

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY REFORM IN MALI: A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	iii
SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	iv
I. SCOPE OF WORK, THE PARAMETERS AND THE METHODS OF THIS STUDY	1
II. BACKGROUND	3
A. The Educational Crisis	3
B. Political Environment for Reform	5
III. RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION	8
A. Actions at the Mass Level	8
B. The 1989 National Forum on Education	9
C. World Bank Analysis	9
D. Context of Democratization	10
E. The NEF Policy Initiative	10
IV. THE NATURE AND STATUS OF THE PRODEC REFORM PROGRAM FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION	12
A. PRODEC in a Wider Perspective	12
B. PRODEC and Primary Education	12
C. Status of the Reform	14
D. Legal Issues in Educational Reform	14
V. ACTORS, INTERESTS AND ISSUES: A STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MALI'S EDUCATIONAL REFORM	17
A. The Actors and their Interests	17
1. Donors	17
2. Governmental Actors -- Centralized	18
3. Governmental Actors -- Deconcentrated	19
4. Governmental Actors -- Decentralized (les collectivités territoriales)	20
5. Other Operational Actors (PVOs and National NGOs)	20
6. The Private Sector	21
7. Other Societal Actors	21
8. Community Associations	22
B. Issues	22
1. Macro Political Issues	23
a. The Fight for Educational Resources	23
b. Education as a Private Sector Issue — The School Book Policy	24
c. Book Production:	24
d. Book Availability and Distribution	25
2. Education and the Role of the State — Testing the Will and Capacity to Decentralize	26
a. The Concept and Future of Public Schools	26
b. Status of Teachers	27

3.	Micro Political Issues and Decentralization:	28
a.	The Communication and Information Gap	29
b.	Defining Quality Education And The Role Of Schools	31
c.	Determining The Location Of Schools — The Politics Of The Carte Scolaire	33
d.	Sustainability Of Schools And School Financing	34
e.	Teacher Training And The “Tronc Commun”	36
f.	School Management and Local Participation	38
VI.	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION	40
A.	Internal USAID Recommendation	40
B.	Macro-Level Issues	40
C.	At the Operational Level	41
ANNEX I:	List Of Interviews	43
ANNEX II:	Newspapers Consulted	49
ANNEX III:	Detailed Analysis Of Stakeholders	50

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEEM	Association des Etudiants et des Eleves de Mali
APE	Association Parents Eleves
CAP	Centre d'Animation Pédagogique
COPPO	Collecte des Parties Politiques d'Opposition
DNAFLA	Direction Nationale de l'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle et de Linguistique Appliqué
DRE	Direction Régionale de l'Education
ECOM	Ecole Communautaire, community-based and run school.
FEN	Fédération de l'Education Nationale.
FENAPEM	Fédération des APE du Mali
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
IEF	Inspection de Enseignement Fondamental (lowest level of Ministry of Primary Education)
MEB	Ministry of Primary Education
NA	Assemblée Nationale
NGO	Non-governmental organization (ONG in French)
PRODEC	Programme Décennal de l'Education
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RDP	Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Progrès
SNEC	Syndicat National de l'Education et de la Culture
SNV	Organisation Néerlandaise de Développement
TDRL	Taxe de Développement Régionale et Local
UNTM	Union National des Travailleurs du Mali

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Educational reform in Mali is part of a complex and long-standing set of reforms designed to restructure the relationship between the Malian state and its people. It is the product of a number of forces: the demand for government which is closer to the needs and realities of the people; the demand for greater autonomy and participation in the resolution of critical issues such as the provision of health care and education; and the need on the part of the Government to meet these demands with lower resource levels and central government expenditures.

As such, educational reform today is intimately involved with the twin processes of territorial decentralization and administrative deconcentration.

The context for educational reform, therefore, is full of uncertainties because neither of these processes has been accomplished, much less fully institutionalized, and because both involve very serious political issues and risks in addition to technical issues and solutions.

In formal terms, the Government of Mali has officially adopted a new Ten Year Guideline Policy for Educational Reform (PRODEC). It is the product of over ten years of serious discussion both in Mali and by interested donors of the need for particular reforms.

This policy, however, has not yet been translated into a general (loi-cadre) law, much less into implementational legislation. There is serious doubt that with current capabilities and pending issues this will happen soon.

A variety of actors are interested in this policy reform. This study divides them into: Donors, Governmental Actors, Operational Partners (such as PVOs and NGO), Societal Actors- such as unions, political parties and student groups, the Private Sector, and Community Groups and other forms of bottom up associations.

In the course of identifying actor interests in specific aspects of the educational reform program, we discovered that there are a number of significant conflicts of interest embedded in this program. These conflicts may surface as significant political issues. Among them are the division of public (internally and externally funded) educational resources between levels of the educational system, and the status of teachers as unionized civil servants.

In addition, there are issues which are clearly unresolved and which must be dealt with in the implementation process. These include: the definition and significance of a quality education in terms of the objectives or ends of education; the notion of harmonizing public schools (with a “classical curriculum”) and a variety of other types of schools including community schools (ECOMs, or ecoles communautaire) the financing of local schools, the role of government in assuring standards and in supporting ECOMs, the placement of local schools, and the privatization of book production and distribution.

Our analysis leads us to the conclusion that while all of these issues can be viewed as technical problems, they involve the political interplay of a variety of actors. Treating these problems solely as technical issues, as has been the tendency thus far in the organization of the Pilot Committee for Educational Reform, and even in the initial consultation seminar sponsored by

USAID in August 1998, is not likely to be an adequate approach to facilitating policy reform in this area.

We also believe that without much stronger community and local-level organizations which can articulate the needs of their members, this reform is likely to stop short of its objectives. There is clearly going to be a need to assist in the demand side not only for groups interested in education, but in other rural services as well. If these groups do not achieve a substantially greater capacity for demanding reform, both elected territorial councils and deconcentrated governmental services are not likely to fully support the reform in terms of the integration and strengthening of community schools.

This leads us to make a few recommendations the USAID/MALI with regard to the linkage between its Democratic Governance Program and its Youth SO (Education).

- . USAID should support an integrated approach to strengthening the reform process through close donor coordination.
- . At the macro level the USG and USAID should closely monitor these processes and offer whatever assistance it can to help resolve issues between major society actors such as opposition parties and organized students and labor in the context of its DG program.
- . At the operational level, USAID's comparative advantage lies in supporting the self-governance of Malian society, particularly in the demand side of political interaction with elected officials and with government services. USAID should continue to emphasize activities supporting self governance in its democracy/governance program, and should bring activities in the Young/Education Strategic Objective into this perspective.
- . USAID should assist in putting in place an on-going communication process which can enable both community members and government personnel at various levels to be informed about the objectives and status of particular aspects of the reform.
- . USAID should continue to assist in the strengthening of associational life particularly at the community and decentralized territorial level(s), specifically with the restructuring of APEs (Association des Parents d'Eleves) in order to begin changing old power/authority relationships that can impede reform.
- . USAID should look at ways to begin helping groups which have an interest in a particular policy problem (such as an aspect of health reform or educational reform) to link to other similar groups, to begin forging networks of citizens interest associations.
- . USAID should supplement this program with a program to encourage local elected officials to understand their new roles and relationships to communities as a bargaining/negotiation process in which both can win.

I. SCOPE OF WORK, THE PARAMETERS AND THE METHODS OF THIS STUDY

This study responds to a scope of work which requested that the consultant team produce a “political economy assessment of the issues surrounding the reform of primary education.” Specifically, this was to involve:

- an investigation and assessment of the current status of primary education reform;
- an assessment of stakeholder positions and interests with regard to the reform and to their capacity to mobilize support for furthering their interests;
- the identification of potential barriers to the reform;
- recommendations to the USAID mission as to how it might work more effectively to help achieve the reform.

In addition to this general guidance, the team was asked by the Technical Advisor to the Democracy/ Governance Strategic Objective to consider the legal basis of the reform and how the reform might contribute to economic growth and political development, as well as to address some additional specific issues with regard to stakeholder interests, positions, strategies and resources.

Given the very limited amount of time to conduct data gathering and analysis for this exercise, and the complexity of the proposed policy change, the team made several critical decisions about the focus and scope of this report. First, this cannot be a thorough analysis of the technical issues involved in educational reform. Second, it will deal only with the primary level of education and will consider other levels and parts of the reform program in passing as they relate to the primary level. Third, it does not attempt to give a definite picture of the history of policy reform efforts in the educational sector nor of the donor assistance over the years in this area. These matters can only be superficially treated here. Fourth, the principal thrust of this report will be on the key issues as determined by the methods we employed, and of the stakeholder perspectives and involvement. Finally, this report does not attempt to predict the probable long term success of the reform program which is underway. It merely, through an examination of the stakeholder perspectives, attempts to indicate what some of the critical assumptions are and to what degree the fulfillment of these assumptions seems likely given the configuration of interests and forces which we observed.

The methods employed to conduct this study were classic. A team of four individuals worked on this project. Two political scientists from the U.S.A. (Dr. Robert Charlick, team leader, and Susanna Wing) structured and conducted the data gathering and analysis. They were supported by two Malian consultants who worked a total of 15 days to assist with the conception, data gathering and initial analysis. Data gathering methods included interviewing in Bamako, a systematic survey of educational issues as discussed in the Malian press over the past several years, and a limited analysis of additional documentation on the issues. Interviews were also conducted throughout the Koulikoro and Sikasso regions in order to better understand the dynamics involved in the elaboration and implementation of PRODEC outside of Bamako. Over

a one week period the team visited numerous community schools, public schools, as well as the Directors at the Regional Education Headquarters (Direction Regional de l'Education, DRE) in the two regions. We interviewed members of the Community School Management Committees (Comités de Gestion) at the village level as well as members of the Parent's Associations (Associations des Parents d'Eleves. APEs). We also talked with teachers of community schools. We were able to meet with local administrative officials, including the *Commandants de Cercle* in Kadiolo and Dioila, and 2 *chefs d'arrondissement*, one in the region of Koulikoro and the other in the Sikasso region.

While the interviews covered a wide range of actors, it must be noted that due to time constraints we were restricted in the number of people that we were able to interview. In the cases where numerous teachers were interviewed or APE members, the views expressed were repeated by nearly each interviewee and therefore we could position these groups' interests with a fair degree of confidence. With respect to local administrators or elected government officials it must be noted that only one or two viewpoints were collected, making the opinions expressed by these actors potentially less representative of their entire "interest group."

II. BACKGROUND

A. The Educational Crisis

It is often a cliché to talk about crisis, but without doubt Mali's educational system is undergoing a series of severe crises. This reality is almost universally recognized. This provides the background to the changes in formal education which have been taking place over the past 15 years, and for the educational policy reforms which are being proposed today.

The first and most apparent of these crises is what Malians commonly refer to as the “la crise scolaire.” It entails the demands which students in secondary and post-secondary education have been placing on the regime since the 1991 political transition that terminated the regime of General Moussa Traoré, and the inability of the regime to meet these demands. This crisis is manifest by repeated disruptions of the educational process by students at the secondary and post-secondary level. These students have frequently resorted to violent action against the state in order to forward their demands and have engaged in strikes which shut down not only secondary and post-secondary schools but all formal educational facilities including those at the primary level. The government, in turn, has responded by closing schools and sanctioning the leaders of the student movement resulting in the continued cycle of disruption and lost educational opportunity. This prolonged crisis was manifest again during the 1997-98 school year, and created or compounded an atmosphere of government weakness. It contributed as well to undemocratic political action on the part of all parties, such as the use of preventative detention by the government to head off potentially violent demonstrations, and the destruction of property and disruption of traffic by student organizations. This crisis has also aggravated other political tensions such as the continued refusal of a number of opposition political parties to participate in elections and to consider the elected government legitimate, since parties use the crisis as proof of government ineffectiveness and lack of representativeness. Finally, it contributed to the fundamental crisis of the Malian educational system — its low level of efficiency and poor outcomes by disrupting the operation of schools and nearly compromising the completion of the entire 1997-98 school year.

The second crisis is the more fundamental — Mali inherited an formal educational system ill-suited to its societal and economic requirements, and policies since independence in 1960 have severely aggravated this fact to the point where Mali's basic educational system simply cannot and does not meet the needs of a society striving for sustainable development and democracy. The indicators of this crisis are too numerous to adequately cover in this report, but are well documented in the reports of the government's Programme Decennal de Développement de l'Education-- its major policy initiative on educational reform at all levels of the Malian educational system. Focusing only on primary level education they find that:

- the level of enrollment in primary schools is still very low, and enrollment of girls lags even further behind national norms (for 1998 less than 50% with about 38% enrollment of girls);
- the rate of school failure (wastage due to the necessity of students to repeat years of instruction) is astonishing high, even when school years have not been compromised by prolonged strikes and closures (18% repeat class in primary cycle);

- the rate of exit from schools prior to the completion of the primary cycle is also very high (more than 5%), compromising the consolidation and retention of whatever basic skills have been acquired;
- the relationship between school and employment opportunities is poor, creating a vast corps of unemployed and underemployed school drop-outs and first cycle school graduates. This same problem exists for students at higher levels of the educational system creating serious disincentives to satisfactory completion of a given course of study;

The causes of the crisis are multiple, but above all these are linked to appropriate resource scarcity, namely:

- insufficient financial resources to assure a minimum acceptable level of educational quality even within the terms of the historic understanding of formal education;
- inappropriate and inefficient employment of existing social and intellectual resources.

The most striking symptoms of these resources issues are:

- the low level of access to state-run formal primary education despite considerable demand, with a corresponding sharp increase over the past few years of enrollment in non-governmental community-based schools — écoles communautaire, or ECOMs (from 223 schools in 1995-96 to 1358 schools in 1998-99);
- the increasingly difficult material conditions under which students and teachers labor -- lack of safe and properly maintained classrooms;
- deteriorating quality of education due to inadequate time for instruction associated with allocating substantial class time to “work projects,” class doubling, split day classes, and the severe lack of educational materials including the most basic such as instructional books, paper and chalk;
- inadequate quality of instruction and the demoralization of teachers due to lack of adequate and appropriate training, lack of supervision, and excessively high workloads, particularly in double and split day classes; and
- failure to apply satisfactory evaluation standards, particularly in the Nouvelles Ecoles Fondamentales where students are given a “laissez-passer” (i.e. passed without regard to the level of academic achievement) in order to make room for others in the system.

B. Political Environment for Reform

While this study will not attempt to review the politics of the past few years, it is essential to at least outline the broad political environment in which Malian policy processes have been and are currently unfolding. Generally speaking, while Mali is considered one of the most successful and promising cases of a democratic transition in contemporary Africa, the past 5 years have

produced a series of political crises that have continued to make the consolidation of democratic institutions and practices somewhat problematic. Above all, there have been the twin issues of the possibility of a genuine alternation of power dependent on the fairness of the rules which limit the concentration of power in the hands of a single party (ADEMA) and its leadership, and of the creation of a loyal opposition. Both processes have confronted serious challenges. The most serious challenges have come in the organization of elections, and in the fairness of electoral rules and electoral processes. Over the past five years a substantial proportion of the opposition has become increasingly radicalized to the point where it has refused to participate in electoral processes under current conditions. The opposition, aggregated in a loose grouping called COPPO, has boycotted elections since the decision of the government to repeat the aborted National Assembly elections of April 1997 on May 16. At the same time, the government has responded with the periodic arrest of opposition leaders, notably with detention without charge of 11 COPPO activists from various parties in Segou in June 1998, and with harassment of their parties in a variety of ways, including the application of a preventative detention measure designed to help control potentially violent demonstrations in April 1998.

In addition, of course, elements of Malian civil society, notably some of the unions and the major student organization, Association des Eleves et des Etudiants de Mali (A.E.E.M.) have continued to vigorously advocate their positions and to try to make an impact on the distribution of governmental resources, at times heightening political tensions and precipitating a governance crisis. At times top governmental and party officials have made more or less explicit promises to these groups such as occurred at the time of the transition in 1991 and again after the devaluation of the franc cfa in January 1994. These promises included the raising of student scholarships by 75% and specific commitments to repair student restaurants and to provide public transportation to students. Due to national budgetary constraints, stemming from a combination of poor levels of tax recovery and conditionalities placed by international financial institutions and bilateral donors on structural adjustment finance, some of these promises have proven impossible to fulfill. This has in turn led to high levels of frustration on the part of these groups over the inability to get government to satisfy these demands, and even to a sense of betrayal, since these very groups are generally acknowledged to have played key roles in the democratization process which brought about the Malian Third Republic. For example, throughout 1998, student efforts to get government to fulfill the specific promises made to improve housing and transportation conditions were largely unmet. The result has been a series of confrontations between these actors and the state which have at times (frequently) become violent or at least highly disruptive. This has been the case particularly for issues of the appropriation of educational resources with the AEEM playing a key role in organizing student action at all levels of the educational system. According to a study conducted in 1994 AEEM committees at the secondary school level formed a crisis outreach committee to communicate with primary school students, therefore intensifying the disruption of primary schools which were located close to secondary schools.

These two political problems (political party and civil society confrontation) have contributed to an atmosphere of crisis which has been chronic since 1993, but which now appears to be improving. Indicators of improvement are fragmentary, but important. First, the hardening of the opposition, represented by COPPO, seems to be associated with its loss of popular support and its increasing marginalization within Malian society. People now refer to COPPO as the "radical opposition" leaving COPPO and its constituent parties little room on the political

spectrum for eventual electoral support. The decision of COPPO to continue its boycott by refusing to participate in the June 1998 elections of council members in 19 municipalities seems to have been a particularly unfortunate political decision, since it was at this level the same opposition parties could best hope to obtain seats and share governing power. This decision placed considerable internal stress on certain parties some of whose leadership would have preferred to contest these elections. Some elements in COPPO withdrew and ran independent candidates, further weakening the loose coalition. There are indications that this internal stress may lead COPPO to consider resuming its dialogue with the parties which support the Presidential coalition (CNDP). If this is so, critical political issues such as the reform of the existing electoral Commission (CENI) and the registration process may be on their way to resolution.

Second, we are witnessing the fragmentation of leading civil society organizations, thus weakening their capacity for action. While the AEEM has not formally split, its internal leadership struggles were so severe during the academic year 1998, and its public image was so badly eroded that its effectiveness as an advocacy group for students at the secondary and post-secondary levels must now be questioned. Increasingly, the AEEM's policy of involving primary school students in its demands for improved conditions and increased scholarship support for higher level students has drawn sharp attacks from many quarters of society, including the quasi-totality of the Malian press.

