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MEMORANDUM

TO: See Distribution
FROM: Carol Grigsby, Acting Director, AFR/WA
SUBJECT: R2a Review - BENIN



The first portion of the R4, the Results Report/Review, was due in Washington on March 1, 1996. This submission documents actual results of operating units through FY/CY 1995 and outlines expected progress for the R4 period.

A review meeting for the subject R2a has been scheduled for Thursday, 21 March at 2.00 pm in NS 6941. The purpose of the review meeting is to present the R2a and discuss concerns surrounding it. Centers and offices are invited to attend this meeting and contribute to the discussions.

Comments related to this R2 may be submitted to Claude W. Reece, CDO-Benin, before the meeting. Information on the review meeting can be obtained from Claude W. Reece at 647-9206.

Attachment: R2a - BENIN

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABMS	Association Béninoise pour le Marketing Social
APE	Association des Parents d'Elèves (<i>Parents Association</i>)
CAP	Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique (<i>Primary School Teaching Certificate</i>)
CENA	Independent National Electoral Commion
CEP	Certificat d'Etudes Primaires (<i>Primary School Leaving Certificate</i>)
CLEF	Children Learning and Equity Foundations
CP	Conseiller Pédagogique (<i>Instructional Counselor</i>)
CPSP	Country Program Strategic Plan
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSM	Condom Social Marketing
DAPS	Direction de l'Analyse, de la Prévision et de la Synthèse (<i>Planning and Programming Division</i>)
DDE	Direction Départementale de l'Enseignement (<i>Regional Education Authority</i>)
DEP	Direction de l'Enseignement Primaire (<i>Primary Education Division</i>)
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DRF	Direction des Ressources Financières (<i>Financial Resources Division</i>)
DRH	Direction des Ressources Humaines (<i>Human Resources Division</i>)
DSF	Direction de la Santé Familiale (<i>Family Health Division</i>)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FP	Family Planning
FQL	Fundamental Quality Level
GOB	Government of Benin
HDI	Human Development Index
HRDA	Human Resources Development Assistance
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
INFRE	Institut National de Formation et Recherche en Education (<i>National Institute of Training and Education Research</i>)
INSAE	Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique (<i>National Institute for Statistics and Economic Analysis</i>)
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MEN	Ministry of National Education
MIS	Management Information System
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
NPA	Non Project Assistance
OPG	Operational Program Grant
PD&S	Project Development and Support
PSI	Population Services International
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SAL	Structural Adjustment Loan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

SECTION I.

A. SPECIAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE USAID PROGRAM

Benin's Democratic Transition

Benin continues to make steady progress in achieving the objectives of the National Conference of 1990, which still serves as the reference point for political and economic reform. Adherence to a democratic, constitutional government is stronger than ever. The presidential elections in March 1996 have been truly contested. What makes this extraordinary in Africa is that an incumbent president is one of the candidates. Also unusual is that the candidates have been talking about the issues facing the country: the amount of social services, the rate of privatization, etc. Democratic institutions have been functioning since 1991. The legislative and judicial branches are alive and well in Benin and exercise real checks and balances on executive power. The press has become effective in influencing public opinion and critical of decisions inside and outside of government.

Economic Restructuring and Structural Adjustment

Benin's economic reform was initiated in 1988, in the form of a structural adjustment program with the IMF and World Bank. To date, Benin continues to be one of the few francophone countries to stay in compliance and has just signed its third structural adjustment loan. The austerity program and restructuring, however, have resulted in negative as well as positive effects, as indicated below:

- privatization and economic openness : In the 1994 API, we reported that the opening of Benin's economy had spurred a significant dynamism in the private sector. This is still the case and the renewed optimism has prompted the return of many Beninese from abroad willing to invest. Economic activity continues to increase dramatically and local production and revenues to local producers are increasing, creating confidence in the future. Bureaucratic procedures, however, remain burdensome and fiscal reform is still seen by the private sector as inadequate, especially after the CFA franc devaluation.
- Growing unpopularity of the Structural Adjustment Measures : As reported in the 1994 API, the SAP remains unpopular in Benin since the population feels as though the country is "at the mercy of Bretton Woods." The private sector has not been able to absorb the 18,000 layoffs in the past three years, following privatization, liquidations and public sector downsizing. Under the SAP, GOB spending is severely limited, including in critical social areas such as hiring of teachers and nurses and expenditures on school materials and medical supplies. During the 1995 and 1996 election campaigns, the SAP was the major theme used by the political opposition against President Soglo.
- Democratization and economic restructuring : As in most West African countries experiencing democracy, the Beninese have placed high expectations on the first democratic government, thinking that democracy

would immediately end unemployment, criminality, corruption, etc. They had not foreseen that only long-term measures could help overcome the decay of the economy. Today, the majority of the population tend to think that if the austerity measures and their social consequences continue, it is the result of the government's failure to fulfill the hopes raised by the National Conference. This confusion, has certainly contributed to the strength of the opposition and in persuading former President Kerekou to stand against President Soglo for the March 1996 presidential election.

Decentralization and Transparency

Decentralization of state power was one the key mandates of the National Conference. To date, with the exception of the "Etats-Généraux" (stakeholders conferences) on territorial administration (1992) and on public administration (1995), very little progress has been made towards effective delegation of authority to local communities. Local elections have already been postponed twice and it is still uncertain if they will be held in 1996. Some progress has been made in the education sector, due in part to the USAID basic education program, which considers management and financial decentralization among its key objectives. The MEN has delegated some authorities to regional and local representatives, but the lack of corresponding delegations by the ministries of finance and interior has been a constraint.

The GOB is making efforts to strengthen financial management, and has made significant progress, but low salaries, heavy administrative procedures and lack of a culture of accountability represent serious handicaps.

A Heritage of a 17-year Marxist Leninist Regime

Benin's 6-year old democracy is still haunted by the legacy of 17 years of an autocratic, highly centralized and inward-looking regime. In the public sector especially, basic concepts of participatory decision-making and accountability are poorly understood. Old habits of absolute state control and oversight remain. Public officials tend not to have a public service mind set.

The uneasy relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government, often leads to a multiplication of institutions, which are poorly structured, under-equipped, poorly administered and filled either with civil servants who seem more preoccupied with making additional income than with producing results or with members of political parties who have other agendas.

Donor Views and Relationships

The donor community in Benin continues to expand. The quality of donor coordination, however, still varies according to sector. On the macro level, coordination is very good. On specific issues, donor consultation and coordination remains spotty but most donors and the GOB are showing strong interest for

improvement. USAID's role as a prime actor in primary education in francophone Benin is now generally accepted. However, several coordination issues have developed between USAID and the World Bank which are discussed in Section III.B.

As regards the health and democracy and governance sectors, donor relationships are issue free. For the March 1995 legislative elections, all donors agreed to harmonize their interventions in order to increase electoral transparency, to which the GOB responded enthusiastically. Also, USAID/Benin combines its efforts with the Swiss cooperation to strengthen parents' associations and with the Dutch cooperation to co-financed the PSI Condom Social Marketing.

As part of the reengineering process, we plan to organize a series of workshops in order to share our strategy and approach in the areas of education, population and democracy and governance with other donors, partners and beneficiaries. It is expected that this will help maximize use of donor resources and improve overall performance in relevant sectors.

B. PROGRESS TOWARDS OVERALL PROGRAM GOAL

1. Goal : "Increase participation in Benin's economic development."

Since the beginning of the country's first Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1988, measures were taken to create an environment conducive to more participative economic development and reduced state involvement in production activities. See table below for results.

Table II.1

PROGRAM GOAL INDICATORS							
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Successful elections (Y/N)	na	Y	na	local N*	na	legis Y local N*	pres Y**
% particip in elections							
- Presidential	na	64.2%	na	na	na	na	na
- Legislative	na	51.72%	na	na	na	na	na
- Local	na	na	na	na	na	postpone	planned
GDP Growth Rate (%)	3.2	4.7	4.1	4.4	5.5 (est 4.4)	7.2 (est)	6 (est)
Infant Mortality***	88/1000	88/1000	88/100 0	nd	nd	nd	nd

* planned but not held ; ** planned; *** proxy for income distribution

Given that most of Benin's economic deterioration derived from a 17-year autocratic rule, democracy is taken seriously in Benin and the citizenry give special attention to the free and fair elections of their leaders. For the legislative election, an independent electoral commission (CENA) was created to ensure transparency and fairness. This Commission successfully managed the electoral process without government interference.

The same process was used for the 1996 Presidential elections, for which voter turn-out was large. There appears to be a

wide-spread understanding that only through the rule of law can the political environment be stabilized and examples of like Niger and Guinea prevented. Following strong criticism by the press and the political opposition, the executive branch is improving its collaboration with other institutions. For example, the 1995 national budget was submitted to the Economic and Social Council for review to ensure that social issues have been adequately addressed. We believe that the overall legal environment will continue to improve. We also anticipate that greater empowerment of civil society will help it exercise more leadership in the conduct of public affairs.

In September 1995, four magistrates challenged the Ministry of Justice's decision to transfer them and the Constitutional Court (CC) ruled in their favor. During the same period, the National Communication Council issued regulations for running private radio and television stations. The procedure was challenged by a private journalist who claimed the Council had no legal basis for issuing regulations since the organic law creating that institution had not yet been promulgated. The CC ordered the Council to stop the process immediately. These few examples show how keen the Beninese are on maintaining the rule of law in their country.

