

**The International Foundation for Education and Self-Help**

**IFESH-BENIN**



**PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING PROJECT EXTENSION  
(PETTP II)**

**FINAL REPORT  
OCTOBER 2001 TO SEPTEMBER 2005**



**United States Agency for International Development**

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## **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AP	Training Assistant (Assistant Pédagogique, AP)
AT	American Technical Assistant (Assistant Technique)
BCD	Library/Documentation Centers (Bibliothèque Centre de Documentation)
BEP	Journal of Teacher Training Exchange (Bulletin d'Échanges Pédagogiques)
CP	Educational Advisors (Conseiller Pédagogique, CP)
CS	Circonscription Scolaire, (School Districts)
C/CS	Heads of School Districts (Chef de la Circonscription Scolaire, C/CS)
CGNPE	Coordinating Committee for the Generalization of the New Curriculum (Cellule de Généralisation des Nouveaux Programmes d'Études)
DDEPS	Departmental Director of Primary and Secondary Education (Directeur Départemental des Enseignements Primaire et Secondaire)
DEP	Directorate of Primary Education (Direction de l'Enseignement Primaire)
DPP	Directorate of Educational Planning and Programming (Direction de la Programmation et de la Prospective)
EP	Public School (École Publique)
EM	Preschool (École Maternelle)
IFESH	International Foundation for Education and Self Help
INFRE	Institut for Training and Educational Research (Institut National pour la Formation et de la Recherche en Éducation)
MEPS	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Ministère des Enseignements Primaire et Secondaire)
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PETTP 2	Primary Education Teachers Training Project, Phase 2
RAP	Teachers' Training Network (Réseau d'Animation Pédagogique)
RUP	Educational Unit Manager (Responsable d'Unité Pédagogique, RUP)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Foundation for Education and Self-Help in Benin (IFESH-Benin) implemented a four year extension of Teacher Training Project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/Benin) through grant #680-G-00-01-00294-00. The Extension of PETT Project contributed directly to USAID's strategic objective for education in Benin, "more children receive, on an equitable basis, a quality basic education". Specifically, the Extension of PETTP assisted in realizing USAID's intermediary results of improving the quality of instruction in primary schools and increasing the national capacity to provide training and educational support to primary school teachers.

During the four year implementation of the Primary Education Teacher Training Project Extension, a number of milestones were passed:

◆ Year One:

Thirty six (36) IFESH field personnel, the training assistants (AP) are recruited and trained. Signing of a contract in a form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and IFESH Benin.

Entry into 36 school districts selected based on the needs assessment of 62 school districts. Establishment of an effective working relationship between the MEPS and IFESH based of the Memorandum of Understanding

◆ Year Two:

All major activities of the program including in-service and group trainings are successfully implemented. Thirty six (36) Documentation Units are set up. Three editions of the Journal of Pedagogic Exchange are published. The pedagogical units are restructured. Motivation Awards to the best teachers and Administrators of the Project.

◆ Year Three:

All programmed In-service and group teacher training activities within all 36 school districts are implemented. Operating budget for all pedagogical units is established. Mission successfully accomplished by the APs in the role of CP in the 36 school districts of the Project.

◆ Year Four:

Technical support continued to be given for the implementation of the New Curricula. Motivation Awards to the best teachers and Administrators of the project. Mission successfully accomplished by the APs in the role of CP for the second year in the row all 36 school districts of the Project.

This final report outlines the accomplishments of the PETTP 2 within the four initial intermediary results (originally called objectives) during its four years duration. As well, the report outlines the role of the Ministry of Education partners, the results of the mid-term and final evaluations, and the various constraints encountered during the execution of the project and their resolutions. A final section of the report talks about the lessons learned from the project and recommendations for improving future teacher training initiatives. A final note concludes the report.

## **II. LINKS TO USAID/BENIN OBJECTIVES:**

In support of the Ministry of Education's goal of reforming the public school system, USAID/Benin determined its strategic objective for Benin stated as follow "more children receive, on an equitable basis, a quality basic education" The strategic objective, intermediary results, secondary results and related activities of the PETT 2 Project contributed directly to the achievement of USAID's strategic objective by improving the quality of basic education that the children receive.

The in-service training of teacher trainers and primary school administrators specifically addressed USAID's intermediary results of "improving key pedagogical systems and inputs for delivery of a quality basic education," and the secondary result of "appropriate teacher training programs developed and implemented." In addition, the training of the heads of school districts (C/CS), and the directors of the primary schools (D/EP) contributed to the intermediary result of "improved institutional capacity for educational planning, management and accountability."

### **III. LINKS TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S OBJECTIVES:**

During the era of communism regime in Benin many elementary schools were built but paradoxically during the same period most of the teacher training colleges were closed down. At the beginning of the democratization in the early 90s, the Government of Benin through the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (MENRS) initiated a number of reforms in order to better educate the children of Benin. In 1991, the newly established government convened a National Commission on Education (*Etats Généraux de l'Education*), which made a number of recommendations for a reform of the education system to improve the quality of education in Benin. In view of the growing number of untrained primary schools teachers, the Ministry of Education made in-service teacher training a high priority of the reform program.

In the mid 1990's, a task force for a Teacher Training Action Plan was to set up a low cost system for in-service teacher training. The task force opted to take advantage of the Educational Units (Unités Pédagogiques – UP), which are neighboring schools grouped together for pedagogical purpose. These local groups were now to be used for bi-weekly teacher workshops. The Action Plan also suggested that the Educational Advisors, who are to advise and support teacher training through teacher observations at work receive on a regular basis, a trainer training. The conclusion and recommendations of the task force were never put into practice;

The objectives and activities of the PETTP 2 directly supported both the reform initiated by the Ministry of Education and its structures charged with carrying out the plans. The PETT 2 project did not impose additional structures to carry out its objectives or to collaborate with those of the Ministry. Rather it supported the existing structures of the Ministry designed to provide in-service training to primary level teachers.