Third, significant fissures now exist not only in the union movement as a whole, but specifically within the teachers' unions. Unions in Mali have been divided since the formation of "free" unions, not officially associated with the former corporatist federation of unions — the Union nationale des travailleurs de Mali (UNTM). Differences between the UNTM and its affiliate, the Syndicat National de l'Education et de la Culture (SNEC) and the independent teachers' federation, the FEN, and its various affiliates surfaced as early as 1996. At this time, UNTM and SNEC softened their positions vis-à-vis cooperation with government and accepted concessions which fell far short of their aspirations for salary and material conditions: demands made after the devaluation of the cfa franc in January 1994. In their view, they decided that they not only had the role of struggling for their members' interests, but in cooperating to try to find broadly acceptable solutions. During the highly troubled academic year 1997-98 these differences came to a head when SNEC voted to cooperate in the monitoring and grading of end of year examinations and specifically the examination for promotion to the second cycle of primary education (7th and 8th grade). Ostensibly, the relevant FEN associated teachers' union, the Syndicat Libre et Démocratique de l'Enseignement Fondamental (SYLDEF) voted to boycott these examinations, placing the entire promotion process in doubt. This conflict, however, revealed still future conflict within the trade union movement when FEN's Executive Bureau voted to reverse its support for the boycott, and when SYLDEF's Secretary General, who was also Secretary General of FEN supported this decision. In turn, SYLDEF's Executive Board voted sanctions and removed him from office, thereby suspending his leadership of FEN as well. In the end, the boycott was ineffective because it was not supported either by SNEC, FEN, non-union teachers, or even many of SYLDEF's own members. As a result the examination process was able to take place and union divisions were made more obvious.

There is one final, but extremely important, element to consider in the policy environment for reform in Mali, and that is the role of external assistance, and the range of policy discretion of

the Malian state. So great is the dependence on multi-lateral, bilateral, and non-governmental financial and technical assistance in the education system that it poses two complex problems. The first is the problem of coordination and the fact that multiple donors set conditions for the disbursement of aid which do not always follow the same criteria. The second is that the economic interests of donors cannot be ignored as a factor in the government of Mali's decisions. In dealing with the internal issues of political demands both by public sector bureaucrats who seek improved salaries and conditions, and by private sector actors who seek improved conditions for securing contracts for the sale of educational supplies, the Malian government must consider not only their interests and their potential political power, but the interests of its vital donors. Without question these interests do come into conflict. Given the overall financial weakness of African states and of the Malian state in particular, this sets up conditions under which political leaders must weigh the consequences of failing to respond to internal demands versus those of antagonizing important donors may feel that they need to be responsive to their own domestic constituencies. It is through this perspective that a political economy analysis of the educational reform process can attempt to comprehend the implications of specific adjustment policies.

III. RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

Malians at various levels of society have been thinking about and taking action on the educational crisis for a number of years. International donors have been influenced by evolving educational theory, their desire to assist with the crisis in African economies through structural adjustment programs, and their support for both domestic and international reasons for the wave of political liberalization and democratization which began in Africa in the late 1980's. The current educational policy reform is a result of the convergence of all of these forces.

A. Actions at the Mass Level

Faced with the inability of government to provide satisfactory access to primary education and to serious problems with the nature of that education and its impact on local-level society Malians have been responding in a variety of ways. Those with more resources, mainly in urban areas, have taken advantage of opportunities to put their children in private schools of various kinds, including for-profit schools, and religious based schools (Catholic and Medersa--Islamic). By the late 1980's this had already resulted in a significant growth in this sector of education, particularly at the secondary level, representing in 1995 about 10% of all enrollment. In 1997-98 ECOMs served a little over 5% of the children in the first cycle of education, while medersas accounted for another 4.5%. Parents with children in public schools and with the means to do so have increasingly made use of private tutors to compensate for the poor quality of public school education and the subsequently poor acquisition of basic skills, associated with overcrowded classrooms and reduced contact with teachers resulting from split day classes and multi-grade classes.

The options open to rural people and the urban poor were much more limited. A number of factors discouraged rural people from sending their children to public school to begin with, including distance to the school, the high cost of maintaining children in school particularly if they have to live away from home, discouragement about the quality of content and results, and serious questions about the values being transmitted to school children as reflected in the chronic disruption of school and society by students. These factors contribute, no doubt, to observations by a number of NGO and governmental actors that there are zones where people are simply not interested in education.

At the same time, it is evident that the demand for education has been growing, leading to the growth of spontaneous community-based (variously called *écoles de base*, or *écoles communautaires*). Some of schools reflected a desire to develop an educational experience specifically appropriate to the community in terms of values and knowledge, as in San. For others it meant trying to make use of funds supposedly available to the APE from the collection of the integrated regional and local tax (*Taxe de Développement Régionale et Local*, TDRL) to construct and maintain public schools with the "classical curriculum". Case studies conducted in the early 1990s have revealed that even when communities have been able to attract funding from international PVOs and church groups, such efforts have often been stymied by the difficulty in coming up with the funding from the TDRL. This difficulty was traced to a combination of lack of confidence in many APEs which were supposed to manage the funding from the TDRL allocated to education. But even more basic, the level of payment of the TDRL

has been very low¹ stemming from a variety of factors including the combining the APE's share with all other revenue, and with the negative attitude toward payment of any taxes following the revolution of 1991. This has meant that in effect the responsibility and financial burden of improving access to primary education in most rural areas fell on the communities themselves, and on NGOs and international PVOs where such assistance could be obtained. Although communities did make significant efforts and the number of community-based schools did grow, at the level of educational planning many Malians saw this as only a non-sustainable “stop gap” solution.

B. The 1989 National Forum on Education

In 1989 the regime and major donors conducted a consultation on education, widely known as the *Etats Generaux sur l'Education* reflecting the broad representation of sectors of society (mainly urban). This consultation resulted in a set of policy recommendations that would dominate for the next decade. Of relevance to primary education were the views that education should be better adapted to the socio-economic realities of the country, that there be more choices in programs beyond the primary level, and that instruction in maternal languages be introduced.² Sharp disagreements, however, emerged at this time over the financing of rural schools with some favoring and others strongly criticizing the idea of financing them through the TDRL or through student labor in collective enterprises, and over how to deal with insufficient teachers and classrooms, given general dissatisfaction with the practices of doubling classes up and teaching two different groups in split days.

C. World Bank Analysis

Meanwhile a second actor weighted in with the release of the World Bank study which concluded that although the Malian government was allocating more of its national budget to education than neighboring states, the money was not being allocated efficiently. It found that on average Mali spent 10% more than comparable states on secondary school education and 10% less on primary education, and it recommended a reallocation in favor of primary education. According to one source the World Bank's prescription on the necessity to increase primary school budget allocations became a matter of conditionality for assistance in the educational sector.³ In any event, in 1989 the World Bank and the Government of Mali signed an agreement (The Fourth Educational Project) which created the *Fonds d'Appui à l'Enseignement Fondamental (FAEF)* providing \$56.2 million to increase access to primary school. At the heart of the agreement was the methodology of working with Parent-Student Associations (APE) to construct local primary schools with a 75% contribution from the fund to match the 25% contribution from the community organized by the APE. Unfortunately, this method seems to have led in a number

¹The ARD/MSI study found that in 1993 the level of payment of the TDRL in the Koulikoro region was about 7% and about 2% in urban Bamako.

²Coulibaly, see above.

³CERDES (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social), *Le Processus Democratique Malien de 1960 a nos Jours*, Bamako, Editions Donniya, nd. (1996), p. 150.

of cases to poor results, as the existing APE officials either pocketed the 25% collected or arranged to withdraw their 25% contribution after the FAEF had contributed its 75%.

D. Context of Democratization

The democracy movement which contributed to the fall of the regime of General Moussa Traoré, in 1991 pushed the debate on the Malian school one step further. In the National Debate on Education which followed revolution of 1991, Malians from a variety of sectors of society expressed their desire to see the educational system open up and provide a true foundation for democracy and development. As a result a new educational ministry, the Ministry of Primary Education (Education de Base) was created with a mandate to end illiteracy, and to assure that all Malians would have a minimum education to participate, in an informed way, in the life of the country. This new political environment, coupled with series of international conferences, including the UNESCO Jomtien (Thailand) conference of March 1990) on the necessity of education for all, set the stage for the reform process.

E. The NEF Policy Initiative

Throughout 1994 and into early 1995 a series of forums were held on education leading up to the formulation and adoption of a policy on the New Primary School (Nouvelle Ecole Fondamentale- or NEF) by the Government's Interministerial Committee on Education (October 14, 1995). The key idea behind the NEF was to create a school which would be more closely linked to the community and to its cultural values by encouraging the use of maternal languages as well as French (and for the Medersas, Arabic) and by linking the school to the development of the community. In addition, these new schools would make use of an active pedagogy, and would assure support for schools by associating all actors, and particularly parents, with them in a direct way.

At the heart of the NEF policy was the decision to provide a common base of education in all schools — those considered formal (public and private) and those which could be considered non-formal, as Centres d'Education pour le Développement (CED) and even ECOMs have often been viewed. In time, the distinction between these forms of education would be eliminated as they would all be assimilated to NEF schools. In NEF schools, about 50% of school time was to be spent on this common educational base such as literacy, numeracy, social studies and arts with the other 50% spent on acquiring and integrating knowledge in the context of “modular education” dealing with solving problems of every day life in the child's local environment⁴. The NEF envisioned the expansion of the notion of the teacher to include NGOs, local resource people, and “animators drawn from either national or regional personnel.”

The NEF formally adopted the principle of “pédagogie convergente” making use of maternal language instruction coupled with a warm and exciting educational environment for making learning fun. In addition, the NEF envisioned a formal relationship of contract between schools and government (usually local government) for the support of both in sharing costs and

⁴République du Mali, Ministère de l'Education de Base, Cabinet, “La Nouvelle Ecole Fondamentale — N.E.F., Referentiel- Document de travail,” Janvier 1995

responsibilities. Finally, the NEF openly argued for multiple measures of quality depending on the end objectives of education sought by the community and the particular student and family. In this manner there would be much less educational wastage, as students failed to meet a single quality standard, such as promotion to the next cycle of education.

The NEF also envisioned the necessity to create Centres d'Animation Pédagogique (CAP) not only to support the teaching mission of these schools but to help provide for their management. In effect, the CAP would be an extension of the Ministry of Education from its national to its regional officers, and would provide a link to school directors and teachers. Many, if not most of the teachers in NEF schools would not be qualified to teach in public schools. They would be “*élèves-maitres*,” teachers in training who had not yet completed their studies.

In effect this reform represented a radical departure from the official school structure and conception familiar, but often unavailable to many Malians. It was in fact officially adopted at the level of the Ministry working group and some schools were designated as NEF schools. For a number of reasons serious criticisms of the NEF developed at various levels of Malian society almost immediately. These criticisms focused on an administrative decision that apparently ordered school directors to make certain that the success rate (promotion rate) in NEF schools would be at least 85%.⁵

Coupled with its already highly unconventional curriculum and its effort to openly attempt to merge various forms of formal and informal education, the NEF generated considerable opposition. Most commonly heard was the notion that this was a foreign idea, developed by French education specialists with little real Malian participation, and that it was therefore not appropriate.⁶

Among the most important issues which effectively killed the implementation of the NEF, however, was the fact that it dealt only with the reform of the primary school level, while powerful educational interests had a great deal of concern about adopting a policy which would have implications for budget and educational demand at higher levels, but which would not deal with them. In the wake of these criticisms, the NEF was formally abandoned but many of its ideas became pillars of overall educational reform envisioned in the PRODEC exercise.

⁵According to an interview with Yaranja Traoré, the Malian director of the *Projet d'Appui à l'Enseignement Fondamental* (9/28/98), the instruction to pass 85% of primary school students was given to Regional Directors in the form of an administrative order in 1996, in order to demonstrate greater success rate in Malian schools.

⁶Not everyone agrees with this perspective. One of the actors we interviewed (representatives of the “free” teachers unions) actually argued that the consultation for the NEF was much deeper and more meaningful than it had been for PRODEC.

IV. THE NATURE AND STATUS OF THE PRODEC REFORM PROGRAM FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

With the stalling of the NEF, Mali's leadership requested support in the course of 1995 from several international partners to reinvigorated the process of further reflection on the Malian school — the UNDP/UNESCO, and the World Bank. Based on the support of these actors, Mali was able to undertake what it billed as a broad consultative process which could lead to the development of a plan for educational reform which might have support of most Malians.⁷ As the above brief history indicates, nearly all of the elements of primary school reform present in the PRODEC have been debated in Mali for years.

A. PRODEC in a Wider Perspective

It must be pointed out that PRODEC deals with the reform of the entire education system, from pre-school through university and technical training. The implications of this broader set of policy recommendations on primary education are complex and can only be treated in passing. They are, however, significant. First, PRODEC envisions a transfer of resources from higher and secondary education toward primary education.⁸ Second, the multiplication of options at the secondary level, the improvement of education at this level, and the creation of a better fit between secondary education and the market may further stimulate demand for primary education as parents see more realistic options for their children as graduates in the job market.

B. PRODEC and Primary Education

The PRODEC program lists a number of reforms specific to primary education:

- access will be significantly improved resulting within ten years in an increase from the present rate of about 48-50% (1998-99) to at least 75%;
- access for girls will improve from the current level of approximately 35% to at least 70%;
- the quality will improve through;
 - the adoption of bilingual education, with initiation in maternal languages and with gradual introduction of simultaneous education in French;
 - introduction of active teaching methods and applied activities;
 - improved training and on-going training of teachers;

⁷PRODEC, Processus d'Elaboration, Mai 1998, 3-4.

⁸According to the PRODEC study “Tableaux des Coûts,” Mai 1998, primary level education is programmed to receive about 58% of the overall education budget. PRODEC, “Grands Orientations”, p 62 indicates that the percentage of the educational budget to be allocated to primary education will increase from 57% in 1996 to 59% in 2009. Meanwhile the percentage going to Higher Education will fall from 18% (1996) to 14% (2008). All this will occur in the context of a overall growth in the education budget of only 1% a year. According to PRODEC (p. 63) scholarship assistance will be available to only 5% of the secondary teacher college students by 2008, and to only 46% of students in post-secondary education (compared to 95%).

- improved access to teaching materials and better quality materials, and specifically to improve the quality and availability of school books (the program sets an objective of providing students with up to 4-5 books by the 4th year, and up to 7 books by the 7th and 8th years; and
 - adoption of a single 8 year primary school cycle to replace the current 6 and 3 year cycles.
- the harmonization of all types of schools (public, private for profit, private religious, and community-based) so that all can provide a minimum acceptable common education. This objective implies that programs, teachers, and methods of training and evaluation will be similar among all the schools;
 - the management of all primary schools and teachers by decentralized governmental structures, e.g. for primary education principally by rural communes; and
 - use of APEs (Associations de Parents d'Élèves) and other decentralized structures in the distribution of books.

To realize these results PRODEC envisions the need to undertake the following actions:

- a massive project of school construction of 18,000 new classrooms and 9000 renovated classrooms;
- a massive recruitment of teachers averaging 2450 graduates of formal teacher training programs, and 1163 voluntary and contractual teachers;
- decentralize governmental education structures (Regional Directions-or DREs, and Centres d'Animation Pédagogique or CAPs). The CAPS will play a particularly critical role for the initial and on-going training of teachers in community-based schools since the training of these teachers will depend almost entirely on School Directors and Teaching Advisors (Conseillers pédagogique) who will be trained at the CAPs;
- significantly increase teacher training facilities by adding 6 new Institut de Formation des Maîtres (IFM) by the year 2003, by renovating and reequipping three existing IFMs, and by creating a special training school for Medersa teachings (Institut des Maîtres de Medersas at Tombouctou);
- reconceptualize the content of teacher training to make it more appropriate to the new end goals of education;
- assure teachers will have sufficient teaching materials, and that students will have suitable school book;
- privatize the writing, publication and distribution of school books, with various actors responding to requests for bids (appel d'offres) and with National School Book Committees selecting books in various fields; and

- establish methods for distributing and replacing books involving the use of decentralized structures, sale of books to students, and the constitution of a fund from sales to replace and renew books.

C. Status of the Reform

As of the time of this study it was generally agreed that PRODEC would be the policy framework in which educational reform and donor support for educational reform would take place in Mali. With the adoption of the PRODEC 'Grands Orientations' by the Council of Ministers of the Government in May 1998 and the holding of a donor roundtable on the financing of the plan (June 1998), the process is now very far advanced at least in terms of its conception and initial programming. PRODEC is now in its early implementation with the establishment of a Pilot Committee and technical subcommittees. Unfortunately, as we shall see below, the creation of the Comité de Pilotage has been conceived almost entirely as a technical and governmental matter and has excluded other actors, particularly societal actors and NGOs. This vision of implementation does not seem to adequately take into consideration a series of political issues which we will explore below, and which will have a significant impact on how this policy is actually implemented. In addition, there are some remaining legal issues which will be addressed in the next section.

D. Legal Issues in Educational Reform

Officially, the structure and functioning of the Malian education system is guided by the Constitution of the Third Republic (1991), and by the Reform of Education Act of 1962 (74/62). In 1994 when the ARD/MSI Mali Democratic Governance Assessment was concluded no further legislation had been passed specifically governing the status of private schools and specifically of non-governmental community schools.⁹ This legal structure was subsequently complemented by a law, a decree and an administrative order (arrêté) (094-032 Portant Statut de Enseignement Privé en République du Mali 5/7/94) which defined the legal status of private schools and of les écoles communautaires (ECOMs).

Subsequently, a new policy orientation called the Nouvelle Ecole Fondamentale (NEF) was defined and was de facto adopted as the policy direction for primary level education. This policy, however, was never the subject of legislation. In fact, when the NEF policy was publicly presented in 1995 it was so heavily criticized by a variety of governmental officials that the Government of Mali never presented legislation officially adopting it to the National Assembly. Instead, a new policy process was put into effect through administrative orders which have influenced a number of aspects of how primary schools have been run in the past three years. In fact the NEF became the basis of much of the reflection of the PRODEC (Programme Decennal) team, specifically through the work of two of its members, Barthemey Togo and Abou Diarra. This policy incorporated many aspects of the NEF in its formulation of a primary school education policy, situating it in an overall reform of the entire educational system. The broad outlines of the Ten Year Program (PRODEC) were discussed and adopted by the Council of

⁹*Governance in Democratic Mali: An Assessment of Transition and Consolidation and Guidelines for Near-Term Action*, Associate in Rural Development, July 1994, particularly the Annex by Abdoulaye Niandou-Souley, "Etude de Cas: Analyse du Cadre Legal du Secteur de l'Education et du Secteur du Développement Rural," April 1994.