Benin's economic performance remains strong despite the dislocations of the CFA devaluation. The GDP increased to 7.2%¹ in 1995, i.e., 1% more than anticipated. This is the result of the GOB's discipline in implementing the SAP, despite its unpopularity, as well as donor support for sectoral reforms. Salary and related expenditures were reduced from an estimated 11.9% of GDP in 1992 to 9.4% in 1995, with personnel cost declining from 9.2% of GDP to 7.7%. Domestic savings are estimated at 7.4% of GDP for 1994, due to the reduction in imported consumer goods for domestic consumption. According to the MOF's quarterly report on macroeconomic, local industrial production increased by 6.7% in the 1st quarter of 1995, while exports increased by 176% over the period of 1994-1995.

2. Sub-Goal : USAID/Benin's sub-goal is to "Strengthen Benin's Human Resource Base."

A strong human resource base is a function of a wide variety of socio-economic elements, including life expectancy; nutrition; literacy and access to education, income level, and adequate housing and sanitation.

¹ STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM INTERIM REPORT, dated August, 1995; (7.2% represents GOB's estimated GDP increase for 1995; a report indicating actual figures is due soon).

Table II.2

SUB-GOAL INDICATORS					
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
HDI (0 - 1)	0.111	0.113	0.261	0.261	0.332
-% of health vs total public investment	9	10	11	9	nd
-% of educ vs total public investment	3	4	3	3	nd
-% of other social vs total public invest	6	4	4	3	nd
HDI Rank	162	162	156	156	155
GNP Rank	138	145	142	nd	133
GNP - HDI Gap	- 24	- 17	- 14	-14	-22

Sources: *Human Development Report; UNDP (1992; 1993; 1994; 1995) – index adjusted by USAID/Benin to keep number of countries constant; Ministry of Finance, 1994.*

As specifically mandated by the 1990 National Conference, the GOB places a high priority on social sectors -- education and health -- and several actions have been initiated to protect the income level of the vulnerable groups.

As shown on table II.2, Benin's HDI level has shown slow but steady improvement, despite a drop in GNP, which resulted in an increased GNP-HDI gap (-22 in 1995 vs -14 in 1993). The GNP reduction -- common to all CFA countries -- is partly due to the increase of imports during 1995 following specific measures taken by France to facilitate consumer goods exports to the CFA zone².

The reorganization of the education and health systems is still progressing with specific attention to primary education and primary health care (USAID, World Bank, French). Following the CFA franc devaluation, the government took some measures to keep the prices of essential drugs at the pre-devaluation level while some of the textbooks usually purchased by the parents were provided to all public primary schools in 1995.

Under the SAP, social programs continue to receive sufficient attention. However, rising unemployment and high teacher/student and nurse/patient ratios constitute serious threats to the GOB's effort to improve the provision of basic social services and to raise the income levels.

² "La Dévaluation du Franc CFA: Un Premier Bilan en Décembre 1995"; Louis M. Goreux, World Bank Consultant, 28 Dec. 1995.

SECTION II.

A. PROGRESS TOWARD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE : PRIMARY EDUCATION

SUMMARY OF DATA

During the reporting period Benin has made steady and substantial progress in improving its basic education system. USAID/Benin's Strategic Objective (SO) 1 is:

To assist the GOB in ensuring that an increasing number of primary school-age children receive, on a more equitable basis, an education which adequately prepares them to assume a productive role in their society.

The SO is broken down into five supporting-objectives which mirror the GOB's Reform sub-objectives. Each supporting-objective is analyzed in a separate section of this report.

The table below shows the indicators used for tracking progress towards the SO in the following critical areas of performance in primary education reform: overall access; quality; and equity (both gender and regional.)

TABLE II.1 Benin Primary Education

INDICATOR (%)	ACTUAL						EOPS
	1990 (base)	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	2002
Access							
Gross Enrollment Rate (GER)*	49.7	56.5	59.9	60.7	64.7	66.8	78
Quality							
Leaving exam pass rate**	40.0	31.7	36.1	59.7	58	nd	80
Equity							
GER rate for girls and boys (girl/boy ratio)	36 ; 62 (.58)	40 ; 71 (.56)	43 ; 75 (.57)	43 ; 77 (.55)	45 ; 79 (.57)	50 ; 82 (.61)	78 ; 78 (1.00)
GER for a northern district and a southern district*** (north/south ratio)	35 ; 62 (.56)	37 ; 66 (.56)	41 ; 68 (.60)	35 ; 86 (.40)	37 ; 92 (.40)	42 ; 94 (.46)	78 ; 78 (1.00)
Leaving exam pass rate for girls and boys (girl/boy ratio)	41 ; 38 (.92)	30 ; 32 (.92)	32 ; 38 (.84)	56 ; 61 (.91)	54 ; 59 (.91)	nd	80 ; 80 (1.00)

Leaving exam pass rate for northern & southern districts (northern district/southern district)**	37 ; 46 (.80)	30 ; 38 (.78)	40 ; 38 (1.06)	59 ; 61 (.96)	51 ; 62 (.82)	nd	80 ; 80 (1.00)
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*number of school children enrolled divided by total school age population

** (CEP)- Leaving Exam to exit primary school for students in grade 6

***The "northern district" is the Borgou region, a largely rural zone with the lowest gross enrollment rate in the country. The "southern district" is the Atlantique region, which, comprising the largest city, has the highest gross enrollment rate.

Background and Introduction:

By the late 1980s, under Benin's Marxist government, education had begun to seriously deteriorate and by 1989, the education system was in a state of collapse. The restoration of democracy, the initial changes of the GOB reform program and the introduction of the Children's Learning Equity Foundation (CLEF) Program in 1991 contributed to the restoration of organization, discipline (and solvency) to the system, convincing parents to once again send their children to school. Early initiatives promoted by CLEF resulted in teachers being paid in a timely manner and ensuring more regular attendance. The initiatives also ensured the production and distribution of teaching guides and restored the regional inspectors' ability to see that basic rules of order were followed through on-site visits. These early steps had their intended effect of getting the former students back in the classroom. By 1992 attendance rates were at their pre-collapse levels. As word spread, and improvements in teaching and school support from the Ministry increased, the trend has continued.

RESULTS FOR THIS REPORTING PERIOD

As the above table indicates, advances in equity and access have been substantial over the past two years. The data are not yet available on pass rates (a proxy for quality), but there are other indications that quality is also improving (which are discussed in the Analysis section). However, despite the overall positive trend, there have also been setbacks and slower progress than anticipated in some elements of the reform program, most notably girls education, decentralization, and some elements of strengthening institutional capacity (see Analysis section).

Some of the specific results accomplished this reporting period include the following:

Supporting Objective A: Improve Quality -

- The Ministry of Education (MEN) has developed, finalized and begun implementation of the Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) Program. FQL specifies key inputs necessary for a minimally acceptable learning environment and provides the means to Benin's basic education system to provide essential aspects of education such as improved textbooks, trained teachers, reformed curriculum, etc;

- Program for the teaching of French and math, key subjects for primary school, have been developed and are being tested;

- For the first time, sufficient math and French textbooks have been provided for all first and second year students;

- New tests have been devised for most primary school subject areas and there is now a body of trained professionals in the areas of testing.

Supporting Objective B: Increase Equity -

- Girls enrollment rates increased by 5% in 1995 and by 7% since 1993. However, despite these gains, the gap between boys and girls enrollment has only marginally diminished.

Supporting Objective C: Assure Adequate Financial Resources -

- The MEN was able to prepare detailed cost projections for reform-related inputs and used this data in the annual presentation to Parliament to justify its budget request.

Supporting Objective D: Greater Participation -

- For the first time, there is a National Association of Parents and Teachers in Benin, a number of regional associations and over three thousand associations at the local level.;

- An active program is in place in which U.S. NGOs are working to strengthen local NGOs to support local empowerment in community and school affairs.

Supporting Objective E: Strengthen Institutional Capacity -

- The MEN moved forward with regional planning of the FQL concept which provided the Ministry not only with a yearly plan for acquisitions and services, but also determines the overall cost for the FQL effort;

- The MEN has eliminated or reduced delays in the production of statistical reports and yearbooks. The regular and timely production of school statistics and yearbooks will indicate a significant improvement of management capacity.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Supporting Objective A : Improve quality -- Make primary education more effective in enabling students to be successful in their post-primary school careers.

The Primary Education Reform has as one of its principal goals the improvement of educational quality. As a strategy for attaining this goal, the reform focusses on improving key classroom inputs such as instructional materials, curricula, teacher-training, etc.

Table II.2

Supporting Objective A: IMPROVE QUALITY							
INDICATOR	Actual						EOPS
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	2002
Improved School Quality							

Adequate curricula developed (proxy)	na	na	na	na	grades 1 and 2	grades 1-4	grades 1 thru 6
% Teachers w/professional qualification. (CAP) ³	nd	28	30	33	38	na	50
Government-supplied textbooks per public school pupil ⁴	0	0	.33	.33	.33	.62	2.0
Improved Student Performance							
Average repetition rate (%)	25.17	25	279	25.67	nd	nd	15
Average drop out rate (%)	08.68	14.2	nd	11.59	nd	nd	15
Grade 2 students performing at required standards (%)	baseline will be 1995					na	80
Grade 5 students performing at required standards (%)	baseline will be 1995					na	80

The Ministry of Education and the USAID technical assistance team have developed, finalized and begun implementation of the Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) program. The program specifies key inputs (or indicators) that are necessary for a minimum of quality in the learning environment. Inputs range from textbooks to desks, latrines, inspector's visits, etc. Specifications and norms are detailed for each input, and during the reporting period FQL Program team members began evaluating individual schools using the FQL indicators as a yardstick by which progress toward FQL status can be assessed. The FQL program incorporates the activities of several different reform action plans that address pedagogical needs: teacher-training, textbooks, student assessment, curricula, and documentation.