The success of the PETTP first phase confirmed that the existing system is not defective in its design and that with training and educational support the structures can become an efficient and sustainable system for providing in-service training to primary teachers.

#### **IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT:**

Successful implementation of the PETTP 2 required close collaboration with a number of key partners, particularly with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MEPS). These partnerships were at two levels, the central administration level, and the operational departmental level.

Partnerships at the operational level included the Departmental Directors of Primary and Secondary Education (DDEPS), the Heads of School Districts (C/CS), and the members of the Teacher Training Network (RAP). That is, Educational Advisors (CP), Educational Units Leaders (RUP), School Directors (D/EP), and the teachers themselves. The two principal partners at the operational level were the Departmental Directors and the Heads of School Districts. Following is an outline of their roles and responsibilities during the PETTP2 project:

##### Departmental Directors of Primary and Secondary Education (DDEPS):

The DDEPS are the highest departmental level authority in the educational system. In the PETTP 2 their role included:

- Granting to IFESH-Benin the authority and legitimacy to work in the school districts;
- Collaborating in the drafting of the annual work plans of the Heads of School Districts (C/CS);
- Assisting in major training seminars;
- Keeping abreast of the work of IFESH-Benin in the school districts and giving feedback on periodic progress reports;
- Facilitating communication between the field and the central administration of the MEPS;
- Collaborating in the planning and selection of PETTP 2 merit awards.

##### Heads of School Districts (C/CS):

The Heads of School Districts (C/CS) supervise the school districts. During the PETTP 2, IFESH-Benin had an agreement with the C/CS, which solicited their active participation and monitoring of the activities within their school districts. Their role and responsibilities included:

- Developing a work plan, which was reviewed on an annual basis;
- Supervising the Educational Adviser (CP) and the Primary School Directors (D/EP) to ensure they are carrying out their responsibilities;
- Participating in workshops organized through PETTP for their own capacities enhancement;
- Organizing and supervising seminars, including Education Unit workshops planned to support the implementation of the New Curriculum;
- Working with PETTP 2 personnel to develop training modules based on the needs of the teachers and other members of the Teacher Training Network (RAP).

The key partners at the central administration level include the National Institute for Training and Research in Education (INFRE), Director of Educational Planning and Programming (DPP), the Director of Primary Education (DEP), and the Coordinating Committee for the Generalization of the New Curricula (CGNPE). Each of these partner institutions had an active role in the implementation of the PETTP.

#### National Institute for Training and Research in Education (INFRE)

The National Institute for Training and Research in Education (INFRE) was created by an act of the Ministry of Education to develop and carry out plan of initial and in-service training for teachers. As the Ministry's training and research institution, INFRE was necessarily implicated in the work of the PETTP, and for this reason, IFESH-Benin and INFRE developed an official Letter of Understanding between the two institutions.

Their role and responsibilities included:

- Participating in the annual activities planning between IFESH and all its partners;
- Consulting with PETTP personnel in the identification of national training needs and in conceptualizing training modules;
- Participating in major group training sessions for both the regular PETTP2 Project RAP training and for those in support of the generalization of the New Curricula;
- Collaborating on special training initiatives;
- Participating in the planning and selection of merit awards.

#### Primary Education Directorate (DEP)

DEP is the institution within the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education responsible for managing the performance of those involved in primary education in Benin at the operational level, from teachers to School District Heads. During the PETTP2, the role of the DEP included:

- Participating in the annual activities planning between IFESH and all its partners ;
- Monitoring, and supervising the Heads of School Districts (C/CS);
- Participating in major training sessions, such as those for the C/CS;
- Acting in an advisory role to IFESH-Benin on matters such as identifying training needs and levels of performance within the school districts;
- Facilitating communication between IFESH-Benin and other MEPS officials on school district issues;
- Participating in the planning and selection of merit awards.

#### Directorate of Educational Planning and Programming (DPP)

This directorate of the MEPS coordinates Ministry activities and acts as a liaison with nongovernmental organizations. During the PETTP2, its role was to:

- Act as a liaison between IFESH-Benin and the central administration of the MEPS;
- Share information, statistics, and data collected from the field and other agencies of the MEPS.

#### Coordinating Committee for the Generalization of the New Curricula (CGNPE)

The Coordinating Committee for the Generalization of the New Curricula was created in 1999 and mandated to assure the launching and the coordination of the implementation of the New Curricula. As supporting the implementation of the New Curricula became an important component of the PETTP2, a close working relationship was established with the Coordinating Committee. During the PETTP2, the role of the Committee included:

- Participating in the annual activities planning between IFESH and all its partners;
- Collaborating in the monitoring of the implementation of the New Curricula and in the identification of in-service training needs;
- Acting in an advisory capacity on issues concerning the implementation in the school districts;
- Facilitating communication about issues surrounding the New Curricula with other agencies and officials of the MEPS;
- Sharing information and data collected from the field.

## V. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES BY OBJECTIVE

The following section summarizes the main activities implemented to achieve the four objectives (intermediary results) of PETTP2 during its four years implementation.

### 1. Provide in-service training to Primary School Teachers and Administrators

The PETT project extension continued to provide practical in-service pedagogical support to the primary education teachers and administrators through classroom visits made with the Educational Advisors (CP) and in-service training of the Educational Unit Leaders (RUP). Both are essential for improving the quality of instruction and teacher training capacities of the Teacher Training Network (RAP).

- **Classroom Visits:**

Class observation visits were an important element of the in-service teacher training activities. For class observations, the IFESH-Benin Pedagogical Assistant (AP) travels with the Educational Adviser (CP), who observes and then advises the classroom teacher.