Ministers of the Government in May 1998. As of the time of this present study neither a loi cadre — a law adopting the broad outlines of the PRODEC reform — nor any further implementation legislation has been submitted to the National Assembly.

In fact there appears to be some disagreement about what legislation is required to put this reform on a legal footing. The PRODEC report discusses the need to “elaborate and adopt texts,” but treats these as administrative manuals laying out the need for procedure rather than law.¹⁰ On the other hand both the President of the National Assembly and the legal advisors to the Ministries of Primary Education and Secondary and Higher Education see the need both for a loi cadre and for a number of specific laws in order to put this reform package on a sound legal footing.¹¹ Based on these laws it is likely that the National Assembly will be able to have a debate on the principles embedded in the PRODEC, a debate which has not occurred as yet.¹² The difficulty is that the legal drafting capacity of the two educational Ministries is very limited and it may take quite some time for its internal staff to be able to draft these laws.

The drafting of the first of these laws, however, reveals how political the process of implementing this policy change is likely to be. This law which deals with the very sensitive issue of the status of teachers in decentralized structures, is currently being drafted and must be presented to the National Assembly in October of this year. It is critical because the Ministry of Primary Education appears to be putting forth a law which would essentially exclude teachers currently holding the status of national civil servants from the corps of decentralized territorial civil servants thus reinterpreting Chapter 2 of the on decentralization (Loi 95-022, 28 January 1995).¹³ If this law were to be passed in this form it would create two separate corps of teachers at the commune level — those which can be hired and fired by the communal council, and those whose salary, career track and status would be independent of decentralized government. This issue of legislating structures and statuses within the context of Mali's decentralization program makes it evident that the laws and decrets governing decentralization must be viewed as a critical part of the legal context for educational reform, particularly at the primary school level. PRODEC officials argue that the two are not inextricably linked and that aspects of the reform can go forward even prior to the putting into place of functioning decentralized government structures at the *cercle* and rural commune level.

For a number of reasons, including notably issues of financing, this point of view must be questioned. At the heart of the PRODEC primary school policy, as we have seen above, is the operation of commune level government and its ability to generate, manage and allocate resources

¹⁰République du Mali, *Programme Décennal de Développement de l'Education- Les Grands Orientations de la Politique Educative*, Mai 1998, p. 66.

¹¹Based on interviews with the Adama Guindo, Technical Advisor to the President of the National Assembly, and with Abel Diarra, Legal Advisor to the Ministère de l'Education de Base.

¹²In July, 1998 the Education Committee of the National Assembly did hold hearings and the full Assembly did have a debate on the Malian school in crisis, but this debate dealt solely with the causes and solutions to “la crise scolaire.” See République du Mali, Assemblée Nationale, Resolution # 25/AN-RM du 09 Julliet/1998.

¹³Interview with Abel Diarra, 9/19/98.

for the variety of schools which will now be considered commune level schools. In addition to the issues of new laws, however, there are important legal questions being raised by some actors about the 1994 law on the founding and management of private schools. Two significant issues seem to be under debate. The first involves the conditions under which “private schools” can be recognized as having “public utility,” a designation which is potentially important for defining the relationship between local and national government and schools. The 1994 law specifies conditions for according the status of “utilité publique,” — having a minimum of 60 students, using an authorized curriculum, functioning according to approved rules, producing results comparable to those of public schools on examinations for at least two years, and recruiting and managing personnel in conformity with the work code for teachers , administrators and contractual workers (vacataires). The law specifically states that private schools must offer a teaching program which is essentially the same as that offered in public school in contact hours, and the primary educational cycle.

The decree (094 448 December 28 1994) on ECOMs on the other hand is much less stringent. ECOMs can receive recognition as having public interest if they have a minimum of 20 students, a proper school site, and they respect the orientations defined by the Ministry of Primary Education. ECOMs must follow a curriculum approved by the Ministry, and must be subject to inspection and evaluation by the Primary Education Inspection service (IEF, soon to become the CAP). The subsequent arrêté (Arrêté No 94-10810 /MEB-CAB) adds an important additional provision to this regulation that if a ECOM management committee applies for the status of public utility to the Inspection the Ministry has three months to makes it decision, and that if the decision is not made within three months the school should be considered to have been accorded the status.

These laws, decrees and arrêtés are important in three ways. First, in theory they offer a clear and not insurmountable path for receiving a status which may serve as a basis for the school to make claims on government for support. Second, they give sufficient discretion to the Ministry to continue exercising a significant amount of public control. Finally, they essentially require ECOMs to offer a quality of education equal to that of public schools and do not seem to recognize their differences in terms of their objectives which relate to a more applied and locally relevant education rather than one essentially geared to enable the student to pass into the second cycle of the educational system. It is obvious that a great deal of interpretation can occur on these regulations and if funding and administrative support were available this could significantly affect the financing and management of ECOMs. Whether these provisions are in fact being applied is a wholly different question involving political relationships, as we shall see below.

The second issue involves the definition of the appropriate school management group, the law speaks only of Comité de Gestion, but it fails to specify how these relate to the existing Association of Parents of Students (APE). This is another important issue in contention in terms of the legitimate representatives of school interests in the eyes of local government (communes) and government services. According to interviews with both World Education and Save the Children they are currently dealing with issues involving the interpretation of these laws and decisions. They believe that there are indications that at the Ministry level some officials want to revisit the law to see if it can be tightened up to give the Ministry more control over the creation and management of these schools.

V. ACTORS, INTERESTS AND ISSUES: A STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MALI'S EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The approach of this section is to identify the key actors in educational policy, and to paint a broad picture of their interests and orientation toward this educational reform. It then goes on to illustrate the interplay of actors and interests through the examination of some specific issues which have been identified in the course of this mission. The approach guiding our discussion of issues is that policy reform requires the working out of relationships of power and authority among actors in such a manner that sufficient support for the reform exists to create motivation, incentive and behavior necessary to carry it out. The interplay of actors and their interests determines the winners and losers of policy reform. The contention of this analysis is that the policy change underway is one that requires a broad sharing of power and authority in order to have a reasonable chance of successful implementation, and that therefore, it is vital to consider the conditions under which actors interrelate and bargain to interpret and implement aspects of the reform. Finally, a complex policy reform like that of the reform of the entire educational system is not a single decision or a holistic orientation of actors. Actors support and oppose specific aspects of the reform depending on how they see them affecting particular interests, and as a function of their capacity for effective action.

A. The Actors and their Interests

For the purposes of this analysis we have divided the actors into seven categories: Donors, Governmental Actors (Centralized, deconcentrated and Decentralized); Other Operational Actors, such as PVO/NGOs; other societal actors; the private sector; and community associations.¹⁴

1. Donors

Foreign economic and technical assistance plays a massive role in this policy reform, both in the process which created it and in its implementation. According the report of the June 1998 donor roundtable, donors have been asked to provide about one-third of the resources for this program. Since about 95% of all donor contributions relate to primary education, the dependence of primary educational reform on external contributions is much higher.

Without question the most important donor in education is the World Bank. Although it has thus far formally pledged only \$4.5 million to the implementation of PRODEC it has prepared a project for over \$US 50 million which takes on major areas of responsibility in the reform primarily to support the publication of books in maternal languages and the training of teachers to use this material, and to provide assistance to the Ministry of Education in planning, economic analysis, and financial data collection. There is also little doubt that the Bank plays a major role both in helping to set the policy agenda and in coordinating donor contributions. In fact internal Bank aide-memoires indicate that it played a key role not only in supporting the formulation of PRODEC, but in establishing key follow-on activities including the establishment of the Pilot

¹⁴In the Appendix to this report the reader will find a sheet on each interest group identified and briefly studied, briefly summarizing their position on PRODEC, their resources and material contributions, their specific interests, and their perception of problems with the policy and its implementation. The section which follows is drawn on a synthesis of this more detailed information.

Committee and its technical commissions. These and other steps were presented to the GOM virtually as conditions for its completion of the negotiations on its new major education funding project.

As a group donors support the PRODEC reform for a variety of reasons. For the principal international financial institutions and some of the donors like USAID, the commitment to assist the government of Mali with its macro-economic policies and to contain its budgetary expenditures in the face of strong demand for educational services is important. Certainly many donors share the interest of UN agencies like UNICEF/ UNDP and on the part of the World Bank to find a way to increase Mali's general level of literacy and basic education for both economic and cultural reasons. Some donors, like the French and the Bank, wish to strengthen the institutional capacities of the Malian government to manage financial resources and to continue to promote French language education. Other donors, like the Germans (through GTZ) Dutch (SNV) and the US (principally through US PVOs like World Education, Save the Children, Africare and Care) have programs designed specifically to assist with the inclusion of poor and disadvantaged groups (such as girls) and to promote associational life and democratic development.

These differences in donor perspectives and interests translate into concern and differential support for particular aspects of the reform (such as ECOMs, Training Institutions, and Ministry of Education administrative capacity). We could detect little conflict between donors over the need for the reform, however, and even over the potential differences in emphasis. Not only do the donors heavily favor the reform, but they concentrate their contributions to it at the level of primary education, and almost uniformly favor adjusting post-primary education to a more technical and professional market which will be more closely linked to the private sector. Without question, donors play a major role in supporting the definition of the policy (through World Bank and UNICEF support to PRODEC and through special consultancies) and technical assistance groups (the major French contribution of technical resources to the Cellule d'Appui à l'Enseignement Fondamental at the Ministry of Primary Education, for example) in its early implementation (through support to the Pilot Committee and its Technical Commissions provided for example by USAID and ACIDI - Canada), and in its subsequent implementation (for example Canadian, Dutch and US support to ECOMs and to government agencies designed to support them, French support to the Education Ministry's financial management system, and USAID's support to its communication and information system).

2. Governmental Actors -- Centralized

The principal central government actors in the reform of primary education are the PRODEC which depends on the Prime Minister's Office, the Decentralization Mission attached to the Presidency, the Ministries of Primary Education and of Secondary and Post Secondary Education, and several technical institutes such as IPN (Institut de Pédagogie National). Indirectly, the schools for teacher training and the technical and professional schools are also involved. The National Assembly may also play a role in this issue although its connection has been very indirect thus far. It should be noted that President Alpha Konaré has engaged himself in this policy process most recently in his Independence Day speech (September 22, 1998) in which he strongly supported the ECOM. Although all of these actors depend on the broad policy guidance provided by the government (essentially the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers,

representing the dominant political party — ADEMA and a few of its small affiliated parties) this does not assure total consensus among all governmental actors on all aspects of the reform, or a coordinated implementation of specific policies.

In the course of our work we detected several important differences among actors on specific areas of policy. There is a built in difference between the two educational ministries over the availability and distribution of resources, leading the Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education, for example to push for more donor investment in its programs. We detected a difference in the way the Decentralization and PRODEC officials on the one hand, and Ministries viewed the importance of local government (Rural Communes) and even in the support they accorded to ECOMs as part of this decentralization. These differences will be illustrated in the discussion of issues which follows. In general, Ministries are less interested in the devolution of their responsibilities and authority over personnel than are Decentralization and PRODEC. Decentralization for its part is more interested in building viable local government than in supporting community initiatives. Institutes, like IPN will have a significantly different and reduced role in the conception and production of school books under a privatization policy than it does now, and there is some concern by the Ministry of Primary Education about this.

3. Governmental Actors -- Deconcentrated

Educational Ministries have their branch offices at the Regional and *Arrondissement* level. Under this reform and the decentralization reform they will also have a branch office at the *cercle* level which is intended to provide service to the new rural communes. Since these structures are not all in place and since they have not begun operating in the context of a full blown decentralization and education reform, it is difficult to ascertain precisely how they will interact in the implementation of this policy. What we can intuit is drawn from a combination of the normal problems of administrative deconcentration and from the attitudes and behaviors we were able to observe in areas where ECOM were already well advanced.

Deconcentrated branches will still depend for their authority and policy direction on the National Ministry, but their willingness and capacity to follow national directives and/or to adjust to localized conditions is not automatic. Given the history of centralization and the mentality of “tutelle” or central state supervision and control, it is likely that branch officials will be ignorant of, or will resist certain aspects of the reform. Given the considerable authority vested in Regional Directors and in Directors of the new Centres d'Animation Pédagogique-CAPs (see for example their authority to recognize and accord public utility status to ECOMs), the incentive structures and perceptions of these officials be will significant.

Based on existing behaviors in zones where PVOs have promoted ECOMs heavily we may anticipate that some branch officials will attempt to minimize their involvement with and responsibility toward ECOMS, while others, particularly in areas where central provision of resources for primary schools has been very poor (such as in the Dogon area) will welcome the new initiative as a way of obtaining resources for the public schools. The proposed Local and Regional Committees for the Coordination of ECOMs will include government inspectors as well

as representatives of the DRE.¹⁵ It is hoped that the creation of these new committees will ensure the participation and interaction between local communities and commune and regional administrators.

4. Governmental Actors -- Decentralized (les collectivités territoriales)

Decentralized actors will begin operating once the direct elections for rural communes and the indirect elections for *cercle* and regional councils occur. It is difficult to predict the behavior of these elected governments at this time. It may be anticipated that in some areas partisanship will be important in exerting pressures on elected officials, and that in others independent candidates largely drawn from existing local notables will dominate. It is even possible that in some areas where rural organization is far more advanced, as in the CMDT area with developed AVs, some elected officials may be drawn from mass associational life. Whatever the pattern, elected local government officials will have a sense of their obligations and interests which will help guide their decisions on such issues as budget and resource distribution with regard to schools. These decisions may be in conflict with the interests of branch governmental officials and/or of rural communities. This is a process which will evolve and at its best will produce decisions based on negotiation among significant local-level actors.

5. Other Operational Actors (PVOs and National NGOs)

At least two-thirds of the ECOMs currently operating in Mali have been created with the assistance of PVOs usually working through national NGOs. World Education and Save have accounted for the vast majority of these thus far. Other actors, such as CEK-Kalosaba working with GTZ, and SNV are responsible for smaller numbers of ECOMS. French Cooperation (Cellule d'Appui) has also worked with a small number of ECOMs on an experimental basis. Each of these actors develops interests of their own in the process of implementing their programs. Each has a strong interest in maintaining and perhaps extending their own program. Since each has a preferred method of operation involving their work with communities and with APEs as well as their method of working with and supporting public education, these operational actors can have differences in the way they would like to see the policy implemented.

For the most part these operational actors are entirely or largely funded through governmental donors (in the case of SNV there is some private Dutch NGO and church support), and it might therefore be concluded that they fully reflect the donor's perspectives. In fact, donor programs may well reflect PVO and NGO perspectives and experience.¹⁶ If this is so, PVO agendas both in terms of their own program and institutional interests, and in terms of their policy orientations (participation, empowerment, minority benefits etc.) must be considered in understanding how disputes over policy implementation may be framed and resolved. Given the importance accorded to ECOMs in the Malian education plan and the significant concentration of activity in the hands of a few PVO actors, and a limited subset of Malian NGO counterparts, the potential

¹⁵MEB/BPE, August 28, 1998 Workshop Final Report.

¹⁶Interview with Korotoumou Kanté, USAID, September 23, 1998.

for power and influence in the policy process on the part of these actors should not be underestimated.

6. The Private Sector

The private sector in Mali has not been a major actor in the development of the primary education reform program. Our interviews with the Employers Association (FNEM) and with specific firms with an interest in the policy of book production and distribution (Association of Malian Printers, and the Organization of Malian Book Publishers) indicates that their interest in this area are very limited and that their inclusion in policy discussions has been minimal. It should also be noted that all of these associations appear to be very weak. FNEM is stronger than the others, but has serious financial problems, pushing it to seek legislation to return to a kind of state mandated *Patronat*). The involvement of the private sector in the specific issue of book production and distribution will be discussed below as one particular example of this actors interest and involvement.

7. Other Societal Actors

A number of other societal actors have an interest in the educational reform. These include political parties, professional associations and unions, and student organizations. All of these actors play some role in defining public attitudes toward the education policy, although all suffer from their internal organizational weaknesses as well. Opposition political parties do not speak with one voice on any policy issue and member parties (we interviewed both the grouping COPPO, and leadership in RDP, MIRIA, and USRDA) may or may not have any real competence in this policy area. All, however, have views on educational policy which are fairly negative toward PRODEC. For some, such as USRDA and MIRIA this stems from their ideological orientation to education as parties of the true revolutionary tradition. All use the opportunity to attack educational reform in terms of their vision of the state and of the need for a commitment to “quality” education. However genuine and deeply felt these orientations are they all serve both to try to attract voters who still identify with the quasi-socialist vision of the role of the state, and students leaders who identify more fully with these positions. Their influence on the policy process through official channels or through the National Assembly is minimal, although they have some capacity to interact with other organized societal actors, such as unions and the student movement, to question and even disrupt policy implementation. ADEMA as the dominant party, also does not appear to play any direct role in this policy process. Rather, this is left to top governmental officials who are nearly all ADEMA appointees.

The Union movement, as we have said before, is deeply split and so are the teachers' unions. The largest of these unions, SNEC, claiming to represent about two-thirds of the entire teaching corps, officially supports the policy reform, although it has professional concerns. The “free” teachers unions, affiliated with their federation, FEN, take a much more critical view of the reform. SYLDEF, the “free” union of primary school teachers openly expresses concern about the status of their members, about working conditions with split class days and other cost saving measures, and about the overall quality of education this reform will bring. These unions, however, appear to have limited capacity for influence having been shown recently to be unable even to enforce a strike boycott of their own members. Despite their apparent weakness, and the

fact the government has been able to win concessions from the overall trade union federation (UNTM) and SNEC, these unions still need to be considered in policy implementation since they can still cause significant disruption of the school year.

Student organizations are a special case of influence in Mali. The AEEM has a strong interest in a number of aspects of this policy reform program, and will act to disrupt it if its interests are not addressed. This is due to its continued ability to link to lower level students transforming it from a small organization of Lycée, professional and post-secondary students, to a mass organization. It is also due to its continued ties to both officials in the governing party and to certain opposition leaders. Nonetheless, when one looks at the policy process it is clear that AEEM's wishes and interests were not really taken into consideration on most counts, and notably one the issue of scholarship support.