Teacher quality, one of the most critical factors to overall quality, is an area where Benin is making slow, but steady progress. Teachers are being encouraged to upgrade their credentials through the professional pedagogical aptitude examination, (CAP: Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique) and almost two-fifths of them now hold the diploma relevant to the grade they teach. However, this examination is somewhat academic; a better indicator

³Percentage of teachers with professional qualification: The Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP) is the professional teaching certificate for primary school teachers. The percentage of teachers with CAP has been increasing since 1991. It is expected that this trend will continue so that in 1998, 50 percent of the primary school teachers will hold the CAP.

⁴Government-supplied textbooks per public school pupil: Textbooks procurement schedule: 1994-95: Grades 1 & 2; 1995-96: Grades 3 & 4; 1996-97: Grades 5 & 6. The reporting on this indicator will follow this schedule and will be based on the FQL standards for each grade. These standards are: Grades 1 & 2: at least one French book or set of French books for two students; one math workbook for each student. Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6: at least one math book and one French book or set of French books for two students; and one workbook for each student. The initial figure of .33 books is an estimate of the existing book stock in the system before the Reform interventions began.

of impact on the quality of instruction is the number of teachers receiving in-service training and, although limited progress was made during the reporting period, it is anticipated that during the coming period considerable progress will be made. Twice-monthly training sessions are held in the teacher's own localities. In addition, efforts are being made to provide in-service training to thousands of teachers at one time through a cascade strategy, beginning with inspectors, then pedagogical counsellors and finally to school directors and individual teachers.

For over five years prior to CLEF, the GOB ceased publishing statistics and the system did not even attempt to systematically measure the school system's performance in terms of student achievement. Such a system is now in place and the baseline year for student achievement will be the school year 1995-96. However, it is important to have some indication that quality is not suffering as enrollment rates go up and heretofore excluded groups enter the system. Thus, the GOB and USAID have continued to use the number of students who succeed on the primary school graduation exam -- imperfect statistically as it is -- as a proxy for the quality indicator. Here, too, we note significant improvement in student successes in passing the exam, due again to the re-established discipline and organization in the school system.

Curricula in any system should be appropriate for the society; huge strides are being made in a domain which is traditionally dominated by the French. The new programs for years one and two have been and are still being tested in experimental schools, with the feedback serving to aid revision as needed. During the reporting period programs for years three and four were written and are ready in pilot form. In the coming period, years five and six will be produced to complete the programs. To implement the new programs on a national scale will require careful planning, training and additional materials if teachers are not to be overwhelmed.

Textbooks were acquired for French and mathematics for the first two grades, with a pupil:book ratio of 2:1 for French and 1:1 for math, thus permitting all pupils to at least have access to books during lessons. Distribution of the new textbooks was underway by the end of the reporting period. Providing the new books was a stop-gap measure since the new curricula are still being prepared. During the coming period, the Ministry will begin working on training local talent to write and produce textbooks. Because textbooks are so critical to educational quality, the success of the new curricula program hinges to a very great extent on this work and the eventual replacement of existing manuals by program-specific textbooks.

Tests and examinations affect repetition rates and, consequently, community attitudes to schooling. Considerable work has already been done on national sampling and new tests have been devised to apply in subject areas other than French and math. There is now a body of professionals available who have received training in designing and administering a range of test types.

Large and multigrade classes pose an additional constraint on quality. With an ever increasing population plus an increasing demand for access, it is evident that there is a need for a teacher recruitment policy based on forward planning. If not, even more teachers will find themselves faced with overcrowded classrooms and classrooms using two or three different standards. However, with the tentative moves now being made towards decentralization, inspectors should soon be empowered to reallocate staff within

their own district to alleviate the most overcrowded classes and schools without having to work through the central Ministry chain of command.

Looking into the longer term, we can hope to see trained teachers following Beninese programs, using Beninese textbooks and preparing pupils for end-of-year tests that reflect the new approaches and the skills being nurtured. Improved instruction leads to enhancement of learning and motivation, which will reduce repetition and drop-out rates even further. With examination reforms, to reflect the new performance-related objectives, the majority of those starting school should be able to go through the whole system and pass the primary school-leaving examination having acquired useful life skills as well as the knowledge base upon which a secondary or technical education can be built.

Supporting Objective B: Increase equity: broaden access to primary education for girls and children from disadvantaged regions.

Benin continues to make progress in the area of overall access to education. However, in the area of gender and regional equity there is still a considerable gap. Girls' enrollment rates have been making steady gains, especially since the GOB waived school fees for girls in rural areas in 1993. However, boys' enrollment rates continue to climb rapidly. It is not clear at this point what are the decisive factors behind the surge in boys' enrollment. The overall Reform impact has certainly influenced the trend, but cultural preference for boys' education is probably just as influential. A salient problem with waiving school fees for girls is that the school fee monies are used by the parents' association and school directors to run the schools. The GOB's decision to waive the fees meant a reduction in operating funds for the schools that was not offset by any government assistance in the area of school operating costs. Most parents' associations had to increase their fund-raising activities (through special one-time "head-taxes" on students, both boys and girls), in order to meet operating needs.

Table II.3

Supporting Objective B: INCREASE EQUITY INDICATORS	Actual *					EOPS
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	2002
Gender Equity						
Gross enrollment rate (GER) Benin	56.5	59.9	60.7	64.7	66.8	78
GER (girls & boys)	40; 71	43; 75	43; 77	45; 79	50; 82	78; 78
Girls/Boys ratios	.56	.57	.55	.57	.61	1.00
Leaving exam pass rate, girls; boys with ratios	30; 32 (.92)	32; 38 (.84)	56; 61 (.91)	54; 59 (.91)	n.d.	80; 80 (1.00)
Regional Equity						
GER North/South (Borgou/Atlantique)	37; 66	41; 68	35; 86	37; 92	42; 94	78; 78

GER North/South ratios	.56	.60	.40	.40	.46	1.00
Leaving exam North/South with ratios	30; 38 (.78)	40; 38 (1.06)	59; 61 (.96)	51; 62 (.82)	n.d.	80; 80 (1.00)

* 1995 figures are preliminary.

In terms of regional equity, it is still too early to measure the impact of the Reform interventions. Most of the Ministry's efforts to date have been aimed at better understanding the factors that affect parents' attitudes toward sending their children to school. In the coming reporting period, it is anticipated that the Ministry with USAID collaboration will develop strategies to address the special needs of the more sparsely-populated northern provinces. Unfortunately, the dramatic success of Benin's cotton industry has led to downward pressure on enrollment rates in several key districts of the north as parents send their children to the fields instead of to school. In another area of the north, the discovery and unregulated mining of gold has drawn children away from the schools (although this affects the secondary more than primary).

Disparities in rural and urban attendance rates are harder to explain. On the one hand, rural increases have kept pace with urban increases, but the gap has not closed. Some of this is due to the relatively higher cost of schooling a child in the rural areas because of distances. Benin has a significant rural to urban migration; it makes sense to believe that many of the more dynamic rural dwellers who put their children in schools may also be the ones who finally migrated to the urban areas. Recent increases in economic opportunity in some of the northern rural areas may actually be reducing the number of children available for schooling.

Also, other factors, such as overcrowded classrooms, may well detract from GOB's efforts to encourage parents to send their children to school.

During the coming reporting period, it is expected that with technical assistance from CLEF, the Ministry will develop strategies and begin implementation of programs to encourage girls enrollment as well as expand the services offered to the disadvantaged rural areas of the north, thereby addressing the gender and regional equity gap.

Supporting Objective C : Assure Financial Resources -- Promote assurance of adequate financial resources to develop and sustain the primary education system.

Specific policy reforms sought under this supporting objective are as follows:

- Allocate a greater percentage of the primary education budget for non-salary expenditures;
- Reinforce appropriate procedures for maintaining low unit costs;
- Allow and encourage the development and operation of private schools, institutes and other NGO's which provide educational services as part of strategy to meet national education objectives;
- Prepare budgets based on identified needs, priorities and resources;

- Increase formal and effective collaboration and interchange among national institutions involved with objective-setting and financial resources mobilization;
- Move greater share of education costs away from parents, towards the state.

The above policy reforms are reflected in the activities of two Reform Action Plans: 1) Financial Viability and Public Participation and 2) Budgetary Process. The former aims at bringing currently marginalized groups into the decision-making process thereby improving the efficiency of financial management. The Budgetary Process Action Plan was built around the recommendations of a comprehensive institutional and management audit conducted in 1991, and is working towards a decentralized and transparent approach in the process of mobilizing, allocating and controlling the use of economic resources. To achieve this goal, budgeting, budget control, accounting and financial reporting procedures have to be overhauled and brought in line with the programmatic needs of both central and decentralized structures of the MEN.

Of the planned activities for Supporting Objective C, the most progress was made in determining the budgetary impact of primary education reform. With CLEF project support, the MEN continued to prepare detailed cost projections for reform-related inputs. This data is used by the MEN in its annual presentations to Parliament to justify budget requests as outlined in the GOB annual spending bill. The MEN committed itself to supporting schools, on an annual basis, in the areas of pedagogical inputs, supplies, equipment, furniture, latrines and school construction and/or rehabilitation.