To improve the CP's teacher training and communication skills, the AP makes suggestions to the CP about their approach, based on the new knowledge and methods the CP has received in the PETTP 2 training sessions. As a result, it creates a better work relationship and cooperation between the CP and teachers. With the assistance the IFESH AP, the classroom visits provides a real learning opportunity for the teachers and for the CP as well. While the CP learns how to communicate efficiently with the teachers and identify future training needs, the teachers improve their teaching skills in the classroom.

As the IFESH AP accompanied the CP on their classroom visits (when necessary transporting them on their motorcycle) the number of visits greatly increased in the IFESH zones. During the project second year, approximately 80% of the planned visits were carried out. As the project progressed, the quality of the visits changed dramatically as the CP learnt to encourage rather than criticize the teachers.

IFESH AP sometimes accompanied also the C/CS on classrooms visits. With the AP the C/CS learnt how to listen, become tolerant, more understanding and friendlier to the teachers. Teachers become very respectful and less fearful of the C/CS. In such a situation of mutual respect and understanding, communication between them improved for the benefit of everybody.

During the third and fourth year of the project, the CP were all discharged from their duties, and in IFESH zones the AP carried out the class visits and UP sessions activities on their own. Evidently, numbers of class visit greatly improved in both quantity and quality. Please find below the number of class visits achieved during the four years period of the PETTP 2.

#### **Class visits**

DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL YEAR	PLANNED	ACHIEVED	PERCENTAGE
ALIBORI	2001-2002	757	541	71%
	2002-2003	1160	692	60%
	2003-2004	1070	958	89%
	2004-2005	1284	1124	88%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4272</b>	<b>3315</b>	<b>78%</b>
BORGOU	2001-2002	827	693	84%
	2002-2003	919	853	93%
	2003-2004	961	828	86%
	2004-2005	1315	1135	86%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4022</b>	<b>3509</b>	<b>87%</b>
ATACORA-DONGA	2001-2002	669	444	66%
	2002-2003	844	521	62%
	2003-2004	1390	1015	73%
	2004-2005	1963	1643	84%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4866</b>	<b>3623</b>	<b>74%</b>
ATLAN.- LITTORAL	2001-2002	610	418	69%
	2002-2003	842	584	69%
	2003-2004	841	812	97%
	2004-2005	928	762	82%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3221</b>	<b>2576</b>	<b>80%</b>
MONO-COUFFO	2001-2002	801	635	79%
	2002-2003	745	722	97%
	2003-2004	921	994	108%
	2004-2005	747	678	91%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3214</b>	<b>3029</b>	<b>94%</b>
OUEME-PLATEAU	2001-2002	497	434	87%
	2002-2003	744	275	37%
	2003-2004	581	494	85%
	2004-2005	910	667	73%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2732</b>	<b>1870</b>	<b>68%</b>
ZOU-COLLINES	2001-2002	1118	1070	96%
	2002-2003	1382	1686	122%
	2003-2004	1228	1597	130%
	2004-2005	1421	1652	116%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5149</b>	<b>6005</b>	<b>117%</b>
NATIONAL	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>5279</b>	<b>4235</b>	<b>80%</b>
	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>6636</b>	<b>5333</b>	<b>80%</b>
	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>6993</b>	<b>6693</b>	<b>96%</b>
	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>8568</b>	<b>7661</b>	<b>89%</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27476</b>	<b>23927</b>	<b>87%</b>

- **Support of Educational Unit Workshops:**

The bi-weekly Educational Unit workshops (UP) were planned by the Ministry of Education as an essential part of teacher in-service training within the school districts. As an innovation of the PETTP2, in IFESH-Benin school districts, these workshops are prepared in advance, and during the workshops, teachers receive reference documents on the training to take with them. Whereas before the sessions were used to socialize and complain, they become well organized, learner center workshops that addressed specific classrooms issues.

In support of the proper functioning of the Educational Units Workshops, the Managers of the Educational Units were given training on how to better facilitate the workshops, how to design and write the teacher training modules, to interpret and present the teacher training modules. By the fourth year of the PETTP2 project, most school districts achieved near 100 % in planning and conducting the bi-weekly educational unit workshops ,and as noted in the mid-term and final evaluations, 100% of the heads of the school districts (C/CS) stated that the workshops, IFESH' style definitely improved teachers' knowledge and classroom practice. Please see below the total number of UP workshops conducted during the four years of the PETT2 project.

## UP Workshops

DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL YEAR	PLANNED	ACHIEVED	PERCENTAGE
ALIBORI	2001-2002	37	27	73%
	2002-2003	60	53	88%
	2003-2004	50	44	88%
	2004-2005	60	43	72%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>81%</b>
BORGOU	2001-2002	33	29	88%
	2002-2003	61	53	87%
	2003-2004	48	47	98%
	2004-2005	65	55	85%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>89%</b>
ATACORA-DONGA	2001-2002	59	46	78%
	2002-2003	66	17	26%
	2003-2004	67	55	82%
	2004-2005	69	60	87%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>68%</b>
ATLAN.- LITTORAL	2001-2002	19	16	84%
	2002-2003	43	43	100%
	2003-2004	38	38	100%
	2004-2005	44	39	89%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>94%</b>
MONO-COUFFO	2001-2002	44	25	57%
	2002-2003	44	34	77%
	2003-2004	42	40	95%
	2004-2005	33	29	88%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>79%</b>
OUEME-PLATEAU	2001-2002	38	27	71%
	2002-2003	44	21	48%
	2003-2004	39	39	100%
	2004-2005	32	27	84%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>75%</b>
ZOU-COLLINES	2001-2002	67	38	57%
	2002-2003	84	69	82%
	2003-2004	80	82	103%
	2004-2005	81	77	95%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>85%</b>
NATIONAL	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>70%</b>
	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>72%</b>
	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>95%</b>
	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>86%</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1447</b>	<b>1173</b>	<b>81%</b>

## **2. Provide Cascade Model Grouped Training to Members of the Teacher Training Network (RAP)**

PETTP2 included a number of group training sessions for each level of the Teacher Training Support Network (RAP). The group training sessions focused on increasing the capacities of the Teacher Training Network (RAP), namely the Heads of School Districts (C/CS), the Educational Advisors (CP), the Leaders of the Educational Units (RUP), and the Directors of the Primary Schools (D/EP).