8. Community Associations

At the community level, APEs and ECOM Management Committees are the most important actors that are likely to be involved in the reform. It is difficult to address how they will respond to the reform because those interviewed were entirely unaware of the reform taking place and were principally concerned with the day to day issues of managing the small resources they had available for their schools. However, there are many communities in which the APE and Management Committees have no overlap whatsoever. PRODEC will provide utilité publique to the APE (giving them the legal responsibility of managing school funds). With the creation of commune level APEs the current structure (*arrondissement, cercle*, and regional APEs) will have to be reformulated. The competition between Management Committee members and public school APE members for these seats may cause tension in some communities.

It is hoped that AVs and other local development associations will work together with the teacher associations in order to provide resources for the school and in order to provide input concerning how resources are allocated. Currently the AVs work together with Management Committees (the members will automatically overlap as technically all villagers are members of their AV) by providing the land for collective fields that are used to support teacher's salaries. This is the sort of local level interaction that will be critical. Another possibility will be the creation of local development committees as in Dioila. This committee, made up of members of all the locally represented political parties, the chamber of agriculture and other private sector representatives, plays a significant role in the allocation of local resources for development as well as providing technical follow-up. Because this committee and the community as a whole consider education a priority, they are currently allocating 50% (in contrast to the recommended 30%) of Dioila's local budget to education.

B. Issues

The purpose of this section of the report is to illustrate the actual and potential interplay of actors with an interest in this policy reform by indicating how they perceive and are involved in specific issues that we identified as important in the reform process. In examining each issue we are not so much interested in the technical aspects of the issue as in the analysis of the interplay of actors and interests and of the concerns this raises for a satisfactory implementation of primary education reform.

1. Macro Political Issues

a. The Fight for Educational Resources

The key political issue at the national level involves the struggle for resources. At the heart of the problem is Mali's under-financing of education due to its low level of tax revenue compared to its GNP. While the Malian government provides between 21 and 23% of its national budget for education (compared to an average of 14% for comparable Sahelian countries, this represents only 2.3% of its GNP (1993-96) compared to an average of 4% of GNP for other Sahelian countries. During the period of the Ten Year Plan the proportion of budgetary expenditures devoted to primary level education is supposed to increase from 57% to 59%, with the biggest reduction coming from the percentage given to higher education (dropping from 18% to 14%) It is clear that the first condition of adequate financing for Mali's schools is that the level of government revenue increase in proportion to the GNP. The financing of PRODEC depends on an average growth rate for the Malian economy of 4-5% in real terms, which means a per capita growth rate of perhaps 2% (PRODEC, May 1998, p. 59). On the basis of this growth the national budget will grow by 2.5% a year, and the National Budget by about 1%. This will mean that by 2008 about 27% of the national budget will be devoted to Education. If these assumptions prove to be unrealistic the zero-sum struggle for educational resources will prove to be still more intense than it appears in this plan.

The main form that this struggle will take at the national level is the struggle between groups with an interest in the secondary and post-secondary educational budget. This involves students on scholarship and the Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education and its affiliated institutes.¹⁷ The issue of cutting scholarship is addressed in the PRODEC as a purely technical and economic issue. Costs at the post-primary level are far higher than for the lower level, particularly if one considers that it is at the primary level that most NGOs bring their assistance. In fact PRODEC financial model is based on the assumption that community and private investment in education will rise significantly and will account for about 22% of the total expenditure in the educational sector by 2003. (PRODEC, p. 62) Certainly the major donors including the World Bank emphasize that they are not really interested in supporting the higher levels of the educational system, thus conditioning the degree to which foreign economic assistance may be able to ease this conflict.

Obviously, this conflict will take place over on-going demands by the AEEM for improved conditions and for the maintenance of scholarships. As the events of the past several years have proven, this is not simply a technical matter. Students have shown themselves capable of going to the street and destroying property in order to have their issues addressed. It is inconceivable that they will accept a nearly 95% cut in scholarships to secondary school students, and a 100% cut of students in teacher training without a fight. Donors interested in policy reform and in democracy and human rights in Mali need to carefully monitor this process. If the only option

¹⁷According to PRODEC's Grands Orientation document (p. 63) scholarship assistance will be available to only 5% of the secondary teacher college students by 2008, and to only 46% of students in post-secondary education (compared to 95% who now receive it).

to satisfying the demands of student groups is repression, however popular that may be at times, the overall result for democratic governance in Mali will not be favorable.

A secondary aspect of this struggle is more a matter of bureaucratic politics. There is certain to be an on-going struggle between the two educational ministries over resources. This struggle can be mediated in part if donors like the World Bank do invest more in professional and technical education as a way of offering more options to secondary and post-secondary school.

b. Education as a Private Sector Issue — The School Book Policy

The issue of school books involves two separate issues — the question of who can participate and benefit from the market to write, publish and print books for Malian schools, and the issue of the distribution and availability of books.

c. Book Production:

Prior to the adoption of the PRODEC there was no official policy on school books production. In fact books were produced in two ways. Ministries would request bids for books that the Regional level officials said were needed. They would then receive bids in such a way that only one favored bidder would have a chance to get the contract. This bidder was invariably a foreign, most frequently a French, firm.¹⁸ Often these books were paid for by foreign assistance linked to the eventual awardee. The books were criticized for being culturally inappropriate, and too expensive.¹⁹ In some other cases projects or donors attempted to produce teaching materials within Mali, usually government services-- IPN and the adult literacy service DNAFLA to write the books and local printers to print them. For the experimental bilingual schools in Segou, materials were produced in this manner with mixed results²⁰ These books were also criticized as often being of poor quality, sometimes with inappropriate content (such as negative images of girls). These problems were traced to the lack of economic benefits for authors due to the absence of copyrights, to inadequate production facilities and the lack of motivation of these organizations to do a good job. In addition, some PVO projects (GTZ/ Dogon project, for example) attempted to address the book issue by designing their own materials and having them printed by Malian private sector firms with somewhat better results.

In the past few years Malian publishers and printers have become increasingly interested in entering the school book market which offers enormous potential sales compared to their very limited current scope of business. Local firms have raised questions about the competitive nature of this market. They have also raised questions about regulations, and particularly heavy taxes which make them less competitive. In turn legitimate questions have been raised about their

¹⁸H.E. Cheick Oumar Diarra, form Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education explained to us how the book ordering process was set up to favor a single foreign producer. Interview of 9/15/98.

¹⁹See also “Atelier Theme 5, *Séminaire Atelier sur le Developpement des Ecoles Communautaires et de la Pédagogie Convergente*,” Bamako, 17-19 August 1998.

²⁰See Haidara, cited above, p 1.

capacity to produce for this market given their current equipment and other resources. According to our interviews the largest Malian publishing firm has gross annual sales of less than \$400,000.

PRODEC decided to explore this issue by appointing an expert commission. The commission produced a report recommending the privatization of both the production and distribution processes.²¹ Interestingly, the director of Jamana, the publishing house formerly directed by President Konaré, was chosen as one of the principal consultants. Through this commission publishers and printers were able to make their views known. They had no direct input into the PRODEC policy. PRODEC accepted that recommendation and it has now broadly become policy. What this policy will require, however, is a series of changes not only in government services like IPN, but in the capacity of Malian firms to respond. In the August 1998 Seminar on the Ecole Communautaire, a panel of Malians which included people from donors, operational agencies like GTZ, and professionals from the Ministries of education made recommendations as to how to implement this policy. The composition of this workshop panel is a lot like that of the Pilot Committee's Technical Commission in that it did not involve either users, firms or most of the relevant PVO/NGOs. The recommendations of this group could well become policy, however. It is evident that the private sector while not directly involved, had some influence in the final policy because it explicitly adopts the notion of modifying pure market forces with a set of provisions to favor Malian producers, including the pairing of foreign and local firms, and the provision of a line of bank credit to Malian firms wishing to compete in this sector. The pairing of foreign and national firms is an approach which has been favored by Canadian aid (ACDI) which currently produces introductory level French language books in a partnership between a Canadian firm (FM) and a Malian firm (Jamana).

d. Book Availability and Distribution

At every level of the Malian educational system parents and teachers complain about the availability of books in schools.²² There are a number of issues--books do not arrive on time, titles are changed too often causing schools to not be able to use the same book for a number of years, books just never arrive at the schools. For many people the most pressing is the fact that books are simply not available to most primary school students. One study has estimated that there is about one book for every three children. Meanwhile, parents complain that books ordered by the education ministries appear illegally on the private market at inflated prices, and publishers complain that they cannot reproduce books which are not otherwise available and sell them on the market. PVO/NGOs such as SAVE are also troubled by the book distribution process which is putting increasing pressure on them to supply books to the schools they help create, a demand they consider far too expensive for their means. This complex of complaints has given rise to a book distribution policy adopted in the PRODEC. Again, broadly the policy only states that the distribution of books will be privatized, and that there may be multiple channels for the distribution of books. PRODEC, on the other hand, calls for 4-7 books per child

²¹*Rapport de l'Etude sur la Politique Nationale de Conception, d'Edition, de Gestion et de Distribution du Livre Scolaire*, December, 1997.

²²See also Youssouf Haidara, *Forum sur la Pédagogie Convergent, Etat des Lieux de la Pédagogie Convergent*, Bamako, August 1998, 13-14.

depending on the year, and new books for the first three years in maternal languages. It is widely recognized that there is no mechanism in place for the reliable and rapid distribution books. Currently schools are often dependent on Regional Inspectors to deliver books and this has proven to be an unsatisfactory mechanism far too removed from schools to assure delivery or any accountability.

Exactly how book distribution is to be done has not been specified. There are many ideas ranging from simply allowing private firms to sell approved books throughout the country, and schemes to complement this with book orders through the schools. The August 1998 Seminar treated this issue and came up with a set of policy recommendations, again without consultation with community groups or users. These recommendations are for a two track book distribution policy in which government (through the Regional level of the Primary school Ministry) will order a fixed (but inadequate) number of books. These books will then be transported by private truckers directly to schools, or possibly to APEs for distribution. Students will not receive the books free, but will be expected to essentially rent them. Schools, APEs or Comité de Gestion for ECOMs will be expected to manage these rental funds for the renewal of old books or for purchasing new ones. In this manner, government commitments to purchase books will be greatly reduced. Who will get these books, however, is still open to question. The policy recommended by the Seminar Workshop (Workshop 5) and repeated to us by the PRODEC team, is that books will go to schools where they are needed, primarily to schools in poor regions of the country, and that where parents can afford books they will be available for sale in private bookstores or outlets. This policy is bound to produce considerable conflict and unhappiness, because in our study we found that even fairly well off parents considered that their children should receive the books for free through the schools and are resentful that they must now often purchase them.

2. Education and the Role of the State — Testing the Will and Capacity to Decentralize

a. The Concept and Future of Public Schools

In Africa, as elsewhere, citizens consider the provision of education as one of the most basic roles of the state. In a country where for a variety of historic reasons until recently private education was so poorly developed this expectation is even more deeply rooted. Along with the provision of education people also expect the state to control schools so that they operate in the broader public interest. In Mali today we discovered in interviews with political parties, labor and other civil society actors that there was considerable concern that this educational reform was designed to reduce or destroy public education. From this point of view the Malian state is stepping back from even the limited provision of educational services it has been able to do in the past. In fact the PRODEC envisions a rapid progression of “private” (which include écoles communataires) education over the next 10 years. By 2008 they expect private schools to account for fully one-quarter of the children enrolled.²³ Although this increase will be occurring in the context of a vast expansion of the educational system, there is great concern that the state will eventually attempt to privatize most if not all of primary level education to reduce its

²³PRODEC, Resumé Executif, Mai 1998, p 9.

budgetary commitments. This perspective poses an important challenge to the notion of the role and responsibility of the public sector in a democratic state.

Among urban people and the more educated this concern is very high. It has even become a partisan concern to some extent as opposition parties are quick to label every policy deficiency of the government educational establishment as an effort to run down and eventually abandon the schools.²⁴ For many rural people who have not been benefiting from state support for primary education and who have created community-based schools (ECOM) to fill the void the issue is also significant. When schools are created with substantial help from a PVO like SAVE or World Education, the community is asked to take responsibility for the school, but it at least is able to receive some educational support it might not otherwise be able to get from government. The question is whether most communities want to continue to be responsible for their own schools or whether they create ECOMs with the hope that they will eventually be supported by, or even taken over by the state. Certainly, motivations must be mixed. This entire question is made sharper by the PRODEC policy of “harmonizing” all schools at the local level. This implies a certain responsibility of the state to at least supervise and provide some assistance to schools so that their curriculum and output can be comparable to public schools. At the same time it raises questions of why villagers should be willing to support ECOMs and at the same time pay taxes, part of which are supported to support local public schools. These issues will be addressed below, but they are at the heart of the national political debate about whether the Malian government is attempting to build up literacy and primary educational statistics and skills by abdicating its presumed traditional role, or whether this is a transitional strategy.

b. Status of Teachers

One of the most potentially explosive issues involving educational reform is the question of the status and pay of teachers. Although teachers in the formal educational system currently only constitute about 13,000 employees, they are well organized and constitute a major group within the national civil service. PRODEC, coupled with the decentralization policy, made several critical decisions about the status of teachers in Mali. First, there will be different categories of teachers. PRODEC clearly lays out several categories of teachers — what it calls *enseignants* who will be public employees, contractual employees who will hold no permanent civil service status, and *élève-maitres* (student-teachers who may be engaged to teach in private, or community-based schools). The statuses and the payment of these teachers is presumably different, raising important questions about the teaching profession and the quality of teaching at variety levels of the system. Given the different training and qualifications of teachers it is likely that these differences will translate into different statuses, and in particular will result in more and more people involved in teaching who do not have the full status of “*enseignant*.”

The most immediately troubling aspect of this issue is what the status of public primary school teachers will be and how they will be paid. According to PRODEC “*les collectivités territoriales*” will have responsibility for the “*prise en charge des enseignants*.” (Grandes Orientations, 47) The plan also states that “*la prise en charge des dépenses liées au recrutement*

²⁴See the Statement by the MIRIA General Secretary for Education Mohamadou Dicko, “*Déclaration à l’Occasion des Rentrées Scolaires et Universitaires, 1996-97*,” Fall 1996.

des enseignants ..sera assurée en grand partie par les collectivites décentralisées avec la mise en oeuvre de la décentralisation.” (p. 64) The plan estimates that the cost of expanding the teacher corps by 2450 per year for teachers and 1163 per year for contractual teaching employees will be 82 billion cfa (for teachers) and 13.8 billion cfa for contractors. These are vast sums of money to be generated by local governments even if the Government of Mali is successful in securing 80% of the coverage of salaries for the new teachers from foreign donors (p. 64). But there is real reason to doubt the feasibility of this plan given that the foreign share of the salaries is expected to phase out completed by 2005, leaving this entire and growing expense to the the Government of Mali at some level. At every level teachers are raising this issue and are insisting that something be done to assure them their status, career track and salary.

How this is being resolved is itself an interesting case study of actors in the Malian education process. Formally officials at PRODEC and in the Decentralization Mission state that teachers will simply have to become civil servants at the level of their territorial responsibilities (commune, *cercle*, region). The Secretary General for Primary Education states that they have no choice, that teachers are obliged to understand that this is the way it is. On the other hand, the potential for conflict and for the total failure of local primary education is significant. The way this issue has apparently been resolved for now is that donors, led by the World Bank, have agreed to make a deal with the teachers' unions to assure existing teachers that they will retain their salary and career path. They have also attempted to assure teachers that they will in fact be paid through block grants to the commune level of government. In turn, teachers are expected to accept their change in status from national civil servants to civil servants in the decentralized “collectivities.” Whether unions are prepared to fully accept this compromise is not yet clear. What is clear is that it is a transitional strategy for taking care of those already in the position, but for leaving those not currently holding this status with an entirely different and a much more tenuous situation. It is fairly clear from the discussions which the World Bank held with teachers unions that this solution largely came from the donors.²⁵ If it does hold, it may make it possible to decentralize the educational system and civil service with minimum disruption at least in the short-term. How this deal will affect teachers in ECOMs, however, is not clear. The Bank memo on this makes vague reference to the fact that the ECOM teachers in the SAVE and World Education schools would also be included in this plan (“prise en charge,”) but it is not at all clear how since they do not currently have civil service status. If in fact this deal does cover the ECOM teachers for those PVOs will it also cover them for other PVO and donor projects? Were this to be the case it would completely change the nature of the ECOM project, essentially constituting a major step in integrating ECOM financially into the public school system.

3. Micro Political Issues and Decentralization:

PRODEC raises many issues concerning who has power in the realm of educational administration. While these issues were not expressed directly in interviews, relationships between certain actors, or lack of collaboration between certain interests signal the possibility for conflict in certain environments. In this section we hope to bring to light the potential sources

²⁵World Bank, Memorandum of the Mission de Suivi de Programme Sectoriel d'Investissement en education (PSIE), Bamako, 9 février, 1998.

of conflict, at the regional and local levels, concerning the shifting responsibilities that will take place under PRODEC. Negotiation will be critical between those interest groups affected by changes in the education structure. In order for the reform to be truly successful and inclusive not only will information and communication concerning the process need to be widely distributed, but more importantly the building of interest groups operating at the commune level in collaboration with other groups in order to ensure the proper management of schools will be essential. An arena of negotiation, at the commune level, could provide the environment needed for successful, decentralized education in Mali. The following section is an attempt to map the key issues presented by those interviewed and the positions of each of the actors affected.

a. The Communication and Information Gap

The centralized nature of policy-making in Mali has led to a lack of communication between national and local actors, and even between actors at the same level. While PRODEC was considered to be a very widely debated process, involving actors at every level of society, there still exists much criticism concerning the lack of information and the extent to which diverse actors were actually implicated in the process. The Secretary General of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family said that concerning PRODEC, “the population has not been informed, and the ‘concertations regionales’ do not count.”²⁶ Some argue that the constitution of the Comité de Pilotage responsible for the supervision, follow-up and evaluation of PRODEC's implementation is flawed in that it has not included any representatives from local or regional level APEs. The ONG community sees this as a slap in the face to civil society, thus putting in question the real role for communities in the next stages of reform.²⁷

Clearly, there exists a vast communication gap between the PRODEC strategy on which there is wide agreement and its operationalization. While there is agreement on the necessity for reform, the difference between the PRODEC document and the field reality puts into question how communities will be involved in the on-going process. A key issue in the entire reform process is the degree to which the style of the policy process in Mali will change, and the degree to which such changes will be perceived as meeting the needs of ordinary Malians. Our analysis leads us to the view that the outcome and satisfactory resolution of most if not all of the so-called technical issues identified below depends on a fundamental change in the power and authority relationships involving education locally and between local government and the government's educational establishment. The issue is not restricted to the question of how local or community schools will be managed and controlled and the nature and capability of Management Committees or APEs. The two most important issues for communities in terms of their relationship with the political and administrative systems will involve the authority to determine where recognized schools will be, and how and to what degree they will receive financial support. The decentralization scheme does not make it sufficiently clear what the authority roles will be to manage education and what the roles of local associations and APEs

²⁶Yousouf Sangaré, Secretary General of The Ministry of Women, Children and the Family, 9/15/98.