During the reporting period the MEN failed to reach several stated objectives for improving financial management. Specifically, the internal budgetary nomenclature had not been adopted by the Ministry for system-wide application. While the MEN budget presentation had improved, it still did not adequately present planned expenditures by function; reinforced administrative and financial management procedures had yet to be developed and implemented in order to provide support for a fully integrated computerized budgetary expenditure tracking system. Achievements over the reporting period include the design and implementation of computerized accounting and reporting modules currently maintained in parallel with the traditional manual accounting journals. The MEN's Financial Resources Directorate was able to prepare: (1) ministry-wide financial statements on a quarterly basis; and (2) supplementary financial information for activities implemented under the primary education sub-sector reform program.

Donors' failure to provide technical assistance to the MEN's financial division and the lack of coordination of various donors' assistance programs have been factors in the slower-than-anticipated progress in this area of reform activities. Specifically, USAID's technical assistance was delayed by two years due to 1) a Washington-imposed limit on the Mission's ability to recruit Personal Service Contractors (PSCs) in order to staff the technical assistance positions, and 2) the Mission's limited capacity to provide administrative support to the technical assistance team due lack of staff. The World Bank's technical assistance package was delayed by two years due to a protracted negotiation process with the GOB.

The decentralization of the budget preparation process advanced marginally during the reporting period. A uniform budget nomenclature consistent with the GOB General Budget Nomenclature and a MEN's budget preparation procedures manual have been finalized.

Needed technical assistance was not made available in a timely manner to the MEN's Financial Resources Division.

The MEN made some progress during the reporting period in the decentralization of procurement. During the 1994-1995 FQL program, a portion of the school furniture acquisitions were made through the regional Ministry offices (DDE). On the whole, however, MEN reform-related procurement was largely planned, initiated and executed either by the MEN's financial division directorate or through the Ministry of Finance's central procurement Directorate.

Table II.4

Supporting Objective C: ASSURE ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES						
BUDGET	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	EOPS
GOB overall budget for education as % of total GOB budget	21.9	23.2%	23.7%	22.9%	23.4%	23%
Primary education budget as % of total education budget	nd	46.9%	47.0%	48.6%	54.5%	tbd
Non-salary primary education budget as % of total primary education budget	nd	9.5%	10.9%	21.9%	24.1%	tbd
EXPENDITURES	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	EOPS
GOB overall expenditures for education (000's \$US at current exchange rates)	\$64,913	\$79,189	\$78,403	(Budget years still open)		tbd
Primary education expenditures as % of total education expenditures	52%	53%	49.6%	(Budget years still open)		tbd
Non-salary primary education expenditures as % of total primary education expenditures	4%	8%	6%	(Budget years still open)		tbd

To date the reform has had a significant impact on the GOB budget allocations for the primary education sector, an area in which the GOB's contribution in 1991 was almost exclusively in the form of salaries. The steady increase in the non-salary budget share for primary education reflects the new priority of providing quality-oriented pedagogical material inputs at the school level through the FQL program. The non-salary share increase is also partially due to flat or declining salary expenditures for the primary sector, part of a government-wide trend in response to the IMF structural adjustment program. Based on current data, however, it is not clear what effect the Reform is having on actual spending patterns. This is the result of two interrelated phenomena: 1) The GOB does not require certain ministries to "close their books" on a given budget year by a set date; and 2) The Ministry of Education's accounting system did not yet have, during the reporting period, the capacity to accurately track expenditures. While budget allocations for primary education have steady increased, USAID/Benin, along with other donors, is still grappling with the problem of establishing an adequate but realistic percentage of national budget allocated to primary education and non salary expenses for primary education. This is shown on Table II.4 as EOPS still to be determined.

Another factor affecting government expenditures on education is the CFA franc devaluation. Part of the 1993 budget and all of the subsequent budgets were spent *after* the 50% devaluation of the CFA franc. Devaluation's immediate impact on budget spending patterns was to double expenditures for items coming from outside the CFA zone and only marginally increase the cost of services and goods inside the zone in terms of CFA. However, expressed in terms of current

dollars, devaluation meant that non-salary costs remained steady while salary costs declined significantly. Since the MEN's budget is heavily weighted with salary expenditures (when compared with other ministries), the MEN's share of the pie declined.

Supporting Objective D: Greater Participation- Promote Participatory Decision-Making and Consensus-Building on Education

The Primary Education Reform Program, now in its fourth year of implementation is generally seen by Beninese as an expression of the need for change in the education sector. However, the involvement of civil society in the implementation of the Reform is in initial stages.

USAID/Benin initiated many activities to contribute to building education NGOs and the institutional capacity of parents' associations.⁵ In October 1995, representatives from parents' associations, NGOs and the Ministry of Education participated in the evaluation of the Primary Education NGO Project (PENGOP) pilot phase. The evaluation, made by independent consultants recruited by World Education, showed that fifty (50) parents' associations have already been trained through ten (10) local NGOs in the two pilot regions (Borgou and Mono) to take responsibilities related to school management. The training provided to them is consolidated by micro-project implementation. Up to the end of the reporting period, 57 micro-projects have been funded, 100% of which contributed to improve parents' managerial capabilities and better school environment.

As a result, parents' associations in Parakou (a major city of the north) are directly engaging the school directors in discussions of priorities for the local school, especially as they relate to the management of funds raised by the associations. This new dynamic creates some friction in schools where the director previously had free reign over use of the funds. While some people in the Ministry of Education think the project implementation generates conflicts among these key school actors, most participants in the evaluation session saw the conflict to be a good sign that progress is being made toward program goals for public involvement.

The indicators chosen for monitoring the progress in the area of public involvement in the Reform demonstrate the positive developments during the reporting period:

Table II.5

<u>Supporting Objective D: Greater Participation -Promote Participatory Decision-Making and Consensus-Building</u>				
INDICATORS	1993	1994	1995	EOPS (1998)
Number of Regional Parents Associations	3	5	6	6
National Parents Association formed	N	N	Y	Y

⁵In Benin, a "parents' association" is the body of pupils' parents which provides funding and oversight for the local school's operations.

Number of NGOs working in the education sector	12	21	26	45
Number of Parents Associations receiving training	-	-	50	200

As shown by the above table, Benin's parents' associations are now organized at the regional and national levels. USAID/Benin has supported parents' associations nationwide as they moved to set up a national federation of parents' associations. Parents' associations have democratically elected officers and a board of trustees. Although the Ministry of Education collaborated with the parents and USAID in this process, it has been somewhat reticent to recognize the new center of power in the national education paradigm. However, the MEN has begun working with the elected board and it is anticipated that increased recognition will be given to the body during the coming reporting period.

USAID Benin will continue strengthening the policy dialogue capacity of the new parents' federation. Also, we will assist the MEN in the elaboration of a support program for parents' associations as well as identifying, with wide stakeholder participation, mechanisms for mobilizing local resources to ensure financial viability to the system.

As PENGOP progresses, it is expected that parents will become more involved in school management issues as well as maintaining dialogue with different institutions involved in the education sector in Benin. Resulting from this dialogue should be a clearer understanding of the role that the non-governmental sector will play in public and private education in Benin, thereby enhancing financial sustainability. Our initiative to strengthen civil society through the PENGOP program strengthens both our commitment to basic education as well as our second strategic objective - support of the democratic process in Benin.

Supporting objective E: Strengthen Institutional Capacity and coordination-- Enable GOB, particularly the MEN to coordinate setting and carrying out of national educational objectives. The overall improvement of education sector management capacity is vital to achieving reform objectives. Skills need to be developed and applied in the management of time, personnel, finances, and information. The information system must be effective in rapidly providing accurate data for informed decision-making and for timely evaluations and monitoring of activities. Decentralization of certain functions and responsibilities is to be encouraged.

The institutional reform action plans aims at:

- improving planning and policy analysis capacities;
- decentralizing key responsibilities to improve operational efficiency;
- strengthening financial management structures and procedures;
- ensuring relevance between responsibilities and qualifications; and
- providing adequate training to management and administrative staff.

USAID has established a series of benchmarks to measure GOB's improvements in its financial

management systems and accountability in the following areas: procurement, budgeting, cash management, accounting and reporting, auditing and payrolls. The table below shows areas of institutional strengthening to be monitored annually, in order to assess the MEN's performance. These areas are related to decentralization, financial management, planning and training.

Institutional capacity building efforts in the area of financial management aim at overhauling and strengthening the MEN's resource allocation procedures. During the reporting period significant steps were taken to operationalize the institutional restructuring designed under the reform program:

A formal dialogue has been initiated with the Ministry of Finance (MOF):

(1) a validation workshop was organized with technical input from the MOF in order to review the proposed MEN's budget nomenclature designed in compliance with the GOB general budget nomenclature;

(2) the MoF's Inspector General has been instructed to perform two operational audits within the MEN; and

(3) a budget line item has been established for the MEN's internal audit division, the Inspector General for Operations.

This drive toward improved accountability should lead to improved relationships between the MEN and the MOF thereby facilitating the mobilization of budget funds to support MEN's recurrent expenses.

Resources allocated to the MEN by the MOF have increased substantially in particular to the DDEs (regional level);

Most of the building blocks for improved financial planning and for financial control procedures which are more in tune with the program needs of MEN's decentralized structures are either in place or currently being designed:

(1) the MEN's budget nomenclature has been finalized after validation;

(2) the procedures manual for the preparation of MEN's budget proposals has been elaborated; and

(3) a local public accounting firm has been contracted under World Bank/IDA funding to develop a comprehensive administrative and financial management procedures manual and to design an accompanying integrated computerized expenditure tracking system.