- At the C/CS level, the training concentrated on increasing their management knowledge and skills to better administer resources and supervise educational activities of the school district. For example, the student inspectors were provided, during two weeks with the theoretical and practical training of their role and work as future heads of school districts, particularly as it relates to their role as in-service teacher trainers.
- At the CP level, the training concentrated on improving their skills in class observation, communication, training needs identification and module writing. Beginning in 2001.
- For the RUP, the training focused on strengthening their ability to prepare for and facilitate the Educational Unit Workshops (UP), which is a key in-service teacher training activity; and finally.
- At the school director level, training sessions centered first of all on increasing their capacities to manage school, their teacher training skills, and the follow-up on the knowledge and skills learned during the Educational Unit workshops.

The table below summarizes the main training provided to members of the RAP during the four years of the project:

## Group Training Sessions of the Teacher Training Network (RAP), 2001 - 2005

Year	Date	Theme	Objective	Beneficiaries	Comments
2001-2002	February 18 to 21, 2002	Communication, Strategy of Group Work, gender equity in the classroom and the pandemic HIV AIDS	Reinforce communication skills Upgrade training capacities in cooperative learning and gender equity	85 Pedagogical Advisor (CP)	100% attendance
	March 18 to 21, 2002	Administrative Management of the School District	Up grade leadership skills	55 Heads of School Districts, their deputies and their regional supervisors (C/CS, C/CSA, C/SEP)	98% attendance
	March 27 to 30, 2002	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Reinforce the teaching capacities of the new curricula for grade 3 teachers	1446 grade 3 teachers	95% attendance
	April 02 to 05 2002	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Familiarize the grade 4, 5, and 6 teachers with the teaching and learning strategies of new curricula	3090 teachers of grade 4, 5 and 6	Attendance exceeded expectation (many teachers from the private schools)
	April 10 to 28 2002	Administrative management of a school district	Familiarize the intern Administrators with the duties and responsibilities of a C/CS	25 intern Primary School Administrators	100% attendance
2002-2003	Sept. 30 to Oct. 03, 2002	Training modules development: writing and interpretation. Management of UP sessions	Improve the training modules writing skills of the CPs  Improve training capacities of the CPs	80 Pedagogical Advisors (CP)	100% attendance
	Nov. 4 to 21, 2002	Management of a school district	Improve a planning skill of the C/CS	134 Primary school Administrators	100% attendance
	Dec. 2 to 5, 2002	Training modules writing	Strengthen the module writing skills of the C/CS	49 C/CS	100%
	Dec. 9 to 11, 2002	Group facilitation	Provide facilitation strategies and techniques	474 RUPS	97% attendance
	Jan. 20 to 25, 2003	Class observation	Provide practical experience in classroom observation	83 intern CP	100% attendance
	May 5 to 10, 2003	Training documents	Improve capacities of the RUP to manage UP sessions (design and write modules, organize	83 intern CP	100% attendance

Year	Date	Theme	Objective	Beneficiaries	Comments
2002-2003			and facilitate UP session)		
	April 14 to 19, 2003	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Reinforce the teaching capacities of the new curricula for grade 4 teachers	1329 grade 4 teachers	98% attendance
	April 14 to 19, 2003	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Familiarize the grade 5, and 6 teachers with the teaching and learning strategies of new curricula	2194 grade 5 and 6 teachers	80% attendance
	Aug. 4, 14, 2003	Administrative management of the school district	Upgrade leadership skills	100% C/CS	90% attendance
2003-2004	Dec. 22 to 24, 2003	Group facilitation	Reinforce group facilitation skills and techniques	518 RUP	100% attendance
	Jan. 12 to 17, 2004	Pupils performance evaluation	Provide evaluation tools and techniques for pupils' academic performance	48 C/CS, C/CSA and 36 AP	98% attendance
	Feb. 23 to 26, 2004	School management	Increase the D/EP capacities in school management and in-service training	1863 school principals	98% attendance
	July 12, 15, 2004	Administrative management of the school district	Upgrade leadership skills	15 C/CS, 6 IFESH staff members	100% attendance
2004-2005	Oct. 18 to 29, 2004	Group facilitation	Improve group facilitation skills and techniques	152 CP interns	100% attendance
	Feb. 21 to 25, 2005	Mathematics in grade 6,	Train grade 6 teachers on how to teach mathematics of the new curricula	1511	100% attendance

### 3. Introduce New Programs and Materials to Support Beninese Teachers and to Improve the Quality of Instruction

#### a- Documentation Units:

One of the teacher training needs identified in the zones of PETTP2 was the possibility to access easily governmental official documents containing information on the teachers' career. To remedy this situation, IFESH-Benin established book shelves called Documentation Units within each school district's main office. The book shelves were regularly supplied with compilations of the most recent administrative acts and decrees. There were also supplies of some books and educational materials for consultation especially for rural primary schools teachers. IFESH- Benin has received many positive comments which confirmed the necessity of those Documentation Units.