²⁷This viewpoint was expressed by World Education as well as by the Groupe-Pivot/Education de Base.

will be.²⁸ Because the reform involves a shift in authority concerning management of education, as actors position themselves to promote their interests in the new arena, this communication gap may be the single most important threat to the success of PRODEC.

Perhaps even more disconcerting given the relative decentralized nature of the reform, of all the interviews conducted in the field very few people had heard of the educational reform process, let alone of PRODEC. Of those who were aware of it, except for the Regional Directors of Education and the mayor of Sikasso and his assistant, they did not have any real understanding of the reform, but had heard of it in passing on the television or radio. No public school directors were aware of PRODEC.

One individual, the Regional APE President in Sikasso who participated in a PRODEC workshop in Bamako, complained about the problem of being informed about the policy as it was already elaborated by the PRODEC team. He was not implicated in its creation in anyway. This individual is very closely linked to activities in Bamako as a member of the National Bureau of FENAPEM and the regional APE president. His complaints about the lack of involvement of the community or regional actors in PRODEC, do not bode well for the decentralized nature of the project. For him the most important question was how the population of Mali could enter into the system of educational reform, arguing that in order for it to be effective the population must truly understand the new system.²⁹

Of those interviewed in Kadiolo who had participated in the 1996 *Cercle* level discussions (including two school directors, the commandant du *cercle* and his assistant) they were completely disillusioned by what they described as a “breakdown of communication” concerning PRODEC. Since the visit in 1996, there had been no contact on the part of the Director of the DRE in Sikasso with anyone in Kadiolo concerning the reform process. One of those present, a former teacher turned local administrator, talked about the long history of failed reform movements in Mali due to the imposition of reforms from the national level, suggesting the danger that PRODEC too would fall into this same category. A visit to the *chef d'arrondissement* in Loulouni, who was accompanied by the APE president and members, revealed that none of these individuals had any knowledge of PRODEC, even though they had been included in the 1996 “consultation élargi”. It is certainly possible that these individuals simply did not remember the visit of the PRODEC team, which included the Director of the Sikasso DRE, however that in and of itself speaks directly to the lack of information and complete lack of a sense of ownership or participation in the process of creating PRODEC.

The *commandant de cercle* that we visited in Dioila had also been a part of the 1996 “consultation élargi” that took place in his *cercle*. Similarly, there had been no news of PRODEC since that time and everyone interviewed doubted its existence. They expressed concern that this reform would go the same way as NEF. Indeed, the *commandant de cercle* argued that he would not go into villages in his *cercle* to discuss PRODEC for fear of the reform never taking place, making his office look as though it was distributing false information.

²⁸Groupe Pivot/ Education de Base, Mme Koné Mariam Traore.

²⁹Abel Touré, Secretary General of the Sikasso Regional APE, (9/20/98).

This lack of information distribution is an enormous problem for PRODEC. While PRODEC has been viewed as “the most participatory of all of the ten year programs”³⁰ the degree to which actors feel disconnected from the process will have an impact on the success or failure of the reform. Those behind PRODEC, the Malian government and donors alike, are well aware of the history of failed, “top-down” reform in Mali and care must be taken by each of these actors to ensure that the decentralized process that they are trying to undergo is truly decentralized.

b. Defining Quality Education And The Role Of Schools

Malian schools are in crisis. As a public school director noted; “(our schools) are a catastrophe....In Mali, we are not preoccupied with quality.”³¹ The overall lack of books and pedagogic materials, an abundance of frustrated teachers faced with overcrowded classes and poor training, not to mention frequently delayed salaries, has contributed to a learning environment that is extremely challenging. With the push to increase the number of Malians in primary education, the quality of the education these children will receive is a key issue for all actors. However, embedded in the question of quality is the issue of what kind of education is being sought in the first place. More fundamentally, how do citizens view their schools and what do they expect these schools to provide to the community?

There is considerable confusion and concern about the differences between ECOMs and public schools in terms of their educational objectives. PRODEC is very unclear on this matter. On the one hand, the content of ECOMs has inherited the NEF policy of minimum equivalent content plus applied modules geared to the socio-economic activities of the local community. On the other hand, the student in the ECOM should be able to continue his/her studies in the next cycle of education.³² Given the differences in the preparation of teachers and concerns about their on-going training, many people interviewed did not accept the notion that both objectives could be effectively achieved.³³

The proposed reform includes the “harmonization” of all of the different sorts of schools in Mali; this includes formal and informal, religious or secular, community or public. All of these schools are to have equal access to training of teachers, books, and community and state funds. However, what will have to happen in order for this harmonization to be a reality? And how will the harmonization effect the different perceived purposes of different sorts of schools? During the August 1998 Workshop on the Development of Community Schools and “Pédagogie

³⁰UNICEF, Kate Flemming interviewed Sept. 14, 1998.

³¹Kadiolo, Director of a public school (9/19/98).

³²See report of Theme II in the *Seminaire Atelier sur le Developpement des Ecoles Communautaires et de la Pédagogie Convergente*, Bamako, 17-19 August 1998.

³³Already parents and public school directors are complaining about the problems that arise when children change schools from ECOM to public and the ECOM students, while they may be able to read, have not yet had French introduced into their studies.

Convergent” the harmonization of the profile of students and of teachers was discussed.³⁴ A clear definition of the “tronc commun” which is meant to ensure that public school and ECOM teachers have the same profile, is carefully laid out.³⁵ While the participants in the workshop clearly defined this “common trunk”, given the lack of teachers available and the lack of resources to pay the salaries of well-trained instructors, the feasibility of implementing these common standards is unclear

Clearly all actors involved in developing schools would like to have the best quality education for Malian students. And yet will some communities wish to choose a poor quality school rather than no school at all? Will parents be willing to forego having a school for their children because they do not have a “qualified teacher” available in their community?

Decentralization and PRODEC will wind up incorporating many ECOMs to the public school system, but not all existing ECOMs will be supported by the Communes. There will still be some which do not meet standards and will be formed without support.³⁶ Some actors believe that ECOMs ought not to be considered as schools that ought to be treated in the same manner of other primary educational institutions at the commune level. As one informant noted, the quality of ECOMs is inferior, their creation is chaotic and is mainly a way to get the Central Government to support a public school in each village. In addition, many ECOM are unsustainable and cannot provide the basis for a school system.³⁷

There are very different perceptions of community schools between Bamako and the rural communities. Outside of Bamako the support for community schools is unanimous. Of all the communities that we spoke to, each was proud of the quality of their own community school. In Niangambougou, in the Koulikoro region, the community (including teachers, members of the comité de gestion, APE members) argued that their community school was of better quality than the nearby public school. They emphasized the important complementarity between the community schools and public system as it exists today, arguing that the successful training of students in the community schools will only help public schools by preparing students to transfer into the public school system which cannot handle all the students at the primary level. Public school directors in Kadiolo argued the same thing with respect to ECOMs in their *cercle*, even mentioning the fact that students at the same year in school in ECOM can read, whereas in the public schools this is not the case. The existence of ECOMs may in fact provide competition for public schools, thus encouraging improved standards. At the local level there was overwhelming support for community schools which allowed many children who would not have been allowed to go to school an opportunity for an education.

³⁴“*Rapport de l'Atelier 2 : Recrutement et Formation des Enseignants des Ecoles Communautaires.*” August 17-19, 1998.

³⁵“*Rapport de l'Atelier 2 : Recrutement et Formation des Enseignants des Ecoles Communautaires.*” August 17-19, 1998.

³⁶USAID, interview with Abibaye Traore.

³⁷Decentralization Mission, Noel Diarra.

Both parents and directors of public schools viewed students of ECOMs as destined to enter into the public school system. The views expressed were not about forming schools to create better farmers, but to truly prepare children to have the skills needed to function without handicap in society. Learning to read and write in French was important to many of those interviewed in the rural areas and concern was expressed regarding the difficulties presented by instruction in maternal languages. In Kadiolo, the feeling among school directors (and APE members) as well as local government administrators was unanimous: unless children were given a foundation in French, with serious books that demanded rigorous work on the part of the student, their schooling would not be useful. They cited an example of two children from a neighboring village, Youloulou, that had completed 2 years of school and then were transferring to the public school in Kadiolo. These students had had no training in French up to that point. What is a school director supposed to do in such cases? This problem was raised in Zantiebouyou as well.

While the technical issues concerning quality of education have been debated, the implications at the local level and therefore the probability of successful reform are not yet clear. Quality will depend on the IEF/CAP being put into place and fully operational in order to guarantee the demands defined by PRODEC. In addition, the rural commune councils will play a key role in ensuring the efficacy of the IEF/CAP, therefore the actualization of decentralization will be critical. At this point, APEs and Management Committees will need to be informed of the criteria for ECOMs that have been established and provided assistance in achieving such standards. Currently, World Education is providing effective management training to APEs in the Koulikoro region. These existing networks could be used to help inform APEs and Management Committees of PRODEC's requirements.

At the Commune level, the Local Committee for the Coordination of ECOM will include an inspector, an orientation advisor, pedagogique advisor, one representative for each of the local "intervenants" concerning ECOMs and one representative of the administration of the arrondissement or a locally elected official. This committee, charged with the oversight of carte scolaire, the advising of "intervenants" the organization and planning of schools, as well as the follow-up and evaluation of activities.³⁸ (No APE member) This committee will play a critical role concerning the harmonization of schools and of "intervenants" at the local level. It is here where, ultimately, the localized debates concerning "what is a school" are likely to take place.

The role that political parties will play in this new environment is unclear. Already APEs are frequently politicized, leaving community members to believe that if the President of the APE is ADEMA, then all the members will tend to be ADEMA.³⁹ The dynamism and activities of the APE may be critical in determining the support the ECOM will receive, and therefore broad participation will be essential. Historically, the APEs were linked to the parasitic central state of the 1980s and the top-down structure of the organization left communities disconnected from the decisions concerning allocation of the local tax resources. As a result, communities stopped paying their taxes. There may be underlying suspicion of "old-guard" APE members and thus restructuring these groups with democratic elections is critical.

³⁸Report from August 17-19 1998, Workshop 3, "Coordination des actions des Intervenants dans la Création des Ecoles Communautaires en Rapport avec la Carte Scolaire."

³⁹Sikasso, Medina Public School Director.

c. Determining The Location Of Schools — The Politics Of The Carte Scolaire

Under PRODEC all schools will have to conform to the “carte scolaire”, and earn official approval to create a school in a certain location with a certain curriculum. The issue of who will determine the distribution of schools with respect to the “carte scolaire” is significant both to communities and to PVOs.⁴⁰ While it is intended that every school that meets certain criteria be included in the “carte scolaire”, it is critical to take into account who will have the authority to make these decisions and on what basis. It is proposed that the IEF/CAP be given the authority to place schools on the carte scolaire. Despite the rules as they exist on paper, the interpretation of the guidelines by the IEF/CAP in favor of one community over another, or the delay in processing inclusion on the carte scolaire of another community may cause problems. The newly formed Local Committee for the Coordination of ECOMs will play a key role in oversight of the actions of the IEF/CAP. In addition, due to the lack of diffusion of information concerning PRODEC, care must be taken that certain communities do not become overly advantaged in the process because they have access to certain resources or training that allows them to create an ECOM while other communities are not aware of the basic standards that must be met.

Another important aspect of the quality of schools and the carte scolaire is the question of “utilité publique.” ECOMs must have utilité publique in order to be eligible for resources from the commune. Therefore the politics of placement on the carte scolaire becomes a critical issue as it also determines the financing of a school. Not all ECOMs will be automatically accepted by Rural Councils as commune schools and it will be up to the Commune Council to decide based on criteria, available budget and other budget priorities.⁴¹ Once again the interplay of access to information and resources for schools is critical. Communities must be made aware of the basic expectations of a school as defined in PRODEC. Technical solutions to this dynamic between communities were discussed in the August 1998 workshop, and in an effort to “level the playing field”, it was decided that NGOs, IEF/CAP, and the Local Committee for the Coordination of ECOMs as well as the Regional Coordination of ECOMs are meant to inform APEs and Management Committees of the standards that have been established. It is unclear how these groups will handle the political dynamics that may become part of these discussions.

d. Sustainability Of Schools And School Financing

At all levels of analysis actors were concerned about how the newly reformed schools would be sustained. Both APE members and teachers are concerned about the difficulties placed on communities in trying to support teachers of community schools. In the case of Niangambougou, the community school recently took on another teacher. The school now has 3 levels and 2 teachers. The community pays the teachers through the money made by a community field. However, now that the school requires two teachers they are concerned that they will not have enough to cover the salaries for both. According to the PRODEC, decentralized governments will

⁴⁰Peter Laughan, Associate Director of Save the Children USA (9/16/98).

⁴¹PRODEC (group meeting 9/10/98).

be expected to take responsibility for most of the costs of public school teachers at their level once decentralization takes effect. Teachers in private and community-based schools will be recruited and paid by the appropriate group (church groups, private employers, or communities). The critical decision in whether community schools will be able to receive support from rural commune government (assuming any funds are available) is whether these schools are accorded the status of “utilité publique.” In the 1994 law and decree, meeting the criteria for this status should not be difficult, the problem lies in determining who will have this power in the decentralized system, and how will it be assured that such power will be properly executed. For example, NGO “intervenants” will be able to guide the communities in which they work to ensure that certain standards are met. However, what will happen in instances where already existing ECOMs are functioning but they technically do not meet the standards because the schools are too close together. Will the carte scolaire be refused to NGO/PVO partners?

By according “utilité publique” to the APES, PRODEC recognizes the APE as the effective managing unit of resources for schools at the commune level.⁴² This is an important issue concerning authority over resources and will create possible conflict between ECOM management committees that are not accorded such power and APES. This conflict will be even more intense if there is perceived centralization in the hands of one political party. However, if the management committees feel they have helped to select members of APE then this should not be a problem. Already, it has become evident that despite the efforts to create transparent APES through training and advocacy, the traditional APE still holds on in many communities. World Education pointed out that local and regional level APE members refuse to step down, arguing that they have a 5 year mandate that has not yet ended.⁴³ Once again, the problem then becomes a power issue concerning the management of resources. Despite the lack of communication up to this point in the process, the implementation will depend on informing communities about the reform and the changing roles of old authority structures and the creation of new ones (in the form of newly formed APES, rural commune councils, CAPs, and the Local ECOM Coordination Committees).

PRODEC specifies that at each level of decentralized territorial administration, at least 20% of that unit's budget should be allocated to education. This is not law, but simply guidance for the administration of funds. In the past, funds have been mismanaged at this level due to lack of transparency of those managing the funds, attention will have to be paid that this does not happen in PRODEC. The hope is that with successful budgetary decentralization communities will choose how to operate their own funds and there will not be the sense that what is happening is not in the communities best interest. It must be noted that some communities may choose to have a new well or a community health center instead of a school. In theory, this prioritizing is precisely what decentralization is about, on the other hand there is the danger of asking communities to spread their resources too thin so that choices such as between health or education are being made. Those interviewed at the Groupe Pivot/Education de Base emphasized the link between PRODEC and other decentralization projects, including PRODES and PRODEJ. In part due to the lack of information concerning these programs, but primarily for financial reasons, the

⁴²PRODEC, “Les Grandes Orientations de la Politique Educative” May 1998, p. 48.

⁴³World Education, interview with the Coordinator, Souleymane Konaté.

combination of these programs will be overwhelming. The combined costs involved with supporting a local community health center as well as community schools will be too much of a burden on the community. This connection between the various programs does not seem to have been taken into account during the elaboration of each reform.

Unfortunately, there are those that argue that the issue of commune level financing of schools is moot since taxes to fund this level aren't paid anyway. ECOMs will have to be funded largely through self-help and PVO support for the foreseeable future.⁴⁴ Donors such as the World Bank are considering providing block grants to be distributed to communes. This would provide the resources needed for teacher's salaries etc. The assumption of the PRODEC financial model is that community and private investment in education will rise significantly, and that international assistance will continue at high levels. NGO and private investment is supposed to account for about 22% of the total expenditure in the educational sector.⁴⁵

Several of those interviewed pointed out the number of community schools that had become public schools. In some cases this was mentioned as an example of the failed model, while for others this seems to be the end goal of the community school (the community builds the school, gets it started, and then the state takes over responsibility). As mentioned above, this confusion over the intended future role of the state is a very important point. Communities may be taking on the responsibilities of creating schools, believing that ultimately the state will take over. If donors believe that this is the role of the state to cover educational costs, they are not likely to continue to oblige requests for support. The diverse perceptions of the ultimate responsibility of the state and the community concerning education is not clarified in PRODEC and is perhaps the most important issue concerning education in the final analysis.

e. Teacher Training And The “Tronc Commun”

Currently, teachers in some community-based schools are supposed to be the subject of periodic follow up by the Inspectors in Enseignement Fondamental (IEF). Many of the community schools visited spoke of these inspections as being the only link they had to the state concerning their schools. There is some evidence that this inspection is weak at present even for a limited set of schools which employ the bilingual methodology and participants in the August 1998 workshop on ECOM noted this problem.⁴⁶ It was pointed out, for example, that the IEF in Dioila is responsible for over 60 ECOMs as well as the local public schools and therefore, inspectors can only visit each school once every two years.

There is also the broader problem of the difference in quality and training between teachers in ECOM and in primary level public schools. This problem has been debated in the August 1998 workshop, and the conclusion was reached that “each type of school must provide a minimum

⁴⁴USAID, interview with Yacouba Konaté.

⁴⁵PRODEC, p. 62.