Table II.6

Supporting Objective E: STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY						
INDICATOR	Actual					EOPS
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	2002

Decentralization: number of key responsibilities decentralized to regional level	0	0	0	2	2	8
Decentralization: Regional Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) programs produced (Y/N)	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Financial Management rating- Scale: 1 (low) - 3 (high)	nd	nd	nd	1	1.17	2.50
Statistical data produced	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Statistical data produced within a year	N	N	N	N	N	Y
Statistical yearbook published Year published	Y 1993	Y 1993	N na	N na	N na	Y same year
Administrative training program implemented (Y/N)	nd	nd	nd	Y	Y	Y

Decentralization is one key objective of this action plan. To address the shortcomings of excessive centralization, the MEN has planned to transfer gradually a number of currently centralized operations to the regional education offices (DDE).

The MEN has determined key responsibilities which will be gradually transferred to the regional offices (DDE). Achievement in the decentralization objective will be assessed through : (i) the number of these responsibilities actually transferred to the DDEs, and (ii) the production of regional Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) school programs. Regional FQL programs have been produced for school years 1995-1996 and 1996-1997 in order to monitor efforts needed to bring primary schools up to FQL standards. The standards have been defined in the areas of pedagogy (curriculum, teacher training, textbooks and pedagogical materials), and school environment (building, furniture, equipment). The transfer of key responsibilities to the regional offices has started with the management of exams as well as the appointment of teaching staff within regions. The decentralization related to the management of exams has considerably improved the overall organization of exams (preparation of candidates' lists, administration of exams, grading and publication of results list). The appointment of teaching staff by regional offices has increased the effectiveness of personnel management resulting in less wastage of human resources.

The decentralization of more responsibilities, as planned, is essential in improving the delivery of related services to users and beneficiaries. However, this process needs to be coupled with the reinforcement of the regional institutional capacity in order for regional staff to efficiently face their new responsibilities. An FQL monitoring program has been developed and will soon be validated for implementation at the regional level, once the required training modules are

developed.

A general assessment of the GOB financial management capability was made in May 1994 by Price Waterhouse, which gave a "medium" rating to the GOB. The auditors' indicated that the rating was changed from "low" to reflect the willingness within the GOB to improve its financial management systems. USAID has established a series of benchmarks to measure GOB improvement its accountability in the following areas: procurement, budgeting, cash management, accounting and reporting, auditing and payroll. The overall financial rating is the average rating for the six functional areas listed above on a scale from the lowest end of 1.00 to the highest end of 3.00. The EOPS for this indicator is a score of 2.50 which represents a medium to high rating of all six functional areas. An EOPS of 3.00 was determined to be unrealistic since it would mean that all functional areas received a perfect score. USAID tranche disbursement conditionalities reflect an incremental increase in program attention to these key areas.

Planning From the beginning of the reform, the GOB took major steps to promote a decentralized organizational environment conducive to effective program implementation. Considerable effort was made in the area of planning and management capacity building. Three main technical directorates were created by decree from two existing offices to provide the framework for a reformed education system that is geared towards results: a Planning Directorate (DAPS); a Human Resources Directorate (DRH); and a Financial Resources Directorate (DRF). Qualified personnel were appointed to key positions in these new directorates.

Planning has been considerably reinforced by the creation of the DAPS which has planned the reform program and is coordinating its implementation. Moreover, the DAPS is developing a Management Information System (MIS) based on an information needs assessment with the support of the CLEF technical assistance. The capacity of the MEN in the production of school statistics (statistical tables and yearbooks) has been improved, reducing the delays in the publication of school statistics. The regular and timely production of school statistics and yearbooks will indicate considerable improvement of management capacity.

During the reporting period, the Ministry moved forward with the regional planning of the Fundamental Quality Level program. This exercise not only provides the Ministry with a yearly plan for acquisitions and services, but it also puts a price tag on the overall effort to improve the quality of education in Benin. By the end of the reporting period, the Ministry had in its database the unit cost, quantity and specifications for the fifty classroom and school-level inputs deemed necessary for quality education.

Late in the reporting period, the DAPS (with CLEF technical assistance) also launched an analysis of the projected needs for teaching personnel over the next ten years. This part of the planning puzzle is critical since the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) has imposed a freeze on hiring within the Ministry. Armed with a solid projection of its future needs, the G.O.B. will be better able to respond to World Bank and IMF pressure to restrain recruitment.

Training. During the reporting period the second phase of the strategic management training program was planned. Implementation is scheduled for the coming period. Meanwhile, Ministry personnel received training in computer software applications especially in the area of statistical analysis.

USAID Tranche IV and Tranche V conditionality addresses shortcomings or obstacles to progress in the following areas: 1) building a larger consensus around reform objectives for local

communities' awareness and involvement in the program; and 2) developing clearly laid-out strategies for public participation in and the mobilization of financial resources for the reform process for long-term sustainability.

CONTRIBUTION BY USAID

USAID has supported the Beninese educational reform program from its inception and has provided the incentives and support needed to keep the program on track. Besides the \$28.5 million made available for the GOB as part of the conditionality program, USAID has funded the CLEF Project which provides technical assistance and training to assist Benin in reaching immediate reform objectives and to institutionalize the reform achievements. With the arrival of the full complement of the technical assistance team at the end of this reporting period an accelerated rate of progress is anticipated during the next reporting period.

USAID also uses its Human Resources Development Assistance (HRDA) program to supplement CLEF training including in-country and overseas training. Over 150 Beninese teachers and educators have benefitted from HRDA training during reporting period.

As detailed in the analysis section, USAID has played a key role in empowering and energizing local PVOs and communities to be active in the civil society, including the operations of local schools. Most of the advances in the PTA movement and development of stronger indigenous NGOs/PVOs can be credited to our American NGO partners World Education Inc., and Africare .

USAID has also maintained a continuous dialogue with our Beninese partners and clients to ensure our consensus on objectives and strategy is maintained.

EXPECTED PROGRESS 1997 AND 1998

The next two years will be a difficult period as many of the remaining education reform plans and strategies move from pilot phases and studies to full-scale implementation. Some of the major constraints we anticipate include economic factors and recurrent cost limitations.

Also, further progress in increasing access and quality in basic education in Benin may be limited over the next five years, unless the GOB allocates more funds to MEN and unless MEN reallocates resources away from university education to primary education in order to recruit and train new teachers. Benin's communities do not yet have the capacity to hire and train their own teachers. The result is that class sizes are getting unmanageable (100 - 220 students in many urban classrooms). Demand is outstripping supply, and the trend is not sustainable. Classes are being held in makeshift structures with few didactic materials. The MEN is faced with the need to make important policy changes on resource allocations.

Nevertheless, USAID anticipates Benin will continue to make good progress in meeting educational reform objectives.

Specific key results targeted for 1998 include the following:

At the Strategic Objective Level:

- Girls enrollment rate reaches 60%;
- Gross enrollment rate reaches 70%;

- Leaving exam pass rate exceeds 60%.

At the Supporting Objective Level:

- Primary school textbooks, synchronized with the curriculum, are produced in Benin for the entire primary cycle;
- National examination system revised in accordance with the new curriculum;
- 1997 and 1998 budgets prepared on a decentralized basis;
- Majority of the MEN procurement done on a decentralized level;
- Adequate curricula developed for all major primary school subjects;
- Budget for education maintained at a minimum of 23% of the national budget;
- Non salary primary education budget maintained at a level of 8% or higher;
- Financial management rating scale for MEN increases from 1.17 to 1.75;
- At least four of the eight key MEN responsibilities are decentralized to the regions;
- Number of NGOs working in the education sector reaches 40 and the number of PTAs receiving training exceeds 100.

B. PROGRESS TOWARDS SPECIAL OBJECTIVE 1 : DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

SUMMARY OF DATA

Table II.7

INDICATOR (%)	ACTUAL			
	1991	1994	1995	% change
DEMOCRACY				
Number of political parties at the legislative elections	29	N/A	53	83
GOVERNANCE				
Total number of registered NGOS	273	500	700	
Number of institutional crises	N/A	3	6	50
Number of MOF inspector Generals	N/A	10	16	60
Number of inspectors from Supreme Court	NA	5	6	20

Background and Introduction

During the 17-year Marxist-Leninist regime, Benin suffered enormous economic hardship amid accusation of corruption, nepotism, neglect, and misappropriation funds. A national conference was convened in Cotonou, during which the regime was strongly criticized and actions were agreed upon to liberalize the economy and to democratize the political environment.

USAID/BENIN's related Special Objective (SPO1) is: **Strengthening civil society through NGO development**

In 1995, USAID/Benin and other donors, increased their support to the NGO community as it continues to gain momentum and credibility from the population at large. More than ten workshops are now organized every week by NGOs on special key issues. Activities in NGO institutional capacity building are continuing and NGOs are taking more initiative to address grass-roots needs of communities. However, real NGO networking is still not a reality and the notion of advocacy is not well understood by NGOs themselves. Hence, NGO influence on GOB decision-making is not as effective as it could be. Despite this, more than four coalitions of NGOs have been formed around sectoral lines. It is now estimated that there are about 70 NGOs reaching an estimated 1 million people, about 1/5 of the total population. In addition, donors support to NGO capacity building is growing rapidly.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

A. Reinforce Democracy

1) NGOs in elections

Benin is consolidating its democracy. In 1995, Benin successfully took an important step by holding the legislative elections for the National Assembly. Also in 1995, a new electoral code was initiated by the National Assembly with the support of civil society despite some reluctance on the part of the GOB. The National Assembly created an electoral commission (CENA) to be the main organizer of elections. This significantly contributed to the success of the legislative elections. Local NGOs were instrumental in voter awareness and education.