#### b Journal of Teacher Exchange (*Bulletin d'Echanges Pédagogiques, BEP*):

As it has been during PETT1 the BEP was under the direction of a PETTP2 staff member who is an experienced journalist and editor. Its production went on as usual during the entire 4 years of the PETT2 project implementation. Faithful to its traditions, the journal featured lot of articles on pedagogical issues such as working in groups, gender equity, and health in school environment. The journal included recognition of the best teachers. During the PETT 2 project, the BEP focused on the New Curricula, but as well included columns of interest to teachers, such as readers' letters; the best teachers of the months; publication of decrees from the Ministry of Education; and, practical advice on teaching subjects of the New Curriculum. A total of 11 editions were produced over the four years. Each edition counted 10,000 printed copies. The BEP is a successful story of the PETTP2. It evolved from a short newsletter to a professional journal, widely read by teachers and administrators throughout PETTP2 zones. Feedback from the teachers and school administrators, as well as partner organizations indicated that it was a highly useful vehicle of information and educational exchanges.

The following table presents the BEP production from 2001 to 2005

#### *Bulletin d'Echanges Pédagogiques (BEP)*

ACADEMIC YEAR	EDITION NUMBER AND DATE	PAGES	CENTRAL THEMES OF THE ISSUE
2001-2002	No. 8, Dec. 2001	59	Launching of PETT Project phase 2
	No. 9, March 2002	59	Cooperative work
	No. 10, July 2002	59	Reading in school
2002-2003	No. 11, Dec. 2002	55	Generalization of the new curricula
	No. 12, March 2003	55	Management of UP workshops
	No. 13, June 2003	53	The fear of the education system reform
2003-2004	No. 14, Dec. 2003	55	New Country Representative for IFESH-Benin
	No. 15, March 2004	55	Results of the id term evaluation of the PETTP2
	No. 16, July 2004	59	The necessity of planning
2004-2005	No. 17, Dec. 2004	59	Sustainability of the PETTP2 activities
	No. 18, July 2005	60	Closing of PETT2 Project

**c- Merit Awards:**

Merit Awards were presented to the best students, teachers and school administrators twice during PETT 2 Project. The first merit awards were presented to the best administrators and teachers in December 18, 2003. The ceremony was presided by her Excellence, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and covered by all local television and radio stations. In January 2004, close to 10,000 school children received each, a school kit full of school supplies ranging from a simple eraser to a note book. A second presentation of merit awards to the best teachers and Administrators took place in early October 2005. Out of 36 heads of school districts, ten (10) were recognized as excellent managers of the school districts and rewarded accordingly with a price and a certificate of excellence. 29 heads of school districts received certificates of good performance. Out of 558 RUPs 39 were qualified as excellent managers of the Educational Workshops and received a price and a certificate of excellence. 43 received letters of good performance. As it was done in the past, the ceremony was chaired conjointly by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education herself and a Representative of the USAID/Benin mission Director. Again, three local TV stations, the national radio station and most local news magazines covered the event.

## VI. INNOVATIONS TO THE PROJECT

### 1. Training Provided in Support of the New Curricula:

Both PETTP 2 in-service and group training sessions have directly supported the implementation of the New Curricula in reinforcing the skills and knowledge of the members of the Teachers' Training Network (RAP), and in teaching modern educational techniques such as working in groups, using positive reinforcement, and teaching child-centered learning methods. However, additional grouped training sessions were added in order to prepare the RAP that was in line for the generalization process of the New Curricula to get to them, or just to assist the Ministry in that process. As a reminder, the generalization of the new curricula began with the 1999 academic year.

The following table outlines group training specifically focused on the New Curricula, the objectives and the beneficiaries.

#### Training in Support of the Implementation of the New Curriculum, 2001 to 2005

Date	Activity	Objective	Beneficiaries	Comments
March 27 to 30, 2002	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Reinforce the teaching capacities of the new curricula for grade 3 teachers	1446 grade 3 teachers	95% attendance
April 02 to 05 2002	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Familiarize the grade 4, 5, and 6 teachers with the teaching and learning strategies of new curricula	3090 teachers of grade 4, 5 and 6	Attendance exceeded expectation (many teachers from the private schools)
April 14 to 19, 2003	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Reinforce the teaching capacities of the new curricula for grade 4 teachers	1329 grade 4 teachers	98% attendance
April 14 to 19, 2003	Teaching strategies of the new curricula	Familiarize the grade 5, and 6 teachers with the teaching and learning strategies of new curricula	2194 grade 5 and 6 teachers	80% attendance
Jan. 12 to 17, 2004	Pupils performance evaluation	Provide evaluation tools and techniques for pupils' academic performance	48 C/CS, C/CSA and 36 AP	98% attendance
Feb. 21 to 25, 2005	Mathematics in grade 6,	Train grade 6 teachers on how to teach mathematics of the new curricula	1511 grade 6 teachers	100% attendance

### 2. Equity in the Classroom:

During PETTP 1, the Pedagogical Assistants received twice a solid training in the theory and practice of equity in the classroom by Creative Associates, first in August 1999 and a second time in August 2000. The theme was so important that it was immediately integrated into both the in-service and group training of the teachers and educators in the PETTP zones during the four years of the project.

Practical examples of implementing gender equity in the classroom included:

assisting and demonstrating to teachers and administrators such as school directors and pedagogical advisors the practical application of gender equity during classroom observation visits; discussing the theoretical and practical issues of gender equity and its application during the Educational Unit workshops. As well, modules on the theory and application of gender equity in the classroom were included in the grouped training such as the training held for school directors in December, 2000.

In July 2001, a representative of Creative Associates came to Benin to monitor and evaluate their Equity in the Classroom project. During the monitoring exercise, the consultant conducted interviews and classroom visits and found that the IFESH-Benin school districts had the highest ratings for both understanding of the concepts and need for equity among teachers and for their practice of gender equity in the classroom.