⁴⁶Haidara, cited above, p 14.

education through a 'tronc commun' and a 'enseignement modulaire'.⁴⁷ Teachers and students must meet certain unified standards. Yet, at the same time that PRODEC adopts the principle of harmonization, it also accepts the notion that education must be more appropriate to the community and to the market. This means that a substantial numbers of the teachers will not have the same initial teacher training (in IFMs), but will instead be trained by School Directors who themselves have been trained in the CAPs with occasional access to follow-up training programs run by CAPs and supported by trainers from IFM. This raises a series of important issues:

- . Will the CAPs be created and properly staffed in order to assure that the entire structure of state support for training and follow-up will be feasible?
- . Assuming that the CAPs are in place and functioning well, will School Directors have the time and knowledge to train community-based teachers in the complex curriculum required; i.e. Education in maternal languages and in a French, education through applied lessons relevant to the environment, active educational pedagogy?
- . Will very different levels of teaching occur in communities supported by specific donors (such as the GTZ, or the French sponsored Cellule d'Appui, or US PVOs as compared to communities which don't benefit from this support but which rely solely on the CAP? What will the consequences of these disparities be?
- . Who will determine the sort of role that the schools will play in the community? Most schools talked to saw the community school as a way to help their children "get ahead". What kind of animosity will be created if a system of "tracking" begins in rural communities concerning their schooling.

The quality of Malian education will certainly be linked directly to the quality of the teachers available. As previously mentioned, PRODEC will require the infusion of 2,450 graduates of formal teaching programs and 1,163 contractual teachers into the educational system. In addition there will be different categories of teachers, that will include public employees, contractual employees with no permanent civil service status, and "eleves-maitres" (teachers in private, community based schools). The status and the payment of these teachers is presumably different and thus raises important questions about not only the quality of teaching at different levels within the overall system but how the teachers will interact with one another within the system. Because PRODEC calls for harmonization of all of the different sorts of schools, in theory teachers will all have equal access to training. Whether or not this will be the reality remains to be seen. If teachers under different sorts of projects are provided with different levels of training this may be a key point of conflict.

During field visits, all ECOM teachers had participated in training that had been run by the DRE in their region. In addition, many schools, both public and private mentioned that collaboration existed concerning training and pedagogic materials between the public school and community

⁴⁷MEB/BPE , "Rapport Final du Seminaire-Atelier sur le developpement des Ecoles Communautaires et de la pedagogique convergente du 17 au 19 Aout 1998"

schools. In one instance, a teacher of the community school in Manambougou had turned to the support of local public school teachers during the first year in which he was teaching without any official training. Before his second year he was given a month of training under the direction of the DRE of Koulikoro. For both the teachers and the community the major concern was not with the level of training of the teachers, but rather the lack of pedagogic materials and books.

There is the need for more government supervision and training of teachers including in private schools and ECOMs, particularly with the implementation of bilingual education in primary schools. The level of qualification of ECOM teachers is very variable; some do not even know French, but are being asked to integrate French into the curriculum.⁴⁸ Some argue that the Central government needs to take responsibility for training and supervising teachers. Legislation to this effect was passed in 1995-96, but the government has not been playing it role.⁴⁹ The ECOMs have been expanding too rapidly for government to keep up with their training needs. All of these issues are addressed by PRODEC, leaving the DRE, CAP, as well as the newly formed Local and Regional Committees for the Coordination of ECOMs responsible, in part, for training and for oversight. However, given the experience of past reforms, it is critical that these are truly active committees that interact with one another as well as with local level associations. World Education sees a real problem of fact that regional level Directors are not building budgets based on need to allocate resources for training and monitoring of teachers in ECOMs.⁵⁰ With respect to follow-up, there has always been great insufficiency of government training and follow up of ECOMs. In World Education area less than 20% of schools had follow up by inspectors, due to lack of resources.⁵¹

Even if the quality of ECOM teachers cannot be brought up to that of public teachers, communities still want them, because even a bad teacher is better than none at all. Since government cannot afford to pay for all teachers, this is a community's only real option. Public school teachers salaries have been frozen and there have been severe limits on the number of new teachers ministries could recruit. Government, nonetheless is supposed to provide some support to the quality of teaching in ECOMs and must help supervise these teachers. Even this is not being done at present.⁵²

In Kadiolo, after 14 years as a teacher, Amadou Diakite left teaching in order to work for the government as an administrator at the *cercle* level. His decision to leave teaching was based in part on the ability to make more money outside of education. Therefore he fears that it will continue to be the case that those who have received professional training to be teachers will not stay in the profession. In Touban we interviewed a teacher at the local medersa who had participated in the visit of PRODEC. When we discussed teachers salaries he was angry that

⁴⁸PRODEC Group Meeting (9/10/98).

⁴⁹USAID Abibaye Traoré.

⁵⁰World Education Coordinator, Souleymane Konaté.

⁵¹Groupe Pivot Koné.

⁵²USAID, interview with Yacouba Konaté.

during the PRODEC visit the DRE director refused to acknowledge that the state pays salaries of teachers in some catholic schools, but that there is no support for medersas, this example illustrates the sort of contentiousness that may exist between schools that are competing for limited funds, with respect to teacher training and teacher salaries. In the end, PRODEC will have to rely on the MEB to be able to convince local level bureaucrats that they are required to work with all schools and a true partnership between PVO/NGOs and the government will have to take place in order for this harmonization to succeed. It is hoped that the creation of committees to coordinate community schools at the local and regional level will help this evolution take place.

f. School Management and Local Participation

In theory the management of local school policy is up to an elected council, for primary schools normally the rural commune council. The most important issue here will be the decision to allocate resources to ECOMs from the communal budget. According to PRODEC, the management of local school policy is up to an elected council, for primary schools this would be the rural commune council. It is important to note that this is a new structure that depends on communal elections and the successful establishment of new communes throughout the country. This raises several important issues concerning how quickly rural communal councils will be in place and whether or not local tax recovery will even permit councils to play a significant role in funding the needs of local public, private and community-based schools. Assuming there are resources available, the dynamic between the rural councils and the authority of CAPS to place schools on the carte scolaire, and thus who is eligible for resource allocation will be a potential arena for conflict.⁵³ Similarly, the influence that communities will have over rural council decisions will be critical and will depend, in part on the extent to which communities use their APEs and Management Committees as lobbying forces to influence decisions made at the council level. The ability for communities to rely on these associations will depend on transparency and collaboration with these.

In Sikasso, a commune that has already held local elections, concern was expressed by the mayor and by his assistant regarding the feasible management of all the schools within the commune of Sikasso.⁵⁴ Decentralization has added to the 15 different “quartiers” of Sikasso, a total of 21 villages. The logistics of successful management and oversight of all of the schools within the commune will be difficult.

While none of the parents or school directors discussed the management of their schools as a problem, past conflicts concerning school financing by TDRLs managed by APEs signal the possibility for danger. It was once commonplace that the TDRL either never made it to the APE or the money disappeared once received. Because of this many residents are unwilling to pay TDRL that they do not believe will be managed properly. Teachers were concerned about the management of schools to the extent that they worried about the payment of their own salaries

⁵³See PRODEC, *Les Grands Orientations de la Politique Educative*, Mai 1998, p. 44. See the discussion of this at the Theme I Atelier of the Seminaire Atelier sur le Développement des Ecoles Communautaires et de la pédagogie convergente,” Bamako, 17-19 August 1998. The participants suggest that this be worked out by “concertation a tous les niveaux entre les partenaires de l’école”.

⁵⁴ It ought to be noted that the recent commune elections were widely contested and remain under question.

and the willingness of the community to provide the resources necessary to sustain the school. It should be noted that in one instance, namely the *cercle* of Dioila, the TDRL is paid up to 95% and the community provides 50% of the money to education. It would be interesting to conduct an in-depth follow-up analysis of this situation in order to better understand the dynamics involved. Clearly, Dioila is a relatively well-off area in the CMDT zone. However, this alone does not account for the difference in both recovered TDRLs and in the extremely high allocation of existing resources to education. World Education is also very active in this *cercle* and has been conducting extensive training of APEs which may also be a factor. Finally, the community has set up a local development committee that works with the *Commandant de Cercle* to ensure that the budget allocations best fit the needs of the community. This example is in some ways the best case scenario for educational reform in Mali. The community and parents, the ECOMs and the public schools are all working together with the local administration to improve their schools. Because of this dynamic, the community has confidence that the TDRL collected will serve the best interests of the community as a whole.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Our analysis leads us to the view that there are numerous unresolved issues in the current policy reform program. It is highly probably, however, that the program will go forward on the national level. What is critical in this situation of ambiguity is that the process by which policy is in fact implemented by one of evolution, negotiation and adjustment. For this to occur there are a number of points at which the reform process must be strengthened.

A. Internal USAID Recommendation

Linkages between a whole range of democratic governance issues illustrated in this report and technical sectors such as health, education and agriculture are so important that

USAID should enhance the process of cross-sectoral program planning and implementation, especially between the DG SO and Youth SO teams.

Specifically, USAID/Mali should consider holding one or more workshops for its SO teams to discuss both of the Political Economy Studies (Education, and Cooperatives) as a step in furthering cross-sectoral linkages and programming.

B. Macro-Level Issues

Different donors have identified difference aspects of the reform in their programs that address specific areas of concern. All are important for the successful implementation of this and related policies.

USAID should support an integrated approach to strengthening the reform process through close donor coordination.

Among the specific activities which this implies (and which some donor should assure) are:

- **support for the deconcentration of governmental educational services and for their growth in capacity in areas critical to the reform is addressed;**
- **discussion and negotiation among actors (including PVOs) related to differences in approaches to community**
- **activities to strengthen demand for career-oriented post-primary vocation education by enhancing career outlets for skills acquired at the primary level, and/or through appropriate planning and support to guide and train primary school graduates at the second cycle level (or in years 7 and 8 of the proposed unitary block system.**
- **Activities to strengthen the legal framework for educational decentralization, such as providing assistance to the legal advisors to the Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education, and the sponsoring of a forum to assist the**

Educational Committee of the National Assembly to prepare for a major debate on this policy and its implementing legislation.

The policy environment in which reform is taking place can be improved if there is a widespread perception that the process is open, inclusive and subject to negotiation.

USAID should encourage the Government of Mali to include representatives of civil society and of educational consumers (such as APEs) to participate in the work of the technical commissions of the Comité de Pilotage.

USAID should closely monitor the issues of conflict between major social groups and government over the implementation of specific aspects of this policy and should support efforts (such as those being undertaken by the World Bank with regard to teachers' unions to find negotiated settlements to these disputes. It is particularly important to find a formula which can meet the minimum demands of student organizations.

C. At the Operational Level

This report has identified a number of series sources of potential conflict in the implementation of the proposed educational policy at the level of rural communes and communities, and between these actors and deconcentrated government agencies. In order for this program to succeed there will have to be assistance from external actors in a variety of places in the system to help resolve these issues. This assistance must include both capacity building of local governmental actors and associational life.

USAID should focus its assistance on improving the performance of decentralized governance by supporting the training of communal councilors, or educational agents at the CAP level, and of community and other local level associations.

Specifically:

USAID should assist in putting in place an on-going communication process which will enable both community members and government personal at various levels to be informed about the objectives and status of particular aspects of the reform

USAID should continue to assist in the strengthening of associational life particularly at the community and decentralized territorial level(s) in order to begin changing old authority relationship and power that can impede reform

USAID should look at ways to begin helping groups which have an interest in a particular policy problem (such as an aspect of PRODEC) link to other similar groups, to begin forging networks of citizens= interest associations.

USAID should supplement this program with a program to encourage local elected officials to understand their new roles and relationships to communities as a bargaining/ negotiation process in which both can win.

ANNEX I: List Of Interviews

BAMAKO

Abibaye, Traore, Youth/ Educational SO, USAID (9/9/98)

Aboubacrine, Alpha, Member of PRODEC (Programme Decennal de Developpement de l'Education) (9/10/98)

Chabert, Alain, Technical Assistant to the Cellule d'Appui à l'Enseignement Fondamental, Ministere de l'Education de Base, (French Cooperation), 9/18/98)

Coulibaly, Cheibane, Director of IMRAD, telephone interview 9/3/98 in Indiana.

Coulibaly, N'Golo, Secretary General of the Ministry de l'Education de Base, Tel:23-05-45, 77-14-18 (9/16/98)

Dacko, Victorien, Consultant for CEK-Kolasaba, and Projet GTZ Dogon, responsible for School book program (9/15/98)

Dembele, Modibo, Permanent Secretary for the Associations des Imprimeurs de Mali, and head of commercial division of LINO-Imprimerie Nouvelle (9/14/98)

Dembele, Urbain, former director of the Institut Supérieur de Formation et Recherche Appliqué, Mali, 221715 (9/19/98)

Diakité, Bakary, IMRAD, (9/10/98)

Diakité, Soumaila, ACDI (Canada), Technical Advisor for Education (9/21/98)

Diarra, Ambassdor Cheick Oumar (9/15/98)

Diarra, Abel, Technical Advisors for Legal issues, Ministry of l'Enseignement de Base (9/18/98) (9/19/98)

Diarra, Abou, Member of PRODEC (Programme Decennal de Developpement de l'Education) Director of IPN.(9/10/98, and 9/21/98)

Diarra, Idrissa, Project Officer, Education, UNICEF (9/14/98)

Diarra, Noel, Mission de la Decentralisation, Advisor on Institutional Support (9/21/98)

Dicko, Mohamedou. Political Secretary of MIRIA (opposition political party), former Secretary General of ADEMA, former Minister of Higher Education. Tel:23-29-81 (9/18/98)

Doucoure, Samba, PRODEC, (9/10/98)

Executive Bureau of SNEC (10 members present at meeting on 9/17/98)

Glowacki, Pierre, Technical Advisor to Cellule d'Appui a l'Enseignement Fondamental, Ministere de l'Education de Base, (French Cooperation), 9/18/98)

Guindo, Adama, Technical Advisor to the President of the National Assembly (9/16/98)

Famoro Keita , Member of Educational Committee of SNEC (9/17/98).

Flemming, Kate, Development Programs Officer, UNICEF (9/14/98)

Jehan, Monique. Ministry of Primary education, Cellule d'Appui a l'Education Fondamental. 23-00-05

Kampo, Salif, Chargé de Projets, Groupe Pivot/Education de Base (9/14/98)

Keita, Modibo, Director of CEK-Kalosaba consulting firm, and Associate Director of GTZ Dogon Project (9/15/98)

Keita, Mamadou, SNV (Dutch Development Agency) (9/17/98)

Konaté, Hamidou, Director of Jamama Press and Director of Organisation Malien des Editeurs des Livres (OMEL). (9/11/98)

Konaté, Soulymane, World Education, 9/10/98

Konaté, Yacouba, D/G SO, USAID 9/9/98

Mme. Koné, Mariam Traoré, President of the Education Pivot Group for Malian NGOs, and founder of AMFP, 9/9/98, 9/11/98

Koné, Zoumana, Coordinator of Groupe Pivot, Education de Base

Laugharn, Peter. Associate Director of Save the Children USA (9/16/98)

Mugabe, Sixte, Coordinator for Health and Education, CARE/Mali (9/17/98)

Nanga, Berthe, Technical Advisor to the National Assembly (9/15/98)

N'Diaye, Ibrahim. Secretary General of ADEMA, and Mayor of Bamako (9/15/98)

Sakho, Dauda, Technical Advisor for legal issues, Ministry of Higher Education (9/18/98)

Sangaré, Youssouf, Secretary General of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Family (9/15/98).

Santara, Mamadou, Secretary General of the National Assembly of Mali (9/16/98)

Sidibe Hamed, Assistant Secretary General of Syndicat National de l'Education et de la Culture

(SNEC) (9/17/98)

Soumano, Ahna, Vision Mondiale Internationale Mali (9/17/98)

Erin Soto, USAID (9/8/98)

Sidiki Diarra, Syndicat National de l'Education et de la Culture (SNEC) (9/17/98)

Simon, Thierry, Mission de Cooperation et d'Action Culturelle, French Embassy, Bamako, Tel: 22-64-29 (9/18/98)

Sy, Victor, Educational and Cultural Department of USRDA (Gologo group) 9/14/98

Sylla, Almamy, Coordinator of COPPO, President of Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Progres (RDP), former Presidential candidate. (9/15/98)

Tembine, Issaka, Acting Secretary General of Federation de l'Education Nationale (FEN), (9/19/98) 22-21-89

Togo, Barthelemy, PRODEC (9/10/98)

Traore, Lassina, Permanent Secretary of the Federation des Employeurs de Mali (9/16/98)

Traore, Lassina, 1st Secretary General of Federation de l'Education Nationale (9/19/98)

Yaranja, Traoré, Malian Director of the Projet d'Appui a l'Enseignement Fondamental, Ministere de l'Education de Base, September 28, 1998.

Yaya, Diallo, National Executive Bureau of Federation de l'Education Nationale (FEN), (9/19/98)

REGION OF KOULIKORO

Dioila (9/26/98)

Diarra, Moro, Conseiller Pedagogique, IEF

Samako, Salimata Coulibaly, Deputy in the National Assembly, Secretary General Association Badima (Women's Association)

Samako, Soungalo, President APE *Cercle*, President of the Koulikoro Region APE, Assistant Secretary General of the National Office of APE.

Sissoko, Gaousou, Director of the First Cycle Primary School Sokoro West, member of *cercle* APE.