USAID/Benin's assistance continued after the election by providing support for a conference to evaluate the election and lessons learned. A grant was given to GERDDES/AFRIQUE. In light of the strong performance of the first CENA, conferees (including civil society representatives, CENA members and GOB officials) recommended that the commission be institutionalized (with a permanent secretary at its head) and be given a permanent footing for continued effective organization and monitoring of the electoral process. This recommendation is under consideration by the National Assembly.

The following table depicts increased interest of citizens in the electoral process:

Table II.8

Participants	1991	1995	% change
Number of political parties at the legislative elections	29	53	83
Number of voters at the legislative elections	1,030,017	1,457,945	42

Source: INSAE

The second National Assembly resulting from the March 28 and May 28, 1995 legislative elections was composed of mostly new members; only 7 incumbents were re-elected. The constitutional court has been instrumental in its role as controller of the electoral process. Figures above show that popular interest in the electoral process is increasing. Though considerable progress has been made, democracy in Benin is still fragile.

2) NGOs and decentralization

One of the key issues is the lack of policy on decentralization. The GOB has delayed making a policy decision for political reasons until after the 1996 presidential elections. This delay is having repercussions on democratization and development efforts at the local level. NGOs are lobbying the National Assembly to get the bill on decentralization passed and promulgated as soon as possible in order to create a more favorable policy environment.

In the coming years, USAID/Benin will consider directing greater efforts towards assisting decentralization and local revenue generation, particularly in the education and family health sectors, thereby strengthening democratic institutions and promoting policy dialogue among key actors in order to build on the positive results acquired since 1990.

B. Improve governance

The rapid growth of the NGO movement in Benin is illustrated in the following table:

Table II.9

INDICATORS (<i>Estimates</i>)	prior to 1991	1994	1995
Total Number of registered NGOs	273*	500	700
Active NGOs in Education	12	24	34
Active NGOs in Health/Family Planning	7	13	18
Active NGOs in Civic Affairs	12	21	29
Active NGOs in Elections Management	0	16	22

*Source Ministry of Interior

1) NGOs in Education

USAID/Benin's persistence in helping the Beninese Government promote participatory decision-making in the education sector is finally bearing fruits. These efforts led to an increase in interest of stakeholders (parents associations, NGOs) in the primary education reform process. From 1994 to 1995, many activities have been initiated by NGOs to assist parents associations build their institutional capacity. In 1994, five of the six regions had a parents association at regional level.

2) NGOs in Health and Family Planning

In 1995, there were about 18 NGOs actively involved in the promotion of MCH/FP service delivery, IEC, and research.

3) NGOs in civic affairs

The following table shows how institutional crisis management became an intricate part of

Benin's democratization process:

Table II.10

Indicators	1994	1995
Number of Institutional crises	3	6
Intervention by the constitutional court	1	4
Decisions by executive orders "ordornances"	1	1
Arbitrage of civil society	3	4
Compromise between powers	1	1

sources USAID/Benin*

An indicator for assessing process in Benin's democratization process is the frequency of institutional crises and the mechanism used for resolution. In 1995 the number of institutional crisis rose substantially. These crises have some positive and negative factors. Though these crises are considered as tests for democracy and their resolution helps consolidate democracy, they can rekindle old fires (Niger) if they are not managed well.

Many people believe now that Benin is becoming a republic of judges because the role of each branch is not well defined or perceived and the apparent weaknesses of the constitution are not being dealt with. The above figures show, however, the important role of civil society in moderating national debates. The successful implementation of NGOs' governance activities greatly contributed to a peaceful and transparent legislative elections held March and May 1995.

4) NGOs institutional strengthening

NGOs institutional capacity has improved compared to 1994. Africare's NGO training sessions targeted NGO presidents, project officers, accountants and other key personnel. Various topics such as administration, financial management, project planning, evaluation and implementation, proposal development and organization strategic planning were covered. The criteria for acceptance to the program included transparency and accountability, and organizational checks and balances. These requirements forced 5 NGOs to quit the program. Africare's goal is not just the number of trained NGOs but more importantly to graduate competent and responsible NGOs which will serve as role models.

In 1995, there was considerable improvement in NGOs' reporting. Precise data were included in the financial reports and the narrative reports were more quantitative and of higher quality. In addition, a seminar organized by Africare produced a NGO Management Manual and recommendations for a code of conducts for NGOs.

USAID/Benin is now paying particular attention to gender issues not only through our NGO Strengthening program but also in our training programs (HRDA and ATLAS). Beninese women

* in 1994, three crises were identified: 1) Budget crisis, 2) University Crisis, 3) Allegation of executive branch of government misusing funds for medical care of President's wife.
in 1995, 6 major crisis were selected: 1) Budget crisis, 2) GOB's attempt to replace the president of the Supreme Court, 3) crisis on the electoral code and installation of the electoral commission, 4) invalidation of a newly elected deputy from the opposition by the Constitutional Court, 5) invalidation of an elected deputy and surrogate from ruling party by the Court, 6) invalidation of another elected deputy from ruling party by the Court.

played important roles in the Beijing Conference and the Social Development Conference. More than four predominantly women political parties were created for the legislative elections. Though they were not successful in getting seats in the National Assembly we think it will lead them way to increased female participation in the decision-making process.

The strengthening of NGO financial and managerial capacities is illustrated in the table below:

Table II.11

NGOs capacity (%)	1994 (base line)	1995 (estimate)
Activity reports produced	62	94
Financial report produced	17	94
Existence of project officer	17	100
% of male/female beneficiaries of BINGOS	47.8	51

Source Africare (oct. 94)⁷

5) NGO and advocacy

Several NGO networks have been formed and are showing good potential for effective advocacy work. The "Coalition pour le Développement Durable" (CDD) has considerably influenced the GOB's attitude as a result of articulating their issues and concerns during the United Nations sponsored Cairo Conference on Population and Development. CDD played a similar role in preparation for the Social Development Summit held in Copenhagen in 1995 and skillfully illustrated that NGO coalition building is one the best means to broaden participation in the decision-making process.

Another NGO network, *la Reseau des ONG*, which increased its membership from 10 to 20 NGOs from 1994 to 1995, focused primarily on civic education during the electoral period. Though it was a first experience, the network was praised for effectively sensitizing the public about voting rights and civic responsibilities. USAID/Benin through a grant to the NDI contributed to that success.

Overall, the value and potential of a well organized, well-run NGO coalition is becoming recognized, but more encouragement is needed. It will be through continued active support that USAID/Benin can ensure civil society's participation in both democratic and development sub-sectors such as education, population and family planning, elections, governance, public affairs and transparency. USAID/Benin has accomplished a lot with limited resources in 1995 but needs to design a more focused strategy to foster democratic gains and build a foundation for sustainable development.

6) Transparency and accountability of the GOB and the Judicial branch

Since 1990, the judiciary has been criticized for not playing its waste, fraud and abuse role, particularly with the executive branch, because it lacks the necessary institutional capacity (human and material resources).

⁷ Data in this table are based on findings in a needs assessment of 18 NGOs ordered by Africare to help them develop a training plan. All the participating NGOs are part of the Benin Indigenous NGOs project. Progress depicted in the table does not reflect the needs of the overall NGO movement. The purpose of this table to show that reinforcing civil society is a long term endeavor requiring that various BINGOS like activities be implemented by other donors.

Before 1994, there were only 5 partially trained inspectors at the *Chambre des Comptes* and 10 GOB inspector Generals to cover the whole country. Policy dialogue with the GOB opened the way for the recruitment of one additional inspector and 4 assistants at the Supreme Court, which launched its activities by auditing election campaign spending. The expected target for fiscal 1996 is to reach 10 inspectors and 10 assistants covering audits of the executive branch, the local communities, public agencies and parastatals. Currently, a general audit of government spending in 1991 is still in process. USAID/Benin intends to provide more support to the judicial system in 1996.

Table II.12

Institutions	1994 (000s)	1995 (000s)	% change
Increase in IG budget	35,616 CFA	58,426 CFA	60
Number of Inspector Generals	10	10	60
Number of Inspector of the Supreme Court	5	6	20

Source: Ministry of Finance

CONTRIBUTION BY USAID

With limited resources, USAID/Benin provided financial assistance to several NGOs that supported a series of activities, the impact of which is reflected in the sections above. USAID/Benin supported a local NGO *Groupe d'Etude et de Recherches sur la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et social* (GERDDES/AFRIQUE) in the organization of a seminar in October 1994 that facilitated the introduction of a new electoral code and the proposal for an independent electoral commission.

In addition, preparation for the legislative elections, included support from USAID/Benin through the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to a local NGO network named *Reseau des ONG*. Thanks to the Network's active role the policy environment is progressively changing. The GOB has begun to recognize that decisions reached with the participation of civil society are easier to implement and have greater impact. NGOs are now being called upon by government to help initiate civil education programs that can complement government efforts. Furthermore, USAID/Benin provided electoral commodities (indelible ink and seals) to the Electoral Commission (CENA) in order to enhance its capacity to conduct free, fair and transparent elections. We also funded the African American Institute (AAI) so that it could send a delegation of observers to contribute to the transparency of the elections. Our assistance continued after the election by providing support for a conference for evaluating the election and lessons learned through a grant given to GERDDES/AFRIQUE.

In addition, during this reporting period, USAID/Benin has provided financial assistance to local NGOs such as the Institute of Human Rights and Democracy (IHRD) and *Association des Femmes Juristes du Benin* (AFJB). These NGOs in turn have produced different booklets related to Benin democracy (Constitution, Charter of Political Parties, Electoral Law) in french and local languages and provided civic education to an increased number of citizens

In 1995, with the support of USAID/Benin, local NGOs (e.g., *Enfants Solidaires d'Afrique et du Monde* (ESAM) and *Groupe Nouvelle Ethique*) organized seminars in May and August 1995 to

share information on education reforms. These efforts resulted in the creation of a National Federation of Parents Association. The Federation is now becoming instrumental in discussions between the Ministry of Education and civil society.