Gender equity in the classroom was reintroduced in the PETTP2 project as a crosscutting theme for all training activities. The mid-term and final evaluations revealed that teachers and administrators in PETTP2 zones are very much familiar with gender equity issues and made tremendous efforts to encourage and monitor the treatment of girls in their school districts.

### 3- HIV AIDS

HIV AIDS like gender equity was introduced as a crosscutting theme for all training activities. The training Assistants organized awareness debates with the teachers during group training sessions and distributed many flyers on HIV AIDS. The final evaluation revealed that 75% of the teachers in IFESH zones can discuss intelligently about AIDS and all the proper behavior to avoid contracting the disease.

## **VII. MID-TERM AND FINAL EVALUATIONS: IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Two major evaluations were conducted to assess the impact of the PETTP2 in the system. The mid-term evaluation took place from January 19 to February 6, 2004. The final evaluation took place from June 6 to June 30, 2005. Both evaluations were done by an outside independent consultant. Since the final evaluation of the project was done in a year time after the mid term evaluation, there were many similarities in the results: some definitive positive impact and other aspects which still need improvement.

### **1. Main Impact:**

Generally, the results of the evaluations showed that in IFESH-Benin zones, the education system works more effectively and the quality of teaching has been improved. More specifically, the RAP is more active and more dedicated to serving the teachers and schools, than their colleagues in non-IFESH-Benin zones. For example, the UP meetings are better because well prepared, and have more follow-up. The C/CS's in the IFESH-Benin zones stated that the UP meetings have improved the teachers' knowledge and practice 90%, compared to only 30% in the non-IFESH-Benin zones.

While the teachers' declarations of the effectiveness of the UP meetings were not as dramatic, they still confirmed that UP session now are much better than what they used to be. For example, 75% of the teachers in IFESH zones felt strongly that the UPs help them to understand lessons content better (compared to 34% in non-IFESH-Benin zones); 85% stated the sessions improved their technique and methods of teaching (compared to 32%); and 83% felt the sessions improved the work environment (compared to 43%).

The most dramatic positive impact of the PETTP2 was shown at the level of the final beneficiaries, that is, at the level of the teachers and students. Examples of the results at the teacher level showed that: 84% of teachers within the IFESH-Benin school districts had well-planned lesson content (compared to 43% in non-IFESH-Benin zones); 78% took into account tests to readjust their lessons (compared to 2%); and 72% of the teachers were able to draw on previous experience (compared to 21%).

In comparing the IFESH-Benin serviced school districts to those without assistance, there was a marked difference in the teachers' interaction with their students. For example: in the serviced zones, 45% of the teachers gave students individual assistance (compared to 2% in the unaided school districts); 41% of the teachers noticed when the students were not participated (compared to 2%); and 51% of the teachers in IFESH-Benin school districts made efforts to interest the student in the lessons (compared to 21% in the non-IFESH-Benin zones).

At the students level, there were also conclusive results. In the IFESH-Benin school districts, 46% of students ask their teachers questions (compared to 2%); 53% of the students felt free to express their opinions in class (compared to 21%); 63% of the students and teachers have group work (compared to 29%); and finally, 51% of

students and teachers confer with each other in IFESH-Benin zones (compared to only 7% in non-IFESH-Benin districts).

## **2. Recommendations for Improvement:**

The evaluations pointed out some areas, which needed improvement. The mid term evaluation made the following recommendations:

- The need to better communicate the mission and objectives of IFESH-Benin to our partners, particularly with the teachers and administrators at the school district levels. At times, the teachers do not distinguish between what they should expect from IFESH-Benin and what the MEPS should provide. This confusion was noted in regards to provision of classroom materials.

To remedy this situation, presentations on IFESH-Benin were made during training sessions, and to department officials. As well, articles explaining the goals and limitations of the PETT2 project were included in the Journal of Pedagogic Exchange (BEP).

- The need to take into account the different categories of teachers (distinguish the civil servants teachers from the “*contractuels*” and “*répétiteurs*”, (the latter are recruited by the community), when planning training and writing training modules, as their needs and level of comprehension may not be the same.

To better meet the different training requirements of the various types of teachers, IFESH-Benin field agents collected information on their status before the training sessions and then adjusted the modules to their needs. In addition, during subsequent group trainings, adjustments were made to address the needs of community teachers as well as the contract teachers.

- There was a need for better communication and collaboration among all the agencies involved in the education reform. The consultants suggested that the various nongovernmental organizations involved, such as World Education, Aide et Action, Plan International and IFESH-Benin, should have a closer collaboration in order to create a synergy of action. As well, a more dynamic synergy should be created with the departments and agencies of the MEPS, such as DEP, and the Coordinating Committee for the Generalization of the New Curricula.

To improve communications and organization synergy with other NGOs involved in education, IFESH-Benin took part in many forums organized by USAID so that all those involved in the primary education sector in Benin can compare notes.

IFESH-Benin also recognized the need for closer collaboration with MEPS, as at times there was a conflict of training schedules. To remedy this, IFESH-Benin worked through three main avenues to improve collaboration with the education agencies. The first was to conduct annual meetings at the beginning of the academic year to discuss IFESH-Benin activities and how they can best support Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education training efforts. Second, before any major training event, IFESH sent a letter to the MEPS requesting authorization to conduct the training. Third, information on all IFESH-Benin events and training

activities were sent well in advance to MEPS to ensure that the different Ministry agencies are aware of our training activities plan.

Most of these issues came up again during the final evaluation but further more, the final evaluation recommended that the MEPS takes over the training approaches and strategies of the PETT 2 project. The evaluation also pointed out that the Ministry needs to set up a reliable motivation mechanism for the teachers. The Ministry also should require accountabilities from all levels in its administration.