Sylla, Ibrahima, Commandant de *Cercle*

Kayo (9/16/98)

Moussa Douyo, Director Public school, first cycle

Koulikoro (9/16/98)

Hamidou Moriba, Director of the Direction Régionale de l'Education

Manambougou (9/16/98)

Sidi Diarra, Instructor ECOM

Bafi Diarra, President Comité de Gestion ECOM

Bakary Diarra, member Comité de Gestion

Niangambougou (9/15/98)

Namoury Doumbia, Treasurer, Comité de Gestion ECOM

Brahima Keita, instructor, ECOM

Fasy Keita, parent

Seydou Koné, parent

Sibi (9/15/98)

M. Sidibé, Director of Public School, Second Cycle

M. Issa Souleymane Camara, Director of Public School, First Cycle

Tienfala (9/16/98)

Famara Sissoko, Chef d'arrondissement

Tjolomajo (9/16/98)

ECOM teacher

Management Committee member

REGION OF SIKASSO

Sikasso (9/18/98)

M. Bakary Kasiznié Coulibaly, Director, Direction Regionale de l'Education

M. Dramane Coulibaly, Director of the Premier Cycle Ecole Fondamentale, Medine A

Mme. Konaté Korotumou, Responsable, Scolarisation des Filles, DRE Sikasso

Mme. Konaté Konandi Keita, Assistant, scolarisation des Filles, DRE Sikasso

Mme. Aissata Coulibaly Coordinatrice Regionale des Femmes, Gouvernorat

M. Mamadou Tangaré, Mayor

M. Dazie Sogoba, Premier Adjoint to the Mayor

Père Miguel, Director of the Ecole Professionnelle et Technique, St. Jean Bosco

Abel Touré, Sect. General APE Sikasso (Commune, regional et *cercle*), Secrétaire Administrative du Bureau National de FENAPEM

Sylvan Sissoko, APE Sikasso member

Kadiola, Cercle (9/19/98)

M. Amadou Dolo, Commandant de *Cercle*

M. Amadou Diakité, Premier Adjoint to the Commandant de *Cercle*

M. Ladjji Ouattara, President, APE Centrale, Director of the Ecole Koko Kadiola

M. Zahana Diarra, Director Ecole Numuso Kadiola, Radio "Voix de Folona", member APE

Loulouni, Arrondissement (9/19/98)

M. Oumar Traore, chef d'arrondissement

M. Meyergué Traore, APE sector president

M. Souleymane Traore, Member APE

M. Loh Coulibaly, Animateur, GRAT

M. Dibril Diabité, Animateur, GRAT

M. Yacouba Togola, Animateur, GRAT

M. Dramane Digiba, Animateur, GRAT

M. Siacko Sanogog Animateur, GRAT

Touban, Village (9/19/98)

M. Ibrahim Bankalé, instructor Medersa

M. Kasim Koné, President Comité de gestion

Zantiebougou, Village (9/20/98)

M. Garba Sall, Chef d'arrondissement

M. Mohamed Coulibaly, Directeur Premier Cycle

M. Bakary Ouattara, Adjoint Director Deuxieme Cycle

M. Ousmane Keita, Animateur AMPJ

M. Fousseyni Doumbia, Enseignant Ecole Communautaire, Dje

M. Adama Koné, Representant APE Zantiebougou

M. Moussa Doumbia, Supervisor of Animateurs, AMPJ

ANNEX II: Newspapers Consulted

Aurore

Le Carcan

L'Essor

Le Republicain

Les Echos

Le Malien

Nouvel Horizon

L'Observateur

Sud-Info

Le Tambour

Zenith

ANNEX III: Detailed Analysis Of Stakeholders

Donors and Operational Actors

World Bank

No current staff person in Bamako--tel: Mme Nafou, 22 22 83, or the World Bank in Washington (Robert Prouty)

Position on

Reform Favors the PRODEC reform which it helped to produce through its assistance. Thus far the Bank has, however, only pledged about \$4.5 million to the implementation of PRODEC and is said to have some outstanding questions which it wishes to see answered. It was supposed to have completed its next educational project, the Programme Sectoriel d'Investissement en education (PSIE) by September 1998.

Support: Over the years the Bank has been a major funder in the education sector in Mali. In June 1997 it proposed to commit (via IDA) \$50 million to the educational sector in Mali for the period 1998-2003. Specifically it agreed to fund the following items in support of primary education: \$15 million to support the publication of books in maternal languages and the training of teachers to use this material (including studies of maternal language instruction and a socio-linguist map of Mali); construction of classrooms and their equipment using World Education model--\$15 million; and assistance to the Ministry of Education in planning, economic analysis, financial data collection and a communication and feedback mechanism for support the economic analysis. Other assistance which it was considering funding in 1997 included support to the construction of the CAPs and transportation of CAP trainers; support to the Pilot Committee of PRODEC, a program to build on USAID program to support female education, and some technical assistance to books for introduction of a new secondary school program.

Interests: The Bank has put its emphasis on primary education but will also support the intellectual infrastructure--planning and analysis— to make it possible for the GOM to implement and evaluate its educational reform. It is extremely interested in donor coordination in this sector and works to co-finance certain project. Specifically the Bank is interested in providing support for female education, maternal language instruction, economic analysis, financial management and some on-going support to the policy change process. The Bank has been working with Teachers Unions to see how a smooth transition can be made to a larger and more diverse teaching corps while respecting the rights and interests of current teachers. It is also involved in the development of a school book program and expected a study to be completed in early 1998 on this.

Critical Conditions	<p>The Bank wants PRODEC to develop some priority investment areas, and is expecting PRODEC to achieve some economic analyses prior to making definitive financial investments. It is also very concerned about the student upheavals and potential disruptions due to strikes of teachers. The Bank pushed hard for the creation of the Pilot Committee and its technical commissions in the following areas: maternal language instruction, school books, training of School directors and teachers, evaluation of student performance, school construction, enrollment of girls, support to ECOMs, health education, a communication strategy, support to APEs, financial management, and data collection. It believes that it is essential for the commissions to develop budgets in each of these areas prior to firm decisions by the Bank to proceed with investments. The Bank wanted these commission to be technical rather than broadly participatory.</p>
Influence	<p>The Bank's investment policies in Mali are of the highest importance. It has a great deal of influence over the entire policy development and implementation process.</p>

UNICEF

Kate Flemming and Idrissa Diarra, Education Officer (22-44-01)

Position on

Reform UNICEF has been very active in PRODEC since its conception. The reform emphasizes girls access to education as well as the use of maternal languages for instruction, issues that UNICEF considers important.

Contributions They financed salaries of 1.5 members of the PRODEC team. For the next stage of PRODEC they will be financing "Education for All" as part of their "Programme Intersectoriel Developpement 1998-2002." They will create and implement a decentralized planning and management system for PRODEC.

Interests UNICEF wants to increase the level of basic education to 65% by 2002-03. They hope to reduce the disparity between sexes, regions, as well as rural/urban zones. In addition, they hope to increase the literacy rate of women from 14% to 40%. Concern was expressed regarding the ultimate role of the state in education in Mali. The ECOM was viewed as a necessity for the time being, however, it is hoped that eventually the ultimate responsibility for schools will rest with the state.

Obstacles Concern was expressed regarding how the ECOMs would be able to integrate into the system and whether or not harmony would be achieved, especially concerning teacher profile, salary, language of instruction, curriculum and the role of the community. While parity is the goal, it is uncertain how this will be achieved. The capacity for communities to pay schools was raised as a concern, some areas will be able to contribute more easily than others. Also want to ensure the quality of books used as well as the overall quality of education received.

Influence Over the next 5 years, UNICEF is contributing a total of \$894,708 to decentralized planning, \$5,933,868 for implementation of *cercle* development plans, and \$3,455,424 for institutional support at the regional and central levels of government (overall total \$10,284,000).

France— Cooperation et d'Action Culturelle au Mali.

Tierry Simon (Tel: 22 64 29)

Position on Reform

The French support PRODEC and have made significant commitments (US\$4.5 million) to it at the June 1998 Roundtable, following the May-June bilateral negotiations. Like many other donors they are taking a wait and see attitude toward engaging in the implementation of the reform to see what can be done in the next two years.

Support:

French Cooperation is certainly one of the most important actors in support of education in Mali. Its major contributions to primary education include support to the Ministry in the form of training and resources to improve the functioning of Regional Directions, School Inspectors, teacher trainers and School Directors, particularly in the least educationally developed regions of the country--Kidal, Gao, Tombouctou , Mopti and Kayes. It does this primarily through its support for Project CAEF (Cellule d'Appui à l'Enseignement Fondamental. This project involves the investment of about \$2.8 million over a three year period and places 9 technical assistants in the Ministry of Primary Education. In addition the French have begun to support a combination of small project support for public schools (about \$165,000 over three years in 60 sites), and an experimental support project for community level schools involving 150 schools in four regions. Their support is mainly financial and technical through 10 national NGOs. The experimental Cellule d'Appui, however, has been conducting training programs which include the training of community school managers as well as regional and cercle level officials of the education ministry. In other areas the French provide support to technical education through their project d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle et à l'Emploi. About one-third of French educational assistance goes to primary education and the rest to secondary and higher education.

Interests:

The French support the general principles of the PRODEC reform, but they are very concerned about the issues of quality of education, and particularly about the emphasis on maternal languages perhaps at the expense of French language acquisition. It is their view that education must serve the development of the private sector which will require people with advanced language and technical skills. They favor an education more adapted to the demands of the market. In community level schools this leads them to favor a “quality” education, or what they call a “niveau d'instruction de base satisfaisant.” They are also concerned about the spread of medersas which could take on a bigger and bigger scope in the Malian primary and secondary education system under this reform.

It is difficult to input motivation to the assistance of such a major actor as France. No doubt there are a variety of motivations and interests which involve commercial cultural and political interests. Support for higher levels of literacy and more appropriate training is probably linked to a genuine desire to reduce poverty and dependency .

Critical

Conditions

The French see the most critical factors in educational reform to be:

--a better mastery of the real needs in geographic terms

-- improved capacity of the Ministry to manage personnel and finances

--that there be real on-going community contribution to the schools at the community level and they not simply be absorbed by the government as many people are requesting .

Influence

The Franco-Malian bilateral negotiations are one of the most important realities in Malian political life. French influence cannot be underestimated. Their support for this program will be critical, and the lessons they draw from their experience at the community level will be important for the whole direction of policy.

Canada (ACDI)

Soumaila Diakete (Tel: 21 30 96)

Position on Reform

Canadian aid has been very supportive of education in Mali since the early 1990s and supports the successful fulfillment of the PRODEC. ACDI sees some significant problems and is attempting to address them with institutional support. ACDI pledged US\$ 13.5 million to the first five years of the PRODEC at the June Round Table.

Support:

Canadian aid has provided emergency assistance to the government of Mali since the 1991 revolution and is now undertaking a more systematic program of support in the context of the PRODEC. In 1992 ACDI paid the salaries of 700 “vacataire” teachers. In 1994 it paid for notebooks to be distributed in Malian school classrooms. In 1998 it has a four pronged program consisting of a short-term program (construction of 10,000 school tables, the provision of 107,000 French grammar books produced through a collaboration between the Canadian publisher FM and the Malian firm Jamana, the rewriting of a reader previously produced by IPN and published in Mali, and a study of the training needs of primary school teachers (a study being jointly designed with USAID which is looking at initial training needs). Its other programs include: Institutional support to the Cellule Technique du Comité de Pilotage (of the Educational Reform), a major program of on-going training of teachers (about \$US 8.6 million), and support to a Canadian NGO (Paul Jalen) for the retraining of APes in school management.

Interests:

Canadian aid has a strong interest in maintaining a cultural relationship with Francophone Africa and particularly with democratic countries as part of its francophone cultural policy. There are probably some economic interests involving co-publication of books, but these seem secondary to a policy of helping produce sustainable democratic development and growth. The policy also serves an internal constituency in Canada which favors poverty reduction.

Critical

Conditions

ACDI views the strengthening of the information/ communication process involving the negotiation and implementation of educational policy to be a key condition and believes that the process must be strengthened. It has other serious concerns about institutional weaknesses for implementing this program, beginning with the maintenance of an interministerial focus through the Comité de Pilotage. The guiding critical assumption operating here is that that old hierarchical and compartmentalized bureaucratic behaviors and mentalities can be changed through communication and consultation at all levels. For this program to have a chance to succeed management of the decentralized school system must significantly improve.

Influence

It is difficult to assess Canadian influence in this process, but Canada has become one of the major players. Its pledge to the initial PRODEC is the fourth largest

(after USAID, the Dutch, and the African Development Bank).

Germany (GTZ Dogon Project)

Modibo Keita (Tel: 22 67 44)

Position on

Reform

Germany is generally supportive of the education reform program and has pledged nearly \$US 6 million toward the implementation of PRODEC. Its major activity is in the support of primary education in Dogon country where GTZ runs an integrated development project..

Support:

Through GTZ German Aid (DED) provides technical assistance to primary education. It also built some informal education centers and helped repair 20 public schools in the area in the first phase of their project. GTZ works with a Malian consulting firm CEK-Kalasaba (Modibo Keita) which serves as the primary technical advisor and trainer. The project involves teacher training and the production of school books in the Dogon. Overall this is a fairly small program budgeting about 5 million DM (about \$US3.1 million for the first three years and another 3 million DM (\$US 1.8 million) for the next three.

Interests:

GTZ favors the principles of the NEF, of education which links the formal and informal, classical core and applied education, and which is conducted in maternal languages. It therefore has a strong interest in the PRODEC. GTZ/CEK has had significant problems working with the decentralized school administration, particularly with regard to the official criteria for admission to school and school location. GTZ does not strictly do ECOMs. It's schools are shared by 4-5 village communities and the management committee is at the village group level.

Obstacles

GTZ has had a great deal of difficulty working with government and staying within the law on school siting, enrollment and teacher management. The local school inspectors are not enthusiastic about maternal language instruction and do not support schools with training and monitoring. Now that PRODEC is official they hope that deconcentrated educational institutions like the IEF and DRE will support the bilingual education approach.

Influence

Germany is a significant development partner in Mali, but its activities in education are limited in geographic scope and size, and it has had little influence over the policy process or its implementation thus far.

GOVERNMENT OF MALI

Ministère de l'Éducation de Base

N'Golo Coulibaly - Secretary General (23 05 45)

Position on

PRODEC Obviously MEB supports PRODEC which it now considers to be policy with its adoption by the Council of Ministers and with the Donor Round Table of June 1998.

Contributions MEB supplied most of the personnel to the PRODEC team and fully supports its implementation. It is now working on the administrative restructuring and legal aspects of putting PRODEC into effect. This will require a deconcentration (he calls it decentralization) of the ministry to the cercle level. By installing the CAPs (*cercle* level) the Ministry will ensure appropriate follow up for training and monitoring.

Interests Seeks resources to put program into operation. There are serious material constraints that need to be resolved. The biggest interest for MEB is to have a sufficient budget to implement properly and not to have budget cut as decentralization proceeds.

Obstacles Biggest obstacles are inadequate budget and potential for conflict with unions. He argues that unions have bought into the change and are now partners. They now accepted concession such as “double vacation” and “double division” (split classes). But they will only go along if these are seen as temporary or transitional steps.

Influence Obviously, one of the most important governmental actors, and one slated to gain the most from the reform, particularly in donor support. MEB has had sufficient influence to counter the claims on the budget of the Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education.

MINISTRY FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY

Youssef Sanagaré – Secretary General (23-11-97)

Position in

PRODEC The Ministry supports PRODEC. They insist that they be actors in the implementation of the reform.

Contributions While the Ministry does not see its role as putting resources into PRODEC because that is the responsibility of the MEB, they hope to lobby donors to contribute to the creation of scholastic competitions for girls in which the state awards prizes to the winners. This they see as an important way to reinforce girls' achievements.

Interests This Ministry is most interested in ensuring the push for girls education. They consider PRODEC to be primarily a MEB issue. However they insist that they have a role in the mis en oeuvre of PRODEC in order to make certain that equal access to both informal and formal education is guaranteed for girls.

Obstacles If the ministry cannot be an actor in the implementation of PRODEC then they fear that the reform may not successfully address the important issues of quality and increased access for girls. Also insists on the danger of the population's lack of information concerning reform. People are fearful of reform and small localized discussions of what is taking place is critical. He does not believe that “concertations regionales” serve the same purpose.

Influence An important government actor that will have considerable influence with donors concerning the push for girls education. This is a very important issue for the Ministry and donors alike and this will be the principle role for the ministry.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Adama Guindo- Technical Advisor to President of Assembly, (22 57 24; 77 38 20)

Position on

PRODEC The PRODEC has not come before the National Assembly yet. In July 1998 NA was engaged in the more basic consideration of the Malian school and the disruption of schools over the past decade. When the Loi-cadre for PRODEC and subsequent implementing legislation does come down, there will be a debate in the NA on PRODEC.

Contributions The NA is seen to play a non technical role, being the sounding board for broad societal concerns about education. The Education Committee has been busy producing a major report on the School in Society which was not adopted by the NA in its July session. It is unlikely that the NA will closely consider many technical aspects of the PRODEC, but will look at how it fits into broader issues of the school in society. The NA has the capacity to invite experts, have hearings and prepare reports that are then discussed in the plenary session as was the case in July 1998.

Interests The NA is trying to develop a pro-active role in terms of understanding and dealing with the broad issues of school and why the schools have been in such turmoil. It seeks to develop more societal support for education through this process.

Obstacles The NA is limited to the pro-Presidential parties which seems to cut off a part of the spectrum of the debate. But it still has deputies and parties which support specific interests in society, such as student groups and unions. The NA did not as a body take strong positions on these groups during its debate, and it is doubtful that any party would want to publicly do so for electoral reasons..

Influence The NA is not the most powerful actor in the Malian system by any means, and is currently limited by the boycott of the COPPO parties including such important parties as CNID, USRDA, and MIRIA. It still has some role in representing a public voice on issues and while a debate will probably not directly affect the passage of a government initiated law, there could be some behind the scene negotiation if some aspects are too threatening to some of the parties interests.

OPERATIONAL ACTORS

PVOs

World Education

Souleymane Kante (Tel: 23 00 57)

Position

on PRODEC World Education is a major PVO in the field of education and democratic institution building. It has been closely associated with the development of PRODEC which it favors, and until recently was very optimistic about it. Its concern now is that the Organism set up to carry the work of PRODEC forward (the Pilot Committee and its Technical Commissions) is made up entirely of civil servants and professional educators, and does not represent users, PVO/NGOs, or local users.

Contributions The major contribution of World Education is to provide funding and training to NGO partners to strengthen associations which will manage schools and represent an educational interest at higher levels. It has a well developed advocacy and institution building program. World Education also uses its own influence to intervene in the policy process at various levels to try to reduce administrative and legal constraints on the operation of local associations. Most of its work is with the creation and training of Comité de Gestion in ECOMs or newly constituted APEs in public schools. It attempts to assimilate all of these to the same status in federations at various levels, but certainly once in place at the commune level.

Interests World Education is deeply committed to spreading access to education, including for girls, through work with both ECOMs and public schools. It has a strong interest as well in promoting democratic processes within schools and at the level of decentralized government through its work with local associations.

Obstacles Over-professionalization of the implementation of PRODEC without a suitable ongoing role for associational life, and possible lack of responsiveness of the technical committees to community perspective. Resistance to reform by APEs in certain areas where existing and old APE members do not want to cede their authorities or to be subject to election, and inadequate support from government to resolve these conflicts. Lack of representativeness of national federation of APEs (FENAPEM) and need to recreate this organization from the bottom. Inadequate resources on part of Government to train and monitor quality of teachers even in public schools.

