputs established.

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- D10. M & E capability relative to MEN organizational and management upgrading established.
- D11. M & E information used by MEN for organizational and management decision making.
- D12. MIS data used by MEN for organizational and management decision making.
- D13. MIS hardware and software in place and used for management tasks.
- D14. ABEL logistical matters related to output D facilitated.
- D15. Strategy for sustainability of efforts done.