Under the Benin Indigenous NGO Strengthening Project (BINGOS), implemented by a U.S. PVO, AFRICARE, provisions were made to finance micro-projects of local NGOs in the family planning sector. In addition, under the HRDA project, USAID/Benin provided short-term training to NGOs involved in family planning. USAID/Benin along with other donors and the Ministry of Health, financed FRAC to assess family planning activities in francophone Africa in general and Benin in particular. In addition, a grant was given to the Population Services International (PSI) for the social marketing of condoms and to conduct IEC activities. Policy dialogue with the GOB continued and NGO are now involved in the design of a national family planning policy.

We have initiated a series of civic education activities in collaboration with local NGOs such as *la Coalition des ONG pour le Developpement Durable (CDD)*, *le Groupe de Recherche et d'Action pour le Bien-être Social (GRABS)*, *Groupe Nouvelle Ethique* and many more to increase awareness of the important role of civil society on good governance and development issues. These activities have helped to keep NGOs focused on key issues and to develop their capacity to influence decision-making. As an example, in fiscal year 1995, USAID/Benin financed a series of good governance workshops organized by GERDDES for various audiences, such as, the newly elected members of the National Assembly, the executive branch, the judiciary, the Autonomous National Electoral Commission and members of civil society. It is considered by many today that these workshops led the way to peaceful resolution of various institutional crises among branches of government because they identified critical issues and provided an open and neutral fora for national debate.

We signed two Operational Program Grants (OPG) with US PVOs in 1994 to strengthen good governance, both of which are in the middle of their implementation phases. In its second year, AFRICARE have made some strides toward achieving its objectives despite some serious administrative constraints. In 1995, out of the 23 local NGOs (health, family planning, and good governance) selected by Africare to participate in its institutional capacity building program, 17 of them are nearing completion of their formal training. while the second phase with 11 NGOs is being launched.

The second OPG funded by USAID/Benin in the governance area is WORLD EDUCATION (WE) which implements the Primary Education NGO Project (PENGOP). PENGOP is increasing the number of NGOs providing educational services to parents associations and communities. The evaluation of World Education's governance program made in October 1995 showed significant progress towards achieving expected results. Compared to 1994 when about 21 NGOs were identified as active in the education sector, 34 NGOs were actively involved in 1995. Furthermore, ten of the 34 were providing technical assistance in training and micro-project design to 50 parents associations in selected areas of Benin. It is expected that during the next phase of the project, at least five additional NGOs will be selected in order to participate in strengthening 101 more parents association for their effective involvement in school management.

In 1995, USAID/Benin through HRDA and PD&S funding mechanisms, strengthened the Inspection General of the Ministry of finance and the *Chambre des Comptes* of the Supreme Court by providing technical training to inspectors on audits and inspection methodologies.

EXPECTED PROGRESS 1997 AND 1998

Up until now, USAID/Benin has considered the sector of democracy and governance (DG) as a Target of Opportunity or Special Objective. USAID/Benin's strategy has been limited to strengthening civil society through NGO development. During fiscal year 1996, we will conduct a sector assessment, with the assistance of the Africa and Global Bureaus. The purpose of the assessment would be to identify the problems, constraints and opportunities in the democracy/governance sector in order to recommend new program directions. The assessment will also enable us to examine availability of data in order to select indicators, program outputs and benchmarks that we will submit in the form of a more comprehensive results framework.

The success of the democratization process in Benin and the installation of effective and functioning democratic institutions such as the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court and the High Commission for Media and Communication, implies that to sustain progress, we need to review our strategy and program aimed at improving governance and reinforcing democracy. The sector assessment we are planning would examine the following issues areas in democratic governance:

- the policy framework for civil society development;
- local revenue enhancement and management;
- public sector decentralization;
- enhancing legislative assembly responsiveness to concerns of citizens;
- an improved judicial system that establishes a transparent, fair, predictable legal and regulatory framework that provides for accountability- i.e., a level playing field with clear rules of the game.

The sector assessment will also:

- assess the political will of the elected regime toward democratic governance and adjustments in the key areas of the legislative arena, constituency building; judicial (traditional/formal), regulatory environment, revenue collection and civil service reform;
- evaluate civil society strengths and weaknesses and the potential for civil society to play an adequate advocacy and be a force for positive changes towards consolidation of democratic governance;
- identify who the stakeholders are in Benin's private sectors, review the private sector's institutional and legal environment for a sustainable development; and
- assess the government's political will and capacities to decentralize various governmental functions but specifically in the education, health and governance sectors, to decreasing levels of administration and to non-state actors. Assess what interventions in this area are most likely to facilitate devolution and greater accountability to the citizenry.
- assess lessons learned on the most recent elections and make recommendations for future USAID/Benin interventions. This will include reviews, inter alia of electoral commission, enabling legislation/laws, political party formulation, voter registration, etc.;

The anticipated result of such assessments would be to create an environment where the existing democratic institutions and the civil society advocacy groups would play their roles

more effectively.

In the following six months, the DG Special Objective Team will 1) develop a DG Customer Service Plan by April 30; 2) Initiate actions for a Sector Analysis between March 15 - June 10; 3) Develop a DG strategy between June 20- Aug. 16 and 4) finalize a DG Management Contract by Aug. 30.

USAID/W's assistance is requested for the field work of the sector assessment and the development of the democracy and governance strategy.

C. PROGRESS TOWARDS SPECIAL OBJECTIVE 2 : FAMILY HEALTH

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

POPULATION With an estimated population of 5.2 million (1992 census), 51 percent female and 49 percent male, Benin is experiencing rapid growth as it has one of the highest birthrates on the continent: 6.8 children/woman, compared to 6.4 for Africa as a whole. The population growth rate during the period 1979-1994 was 2.8 percent. Contraceptive prevalence for modern methods is estimated as less than 3%. The following are constraints to the delivery of family planning information and services:

- . Benin has not yet adopted a population policy, although one has been drafted. A family code has not been adopted, although one has been drafted. The colonial 1920 anti-contraception law is still in effect, although not enforced. The National Population Commission, created in 1993 to prepare the Cairo Conference and in charge of drafting a population policy, is not very active and is rather unknown to the population. We are expecting progress on issuing a population policy and family code following the presidential elections in March 1996.
- . Reliable data at the national level on fertility and mortality is lacking. In 1995, the GOB officially requested USAID's support for undertaking a Demographic Health Survey (DHS), the first time in Benin. This survey will be completed by the end of this fiscal year.
- . Pronatalist sentiment exists at all levels in the GOB and in the country. A RAPID Program to sensitize policy makers at all levels is being organized and will be held by end of this fiscal year.
- . The capacity of the Ministry of Health to plan and manage its programs is weak and its commitment to family planning is uncertain.
- . Continued delays in USAID/W on releasing already hired family planning staff to serve in the Mission to help us plan and manage our family planning program.

In the non-public sector, support for and delivery of family planning services by NGOs is thriving. The Benin Association of Women Lawyers (AFJB), the Benin Association for the Promotion of the Family (ABPF) and the National Coalition of NGOs for Sustainable Development (CDD) -- have been the three most active organizations in this regard.

In addition to their contributions to the drafting of a family code (submitted to the GOB since 1992) and to bringing about a family planning supportive position by the GOB at the Cairo Conference, these NGOs also organized many seminars and conferences in 1995 to sensitize decision makers on the link between population growth and sustainable development. One of the highlights of this NGO-led advocacy was the celebration of the 1995 Population World Day which focussed on two themes: 1) "Main results of the Cairo Conference and Follow up"; and 2) "Population Policy Statement: implications and deadline".

While the GOB showed more commitment to addressing the constraints of rapid population growth during the reporting period, a lot more could have been achieved given the amount of continued donor and NGO pressure. It has to be noted that some major events took place in 1995 such as : the Legislative elections (March 95); the hosting of the Francophone Countries' Summit (December 1995, attended by 49 foreign delegations); a new budget crisis (December

1995-january 1996); and the presidential elections of March 1996. All this forced the government to postpone several items on its initial agenda.

FAMILY PLANNING : Health and population indicators suggest that unmet need for family planning is high. Infant mortality has declined rapidly in the past decade (from 150/000 in 1982 to 105.5 in 1992) but it has not been matched with improved rates of contraceptive prevalence (less than 2.5 per cent for modern methods). Maternal and child mortality remain also high (respectively 800 per 100,000 live births; and 80 per 1,000). Up to 20 percent of all pregnancies are currently terminated by induced abortions and this rate is increasing. unsafe abortion may account for up to one-third of maternal deaths.

The GOB's health development policy puts a strong emphasis on the integration of family planning into the general health care system and is moving slowly but steadily ahead. A new Family Health Division was created in late 1994, followed by a Family Planning Policy Declaration (March 1995) and a draft Family Health Action Plan (December 1995). This action plan was sent to donors and, for the first time, to some NGOs for comment and the latter were also invited to participate in the review meeting. These recent actions suggest that some fundamental policy changes have taken place since last year.

This year, Benin also hosted the eighth annual meeting of the Francophone Regional Advisory Committee (FRAC) on family planning. This year's topic focused on "Community Participation" in the development of family planning programs. During the Cotonou meeting, the opportunity was given to participants to travel up country in order to appreciate the populations' involvement in family health activities. This FRAC meeting came up with resolutions and recommendations regarding strategies that will facilitate communities' participation in family planning programs. The meeting was organized by the Benin Association for Family Planning (ABPF) in collaboration with the MOH and with USAID's financial support.