## VIII. CONSTRAINTS ENCOUNTERED AND THEIR RESOLUTION

During the four years of the PETTP 2, a number of constraints were encountered. Solutions for some constraints were found, for others partial solutions were all but necessary, enabling the project to continue successfully and adding valuable experience. The most notable are presented, with the solutions found.

### 1. Teacher Strikes

Throughout the PETT 2 project, but most particularly during the second and fourth years, teachers held a number of strikes, some lasting for months. These strikes affected most severely the activities in field such as classroom observation visits and Pedagogical Unit (UP) teacher workshops (séances d'UP).

#### Resolution:

Although IFESH-Benin was not able to control or end teacher strikes, several strategies were adopted that mitigated the negative affects. These included:

- The CP making up the number of their classroom visits after the strike. It should be noted that the RAP was more motivated in the IFESH-Benin zones because of the program of annual merit awards;
- The RUP rescheduling the missed teacher bi-weekly workshops (séance d'UP) to a working day;
- Maintaining the group training schedule (even while on strike the teachers continued to participate in the grouped training sessions, allowing the training to continue as scheduled);
- The IFESH-Benin field agents (AP) continued their work in the field, the classroom visits and teacher training workshops, focusing on the private schools or taking advantage of the days legally declared working days (Mondays and Fridays)

### 2. Training Schedule Conflicts with the Ministry of Education:

A number of times during the first year of the PETTP 2, planned training sessions for the Pedagogical Support Network (RAP) had to be rescheduled or redesigned as the MEPS would announce their training for the same time frame with little or no lead time. This situation has been exacerbated with the advent of their New Curriculum training. As a supporting partner of the Ministry, IFESH-Benin cannot conduct training sessions at the same time as the Ministry, as it involves the same members of the RAP, and the themes are sometimes the same. Therefore, although IFESH-Benin had planned the training session months in advance, they were subsequently rescheduled or redesigned or reformulated as in-service training modules.

#### Resolution:

Several approaches have been instituted to better coordinate training IFESH-Benin activities with those of the MEPS. First, an accord was drafted which allowed IFESH-Benin personnel to be integrated into the training sessions in order to assist the Ministry trainers.

The second approach to better coordinate activities, was to consult with Ministry training officials about their upcoming training, even if nothing had yet been written, and by providing them with a copy of IFESH-Benin's planned training activities for the year. In this way, they were informed of our schedule, and the timing was better managed.

### **3. Misuse of the time of the Pedagogical Advisors (CP) and the Heads of School District (CCS) by the higher hierarchy**

Several issues connected to the administration of the Pedagogical Advisors caused problems during the four years of the PETT2 project. In some cases, school districts operate with less than the required number of CP, making it very difficult to accomplish class visit goals. As well, both the heads of the school districts (C/CS) and the CP were often solicited for various training and administrative activities outside of their school district (CS), leaving it without leadership, which negatively impacts teaching and training activities. In addition, each time there is to be a renewal of contracts or nominations of the CP, the bureaucratic process takes an ordinate amount of time, again leaving the school district without the leadership and pedagogical assistance of the CP.

#### Resolution:

Although it was not possible to resolve all of the organizational issues of the CP, the PETT 2 project has striven to decentralize authority so that all members of the RAP are involved in the process of teacher training. For instance, to help resolve the problem of the CP not always being available to organize and write the training modules for the Educational Unit meetings, during one of the PETTP 2 training of the Managers of the Pedagogical Units (RUP), they were trained on how to write the teacher training modules, so that if the C/CS or the CP are not available, the RUP will be able to do it, presenting them at the bi-monthly teacher training workshops (séances d'UP).

### **4. Chronic absence of school Directors D/EP**

The principle of the PETTP2 is to always get the School Director involved in the in-service training of his/her colleagues but in many instances, the school principal is not in the school.

#### Resolution:

Plan a second visit to the school where the Director was not present in the first place. Discuss the situation with the C/CS if there is no improvement in the Directors' behavior.

## **IX PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS LEARNED:**

During the four years of the PETT 2 project, IFESH-Benin learned a number of important lessons through the regular and systematic monitoring, internal project evaluation of its management and the results of project activities, as well as the periodic external evaluations. These could be valuable to future in-service teacher training initiatives if the MEPS ever decides to use the PETTP 2 project approaches and strategies. Major lessons learned from the PETTP 2 include:

### **1. Project Strategy:**

#### A Model Based on the Actual System

The PETTP 2 model of in-service training is based on the existing Beninese system of education, not adding parallel structures, or personnel. Rather, the objectives and activities of the project endeavored to make the existing structure more dynamic and effective. This needs to be stressed to the Ministry partners from the beginning of the project, so that they understand the concept of technical assistance. The PETTP 2 structure and personnel were not there to either replace or do the work of the Ministry.

Underlying the strategic objective of improving the quality of education is the need to change behavior through added knowledge, skills and motivation. Therefore, the two main thrusts of the PETTP 2 model are to offer grouped training to provide new information and knowledge to the members of the Teacher Training Network (RAP), and secondly through a qualified assistants in the field, to provide on the job, in-service training, both to strengthen the newly acquired knowledge of modern pedagogy and to reinforce its practical application. Neither the training nor the field agent replaced or took the role of the Ministry personnel and every effort was made to avoid this confusion, which could potentially be undermining to the objectives of the PETTP 2.

However, with this basic project strategy of using the existing structure and personnel, other elements were added to the original goal of increasing knowledge and skills without disruption, including the focus of the New Curricula, and introducing the practice of gender equity in the classroom.

#### Partner Contracts:

In order to ensure the full collaboration and implication of all partners, it is necessary to include all the Ministry agencies, both central and departmental in the process right from the planning stage of the project.