HIV/AIDS According to the 1992 statistics of the US Bureau of the Census, the overall HIV prevalence in Benin was between 1.3% and 4.5%, i.e., between 50,000 and 200,000 people. Although these figures are relatively low, they mask serious imbalances between urban and rural areas. More alarmingly, the number of HIV seropositive cases is expected to double annually. To complement government's efforts in this area, USAID initiated in 1990, a Condom Social Marketing program, the largest AIDS prevention activity in the country. This program is still successful as shown in the table below :

Table II. 13

Condom Social Marketing					
	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996 *
PSI					
-distributed	0	90,176	179,360	183,476	100,000
-sold	355032	1,263,448	1,425,672	1,955,983	2,280,000
PNLS					
-distributed	no data	90,880	80,000	136,000	120,000
OTHERS					
-distributed	no data				

Total	335,000	1,444,504	1,685,032	2,275,459	2,500,000
%increase	na	48.2	16.6	35.0	10%

Sources: MOH; PSI

* Projected

The above figures show the achievements of the CSM program in Benin, in conjunction with the GOB's AIDS control program (PNLS). A total of 2,275,459 condoms were distributed in 1995 against 2,200,000 projected. This indicates an increase in demands of condoms and, we believe, in AIDS/HIV awareness. Although an impact assessment of this program has not yet been conducted, it may be suggested that the 35% increase in condom distribution and the extension of IEC activities to all six regions of the country has contributed to slowing down the spread of the disease. Starting in 1996, the free distribution of condoms during promotion campaigns will start to drop while sales figures will progress to 2.5 million. However, the MOH ability to protect and care for those already affected remains an issue.

This year the MOH, which has so far been strictly opposed to PSI's venturing into other areas, has asked that additional contraceptive products and oral rehydration salts be included in the PSI social marketing program. This is the best tribute to USAID's effort to promote public-private sector collaboration in Benin. In addition, during President Soglo's official visit to the U.S. last fall, the GOB announced its decision to make AIDS/STD control a major priority and requested an increase of USAID's assistance. The success of the CSM has certainly contributed to such decision.

During the reporting period, PSI continued its partnership with the Benin Association for Social Marketing (ABMS), and to date, about 1,125 Village Volunteers from the ZOU region (center of Benin) have been trained in conducting sensitization and demonstrations techniques for AIDS/HIV prevention. Each of these volunteers also represents a sales point for condoms, which helped increase condom sales figures.

CONTRIBUTION OF USAID ACTIVITIES

USAID's Special Objective (SPO 2) in this sector is : **To Expand the Availability, Quality, and Use of Sustainable Family Planning and HIV Prevention Services.**

Although USAID does not yet have a bilateral family planning project in Benin, we have continued to support small scale activities in areas such as policy dialogue, AIDS/HIV control and family planning services delivery.

In addition to supporting studies such as, the Population Sector Needs Assessment (1994), the Demographic Health Survey (1995-96), and the RAPID program (1996), we also maintain regular contacts with the major players in the sector and participated in all major events. On each occasion, USAID and its partners insisted on :

- . the adoption of a population policy and family code;
- . the need for an effective partnership between the GOB and the NGOs;
- . the need for a clear family health strategy and action plans;
- . the need for increased training opportunities for policy makers and family planning service providers; and
- . the need for increased enrollment rates for girls.

USAID also financed long term and short term training to the US and in-country in order to provide exposure to experiences from other countries.

EXPECTED PROGRESS IN 1997 AND 1998

In our 1994 API, based on the recommendations of the assessments mentioned above, we indicated our plans to expand our program in the family planning sector by this fiscal year. We have been asked by the Ministry of Health to integrate family planning services and HIV/AIDS preventive measures into its on-going primary health care program. To be able to respond to these opportunities, we need to address our own technical and managerial capacity. We successfully recruited, selected, contracted and funded the services of a Western Consortium Senior Fellow during the summer of 1995. Since September 1995, however, we have been blocked by USAID/W from bringing this fellow to post. As a result, our capacity to plan and implement a program in family planning this year has been crippled.

Despite this constraint we have been able to move our program forward, mainly through the support from centrally funded programs of the Global Bureau. The results of the DHS will provide for the first time comprehensive fertility and mortality data that will be made available for program planning and policy dialogue purpose to decision-makers in the GOG and in the donor community as well. The survey results will also provide us with a rich data base line from which we will be able to select indicators, program outputs and benchmarks that we will submit in the form of a more comprehensive results framework.

The results of the RAPID program should include more receptivity to policy change in support of family planning. Family planning norms and protocols will be updated and Ministry of Health staff trained in their use through the INTRAH program. We will make use of these programs in the design of our bilateral family health program.

The overall objective of our family health program will be to help integrate and improve the quality of FP and HIV/STD prevention services in both the public and private sectors. We will focus mainly on:

- . (i) increased information on and access to family planning services and commodities;
- . (ii) expanded community-based distribution of barrier contraceptives through local NGOs;
- . (iii) expanded condom social marketing of contraceptive and child survival products through community-based initiatives and IEC campaigns;
- . (iv) strengthening institutional capacities of both the governmental agencies and NGOs to provide sustainable FP and HIV prevention services through improved training and supervision of service providers; and
- . (v) creating an enabling environment through the effective implementation of a population policy and a family law.

To ensure efficiency and sustainability, the project will also draw on the capacities that are being developed among local NGOs and PVOs under the Benin Indigenous NGO Strengthening (BINGOS) Project, implemented by AFRICARE.

It is also expected that the government's current effort to promote girls' education, with USAID's assistance, will also have significant and lasting impact on fertility since studies have shown that there is a high correlation between the years of girls' schooling and contraceptive use.

SECTION III. STATUS OF OPERATING UNIT'S MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

A. Changes or Refinements

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE : Primary Education

With reengineering, a Strategic Objective Team (aka Basic Education Team) was created and is now operational. The Basic Education Team consists of members from each of our support and technical offices that impact on the basic education program. The Team's coach is the former GDO and a trained education. Much of our interaction with our development partners and clients in the area of basic education now reflects the concepts and philosophy of reengineering. An extended Basic Education Team is being formed and will include partners and clients from both government, civil society and other donors. An orientation for the extended team members is planned for April.

SPECIAL OBJECTIVE 1 : Democratic Governance

At the operating unit level, a Special Objective Team (SPOT) has been established with the mandate to design, implement monitor and evaluate all activities under this special objective. The team is composed of two technical specialists, an administrative management specialist, a team support specialist a public participation specialist and a results and resources specialist. The team will arrange a democratic governance sector assessment to identify the major constraints in the sector and to recommend strategic directions for an expanded program.

SPECIAL OBJECTIVE 2 : Family Health

As part of the reengineering process, the family health Special Objective team is planning to conduct a workshop with all partners and stakeholder in this sector in order to share views and agree on priority targets. We have requested from the GOB a concept paper explaining how it plans to use our assistance integrating family planning and HIV/AIDS control measures into its primary health program. The question whether this sector should be addressed as a strategic objective or remain a special objective will be reflected in our next R4 submission. We strongly believe that we will better serve the intended beneficiaries and complement our primary education focus through a comprehensive family health program in both the private and public sectors. This approach would require the resources and coordination generally associated with a strategic objective.

B. Special Concerns and Issues

DONOR COORDINATION

In the education sector, we have invested much time and effort with the MEN to strengthen its capacity to write and produce its own curricula and texts. At the same time the World Bank is planning to bring in a large quantity of foreign produced texts to meet immediate needs that are not linked with nor supportive of the new curriculum. However, these texts will arrive just when the new MEN produced curricula are scheduled for introduction into the same grades. The private sector publishers of these texts are naturally quite anxious that the World Bank initiative more forward. We are taking the position that the texts should be revised to fit with the curriculum before distribution. The issue is being amicably fought out.

Another World Bank issue has to do with its on-going efforts to construct additional classrooms without, in our view, sufficient analysis of the incremental recurrent cost burden. The World

Bank is pursuing this program in education at a time when others in the Bank, as well as in the IMF, are obliging the GOB to restrain public sector wage expenditures (i.e., new teachers) so as to restore equilibrium with revenues for SAP purposes. Our donor coordination approach is to get the two sides of the Bank to work with each other.

Another issue has been Washington-mandated restrictions on hiring. This has had a considerable impact on our education program since key actors in its technical assistance team had not been hired when the December 1993 PC levels were announced.

Whereas progress in financial management improvements within the MEN has been impressive, the GOB continues to experience considerable difficulty in adequately financing reform-related activities in a timely-manner. USAID may need to address Ministry of Finance financial capacity issues through a specific targeted intervention.

In the family health sector, activities are coordinated by a newly formed Special Objective Team. The core team consists of a Resource and Results Coordinator, a Financial Management Analyst, an Administrative Management Specialist, a Public Participation Specialist and a Team Support Coordinator. The team is lacking technical expertise in the health sector. Whether family health continues as a special objective or graduates to a strategic objective, technical expertise is essential for the achievement of desired results. Identification and selection of a Western Consortium Fellow to fill this void was done in FY95 but the contracting of the chosen candidate is delayed due to the on-going hiring freeze. The granting of the required waiver and subsequent reporting the fellow to post is of critical importance.

C. 22 CFR 216 Issues and Schedule

USAID/Benin does not have issues related to IEES and EAS at this time.

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