For teacher training in Benin, this means that both the central agencies, such as the Cabinet, the Technical Counselor for Primary Education (CT1), the Director of Primary Education (DEP), etc., as well as the departmental level authorities, specifically the Departmental Director of Primary and Secondary Education (DDEPS), and the Heads of School Districts (C/CS).

During the planning stage, these partners need to understand their role in the project and have a written document outlining both what they can expect to receive in terms

of support and in return, what effort and results are expected from them. These results should be established by all parties concerned and agreed upon during the planning stage. Then the planning, with the results and activities, established for each year, should be formalized within a contract signed by the partners.

## **2. Project Performance:**

### **2.1 Early Transfer of Responsibility to the RAP:**

The development of human resources through the transfer of knowledge and competence needs to begin very early in the project implementation process. By involving the partners directly in the work from the beginning of the project, and then transferring both the responsibility and the authority to them as early as possible, with project personnel taking only an advisory position, increases the likelihood of a successful transfer and project sustainability.

### **2.2 Organization and Communication:**

The two areas that needed to be focused on in both the grouped and in-service training activities were organization (including planning) and communication skills. On IFESH-Benin's part, planning of activities, both in the field and grouped trainings were organized and planned well in advance, with the schedule and program sent to the Ministry as early as possible. As well as informing all partners of the activities, it also helped to lessen the conflict of training schedules with the Ministry.

To help remedy the issue of the lack of communication among Ministry agents, during the third year of the project, trimester meetings were held with all the partners within each department. It was found that these would often be the only occasion where the education administrators met all together to discuss issues and problems concerning the school districts. These meetings were invaluable in coordinating the upcoming training activities of IFESH-Benin and for the agents to compare problems and solutions and share information, both about teacher training and organization and planning of activities within the school districts.

## **3. Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **3.1 Training Partners in Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be integrated into the knowledge and competences transferred to the partners throughout the project. Beginning with the planning stage, the partners need to understand the elements of project monitoring and evaluation, including the expected results and the performance indicators. The theory and process of monitoring and evaluation as a part of school and teacher training planning and management, need to be integrated into the grouped training sessions, as well as into the in-service training meetings.

### 3.2 Systematic Data Collection:

The partners, specifically those in the field, such as the C/CS and CP must also be aware of the importance of systematic data collection on progress and results and taught how to do this, from designing the tools, to when and how to collect the information, as well as to ensure that the data collection is reliable. At the beginning of the project, the partners need to have this aspect written into the contract, and receive training on how to manage by results.

### 3.3 Annual Partner Meetings:

Each year of the PETTP2 had an annual meeting, either at the end of the school year or the beginning of the following school year, to review the achievements of the past year, compared to the program and expected results and the proposed program and plans for the following academic year. These meetings were attended by the central officials of the Ministry of Education and therefore the heads of the school districts (C/CS), as well as the DDEPS came prepared for the annual meeting with their completed reports and statistics.

The information collected during these annual meetings were essential to the monitoring and evaluation process and allowed one department to hear about the results of other areas, as well as their monitoring and evaluation activities. The data collected was also used to compare the results of training activities monitored by the IFESH-Benin agents with the results presented by the Ministry departmental and school district level agents.

## **4. Generating Motivation:**

Early in the PETTP2, two aspects of the teachers and administrators were noted. The first was that, because of a number of reasons, including low salaries, overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching materials and training, the morale and interest were very low in both teachers and administrators. The second was that the PETTP required both teachers and administrators to work harder in their respective jobs. And in order to convince them that learning their role and becoming more efficient and effective was worth the effort.

The merit program of the PETTP2 was not costly, including the “teachers of the month” column of the Journal of Educational Exchange (BEP), accorded to the best teachers and administrators. These awards generated motivation among the teachers and administrators to the degree that even during the teacher strikes, alternate scheduling was made to ensure that classroom visits were made, and that the teacher training workshops (séance de UP) were held.

Receiving training to better understand the role and work of teaching and administering the schools more effectively proved to generate new pride and intrinsic motivation in teachers and administrators. For example, in the IFESH-Benin school districts, the teachers had become enthusiastic about the bi-weekly teacher training meetings, and the Manager of the Pedagogical Unit (RUP), who had been trained in writing teacher training modules and facilitating the group work, became proud of the

well-organized UP workshops, which became the norm. There is no doubt that even after the end of the PETTP 2, the RUP will continue to prepare the teacher training modules and to facilitate the teacher training workshops, so that they are, as intended, a real learning experience for the teachers.

## **X. FINAL NOTE**

The PETT 2 project implemented three main services in support of the primary teachers and educators in the IFESH-Benin zones. These were classroom visits made with the Educational Advisors (CP); in-service training of the Educational Unit Leaders (RUP) in the form of technical assistance in the organization and execution of the Educational Unit workshops (séance d'UP). Group training mainly focused in providing new information and knowledge to a large group of teachers and administrators.

One of the problems that contributed to the decay of the system is the low moral of the majority of the system. Low salaries, over crowded classrooms, lack of teaching materials and trainings all combined over the years to bring the moral of teachers as low as it can be. In order to get the teachers and administrators motivated again for their work, PETT2 project created a low cost merit program. The program worked very well because of monitoring and evaluation activities executed regularly and objectively to assess the job performance of the teachers. This turn out to be one of the best motivation strategies that hopefully the Ministry will take over. These activities were basic to improving the functioning of the system and the quality of education in the school districts. These in-service activities were carried out under the supervision of IFESH-Benin's American Technical Assistants, and implemented by the PETTP2's Beninese Training Assistants. This method ensured follow-up and support, as well as a transfer of competencies in the practical application of modern pedagogy.