Influence Difficult to assess in the overall policy process. World Education is likely to have some influence at the District level and below through its partnerships with communities, APEs and other associations including national NGOs. It may also have some capacity to influence technical decisions on the interpretation of law that will give more scope to local associations in school management.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

Peter Laugharn (tel: 22 61 34)

Position on

PRODEC SAVE favors the reform and has participated in consultations around its development and approval

Contributions: SAVE is a major provider of support to the development and management of COMs under a USAID cooperative agreement. SAVE is helping to create about 700 schools over 5 years, and is providing some support to the IEF (Inspection level) to increase their capacity to work with ECOMs.

Interests SAVE has a strong interest in improving cooperation between government and the ECOMs in a number of areas including teacher training, approval of schools as having a public utility, and provision of books and materials. It also has a specific methodology which emphasizes the link between a particular community and its school which it wants to defend in the context of this policy reform

Obstacles Problems identified by SAVE include: the insufficiency of information from the Central Government to field agents on the implications of the educational reform and decentralization laws; specifically relationships with the Direction Regional and Inspector levels; the desire on the part of Ministry of Education officials to reassert as much control as possible over ECOMs and their desire to revise or reinterpret the 1994 law on ECOMs; tendency of Ministry of Education officials to apply the school siting formula (carte scolaire) too rigidly; unresolved issues about teacher recruitment and qualification levels in ECOMs and the problems of meeting the new 8 year block primary educational program; the lack of a coherent policy of school book distribution involving state support

Influence SAVE is a major operational actor in the promotion of the ECOM movement and is consulted in policy implementation. It also significantly influences USAID positions, although USAIDs own objectives and criteria also heavily influence it.

CARE

Sixte Mugabe/ Sarah Campo (Tel: 24 22 62)

Position on

PRODEC CARE supports PRODEC and its policy of integrating ECOM into education system. SNV thinks it had little opportunity to participate in the formulation of PRODEC. Most if not all of the decisions seem to have already been made.

Contributions CARE is just starting a ECOM support program over the next three years. It previously had a project to support public schools with repairs and infrastructure (school lunch rooms and furniture). The thrust of its new program will deal with support of APEs. CARE requires significant input from local community and hopes to organize this through APEs. This is still a small program involving 24 schools to be done in three phases.

Interests CARE wants to promote sustainable local education, involving a great deal of local participation. At the heart of this is the formation of viable APEs. They want to help implement PRODEC ECOM policy.

Obstacles Must have local participation or cannot be viable. Some School Education officials do not favor strengthening APEs because they fear loss of power and control. There are serious problems of implementation given low level of teachers and need to improve content, and problems implementing French language education under these conditions. There are issues of school viability. Many communities want their ECOM to be taken over by the public schools. Problem of getting schools recognized as having utilite publique so that they can get government support. In the region they work in there is considerable resistance to education and this may limit their program.

Influence CARE is not yet a major player as a US PVO in ECOM policy.

SNV/ Dutch AID

Mamadou Keita (Tel: 21 43 27)

Position on

PRODEC SNV supports the ECOM orientation of PRODEC. It was not involved in the policy process and took no concrete action on this. It strongly supports the decentralization program and sees this as an important component.

Contributions SNV has a five year program of support to community schools involving a little over \$US 7 million. It gets its money from Dutch aid and from Dutch churches and NGOs. SNV program is oriented to working with the poorest of the poor through strengthening institutions at the community, and NGO level and helping to form partnerships at the cercle level. At the community level it works with APES/Comite de Gestion. SNV works in several areas--Mainata, Southern Segou, and Douila. It also is working at the national level to support the communication process of decentralization. Dutch aid overall has pledged over \$US 22 million to the PRODEC, making it the second largest donor to date.

Interests Its main interest is to assist the poor to participate in the development process through strengthening institutions which link them to state partners.

Obstacles The development of local associations is very uneven from one area of the country to another. Programs must be adjusted to local conditions.

Influence Dutch aid and SNV are players in school reform and decentralization.

SOCIETAL ACTORS

Federation de l'education nationale (FEN)

Tembine Issaka (Tel: 22 21 89)

Position on

PRODEC There is no official FEN position on this policy, only views of individual unions. FEN's (Acting) Secretary General, however, is not particularly favorable to PRODEC which it sees as having been conceived "in a laboratory." They compare the participatory aspects of it unfavorably to NEF. FEN sees the consultations that were held as "Forums de faire vouloir"--ie, consultations to get people to agree. They claim that they boycotted the consultation where they were invited to comment because they receive the report the evening before and clearly had no time to develop a position. PRODEC's report of the Strategic Atelier of November 1996 notes the participation of a representative of FEN. They do not think the entire PRODEC process of dealing with the policy recommendations has been very open or that the document has been widely distributed. FEN favors a democratic and effective Malian school and would support reform to accomplish these goals. There are serious problems with the whole educational system which need addressing. Ecoles communautaires should be recognized for what they are--little more than literacy centers. They cannot be assimilated to regular public school education. They favor some aspects of the reform--such as maternal language initiation, if taken seriously, and the need for more supplies and books.

Contributions FEN groups a number of unions representing teachers at all levels of the educational system. These unions do not take common action on policy issues like this. Their members, however, are deeply involved through their professional interests.

Interests FEN and its member unions are interested in the quality of the Malian school and in their professional conditions— rising teacher pupil ratios, particularly in urban areas; budget constraints compared to high and growing demand; lack of adequate adaptation of curriculum to changing economic situation; and doubling of classes and division of classes. These poor teaching conditions exhaust teachers. They want to see these conditions considered as temporary concessions in the face of budgetary constraints and not new sustainable realities. They fought for a time limit on double vacation classes and got a governmental promise that they now see as being broken. They favor maximum access to school, but to a quality school. Existing solutions to the teacher shortage are unworkable and unacceptable. If we are to consider ecoles communautaires as regular schools there is a serious problem with the level of teacher training in those schools.

Other specific interests:

--defense of public education which they see to be under attack by this policy. It will be replaced by private education which communities will have to pay for, and not government.

--maintenance of full time civil service teachers and an end to the contractor or

part time teacher program

--rejects unequal access to education which privatization implies

Obstacles They see structural adjustment budgetary obstacles as greatest. Schools should not be part of adjustment as they are long-term investments that societies must make. Weakness of civil society and unions against government which can appeal to public opinion to overcome their legitimate demands.

Influence They have some through their ability to strike or boycott, thus disrupting formal schooling. But it is clearly very limited in terms of policy. They are barely consulted Capacity to mobilize their members is also falling due to splits in union movement and general conditions.

Syndicat national de l'education et de la culture (SNEC)

M. Sidibe, Assistant Secretary General

Position on

PRODEC SNEC has officially approved the PRODEC policy in its general lines. It sees the process as having been very open and consultative with teachers, community people and unions involved. SNEC was associated with the PRODEC discussions. SNEC has some concerns about the maternal language training aspect which it thinks can be bad for national unity.

Contributions SNEC is the principal teachers' union, affiliated with the confederation UNTM. It has over 8000 members out of a total of about 11,000 teachers in the Malian system. SNEC has on-going educational programs to retrain teachers and has 70 full time people who do this. They want to contribute to retraining for PRODEC. This training is open to all teachers, not just SNEC members.

Interests Stated interest--wants a Malian school that will contribute to democratic development. Professional interest of teachers— want a good and consistent status for teachers. Want teachers to be able to move from one area of the country to another (think national language policy may threaten this). They are concerned about educational quality. SNEC has accepted the idea that there will be a corps of lower qualified teachers, but it only wants this to be a transitional situation. SNEC is concerned about the safety and security of teachers given disruptions by AEEM. It wants to see stricter discipline applied and decisions adhered to and APEs involved more in student sanctions.

Obstacles Insufficient resources to provide good on-going training. Lack of political will to apply a rigorous discipline program. Lack of parental involvement. Limited resources force temporary situations in which temporary teachers are necessary but not good.

Influence As a union affiliated with UNTM SNEC is much closer to government than FEN and its affiliates. It gets consulted more, but it is not clear that it has more power as a result. SNEC feels constrained to go along with government policy to some degree and not just to make claims on behalf of its members.

Association des Parents d'Eleves- various levels

Position on PRODEC	Officially APEs were associated in the PRODEC consultations and the newly formed national federation of APEs (FENAPEM) was associated at the national level. There is real question both about what an APE is and whether there is a position on various aspects of the reform. Members of FENAPEM tend to be president of their local and regional APEs. There are a variety of actors now involved in APEs depending on where in the country they are located and which donor/PVO they have been working with. These range from unreformed top down or elite dominated APEs which were largely discredited during the implementation of the World Bank Education Program (IV) to those which have been newly created at the village level to manage the ECOMs.
Contributions	APEs will contribute to implementation of PRODEC to the extent that they are informed and understand their role with respect to management of funds. They will be a critical link between the community, the schools, and the rural communal councils. The training of APEs will be essential in order to make their contribution to the PRODEC beneficial. Transparency will be an important issue.
Interests	APEs are to be given the authority at the Commune level to manage funds devoted to education. No APEs at the local level were aware of PRODEC unless they had been visited by the PRODEC team in 1996, in which case they had not been contacted since and wondered if the reform would ever take place.
Obstacles	If communities do not contribute to the TDRL then the resources will not exist for education. Already very concerned about their inability to support teachers at the community schools.
Influence	APEs will most influential to the extent that they create networks between themselves and lobby at all levels of government. The FENAPEM has been criticized for its lack of true representation. World Education has included this into their strategy of training APEs, promoting the building of associations of associations in order to increase the influence of parents at all levels.

Association des Etudiants et des Eleves de Mali (AEEM)

Position on PRODEC

AEEM has taken no official position and was very little associated with the development of the policy. In fact, AEEM is not a single unified organization but rather involves leadership at many levels with the principal of democratic internal governance preventing any one leaders from speaking for the association without broad consultation (Zerek Smith, 9/9/98). AEEMs operate throughout the country at the secondary school level and form links to primary schools through their crisis committees. AEEM has been suffering a major leadership crisis over its policies during the 1997-98 school year, and we were unable to meet with current AEEM leaders (or factions) during the period of our stay to verify what their current thinking is on PRODEC. We have been obliged therefore to interpret their position from their public statements as reported in the media and by informed Malians.

Contributions AEEM was formally involved in some aspects of the PRODEC consultation including the "Strategy Workshop, November 1996. The organization formally represents all secondary and post secondary school students in Mali, but was recently denied the right to continue representing primary school students (eleves). As the only formal student organization in the country its input into the educational reform progress is considerable. AEEM has proven itself capable of mobilizing its members repeatedly for actions on behalf of its interests, including strikes, boycott and street demonstrations that have sometimes turned violent.

Interests Formally, AEEM claims to have no political interests and to strive only to defend the professional and material interests of its members. Its primary concern is about the level of scholars and conditions for students in dorms and school restaurants. It is also obviously concerned about the job market and has been sharply critical of structural adjustment in the educational sector. AEEM is openly opposed to the privatization of the educational system that it thinks will weaken it, and which will make conditions for students worse. Although it favors the expansion of primary education it is resolutely opposed to the reorientation of funding away from scholarships.

Obstacles Limited economic resources, low standard of living of most of its members, decreasing popular support, and lessened support from political parties. AEEM is increasingly seen as engaging in illegitimate actions, but it should be pointed out that the National Assembly confirmed its status as the representative of students in its July 1998 Special Session on Education.

Influence AEEM's influence is still considerable, both because its actions can and have paralyzed the educational process, and because it maintains close ties with some of the opposition political parties. Its influence with the ADEMA dominated government is also not insignificant due to the fact that some of the leaders of the government, including the President of the National Assembly are former AEEM leaders and activists.

POLITICAL PARTIES

OPPOSITION (COPPO MEMBERS)

COPPO and R.D.P (Rassemblement pour la Democratie et le Progres

Interviewed Alamamy Sylla, President of COPPO and President of RDP (Tel:24 67 95, 21 30 92)

Position

On PRODEC COPPO as an organization has no collective program. It is merely a temporary coalition put together in the aftermath of the annulling of the National Assembly election on April 25, 1997. RDP is critical of some aspects of PRODEC, mainly its emphasis on mass education at the expense of quality. RDP favors greater direct government investment in education, and does not favor the substantial privatization of education at the primary level.

Contributions As of September 1998, COPPO is beginning to develop a common governmental program which may convert it from a temporary grouping into a more permanent political coalition. As opposition parties, members of COPPO were not included in the discussions about the PRODEC.

Interests When the government decided to hold the N.A. election again on May 16, 1997 a number of parties organized to boycott it an subsequent elections under a regime it considers to be illegal and illegitimate. COPPO's main interest is to contest the authority of the current regime, and to try to get conditions for an acceptable election established (a mutually agreed upon electoral registration list). In the meantime it refuses to participate in government. RDP (Sylla) favors a higher quality primary education, and is skeptical about use of maternal languages which will result for many children in a poorer level of training in French. RDP is critical of government in general, however, for under-investing in education. It accuses the Konare government of misappropriating resources and of escalating the expenditures for the presidency at the expense of education. RDP's main interest is to discredit the Konare government, its policies and budgetary priorities. It attempts to appeal to the poor, and to unionized and urban workers.

Obstacles RDP and COPPO are now strictly opposition parties and have no formal voice in government. Their internal party organizations are divided and weak. Their positions are almost entirely outside the main policy debate.

Influence Although these parties are considered outliers and “radical” they do represent a significant segment of political opinion, and it is clear the ADEMA through the Presidential coalition and the Ministry of Political Parties is trying to deal with them and come to some agreement on the terms of their re-entry into the political process.

USRDA- Victor Sy, Educational and Cultural Committee

Position

On PRODEC USRDA favors a reform of the educational system but is resolutely against the privatization of national education. It favors a strong role for government in supervising, providing quality standards and providing access to education for the poor. It is not in favor of basing primary and secondary school education increasingly on community and private schools. It believes that ECOMs should be absorbed into the public educational system, and that teachers should be paid at the same level. In general, its position is that there are or could be sufficient central governmental resources for education if they and the overall budget were better managed. USRDA expresses concern about education in maternal languages which it believes will weaken national unity. It argues that government decisions to lower the benefits of secondary and post-secondary school students are unjustified given their

Contributions USRDA has not been directly involved in the discussions on PRODEC. It has commented on educational policy in newspapers and in political position papers. Its main contribution to educational policy at this point will be to hold and offer an alternative point of view based on more central government support and more equity.

Interests USRDA's positions seem mainly to be associated with attracting political support to an alternative position that associates itself with the interests of organized students (AEEM) and teacher's unions. At the level of policy, its major demand is for quality education continuing a traditional of selective education over mass and applied education.

Obstacles Low public support. Weakened and economically limited organization. No parliamentary or governmental representation.

Influence At this point USRDA is a badly weakened party, having suffered several major splits (most recently with Saidou Badian Kouyake who took a faction of the RDA back into support of ADEMA and the presidential coalition). USRDA is struggled for its very existence, although it still has some support as the party of national independence and of the first regime.

MIRIA, Mahamedou Dicko, Political Secretary, (tel:23 29 79)

Position

On PRODEC MIRIA is for educational reform but has a number of criticisms of PRODEC. It was not broadly consultative enough. It focused mainly on government. It really did not take student needs into consideration. Opening access to primary school is good but not at the expense of secondary and post-secondary. He sees PRODEC as largely a product of World Bank and other International Financial Institutions.

Contributions MIRIA did not participate in the development of PRODEC nor did Mohamadou Dicko, despite fact that he was the former Minister of National Education in the first ADEMA government.

Interests MIRIA has close links to the students and wants to promote their interests as well as national interests more fully. It talks about having a de-politicized political forum on education, but wants to take partisan positions on PRODEC to its own political advantage. MIRIA is for quality, state funded education. As Minister of Education, Dicko wanted to put more controls on the private schools but he found significant resistance. Also favors more options within the second cycle for more appropriate training in professions. There needs to be strong state supervision and control over the educational process.

Obstacles MIRIA has not real voice in government or in policy making at this point. It does have high level people including educators but they are excluded. MIRIA sees the IFIs as a major constraint on improving Malian education but virtue of structural adjustment budgetary restrictions.

Influence As a part of the original revolutionary coalition MIRIA still has its followers and has some high level people like Dicko and Mamadou Lamine Traore who command respect, but it has little political influence in national policy at present.

PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS

Federation of Employers (Federation Nationale des Employeurs du Mali)

Lassina Traore- Permanent Secretary (tel:22 63 11)

Position

On PRODEC FNEM has no official position on PRODEC. It had some contact with it through the World Bank sponsored programs for professional education.

Contributions FNEM is concerned mainly with professional and technical education. The educational system has never seen the private sector as a partner in education and so there has been no real opportunity to contribute. FNEM does represent members in labor disputes and personnel actions. This is its main activity at present.

Interests FNEM does not favor mass education per se, but favors more specialized training in professional and technical skills. This is what their members need for the labor market. They are critical of any program which will simply add more people at low levels of education to the labor market. FNEM would like to see a change in the mentality of government officials vis-a-vis business, and they would like to be more involved in defining an educational training strategy. FNEM was particularly critical of the Nouvelle Ecole Fondamentale plan and its elements in PRODEC as producing students poorly trained for any employment in the modern sector. FNEM is also very much opposed to giving in to student demands and allowing them to control the conduct of education. They have ruined the schools.

Although FEN groups members from 19 different sectors of the economy, it is now a weak organization because it is now a voluntary association and many members do not pay membership fees (in principle 1% of gross salaries). This weakens it considerably. As a result, FNEM wants the government to write a new law and to restructure the Conseil National de Patronat, and to provide for obligatory payment of membership fees [note mentality of private sector actor, in corporatist tradition].

Obstacles FNEM is not routinely seen as a partner in education policy. Its own organization based is weakening due to non payment of dues. It has weak representational roles with regard to anything except professional training.

Influence FNEM has little influence in the definition or implementation of primary education policy.

Association of Malian Printers (Associations des Imprimeries de Mali--AIM)

Interview with Modibo Dembele, Commercial Director of LINO-Imprimerie and Executive Director of AIM. President is Yamusa Coulibaly (tel: 22 49 01)

Position

On PRODEC AIM has no formal position on PRODEC and was involved in the process only through consultation with the Expert Committee of PRODEC on the book policy

Contributions The association is a loose grouping of small commercial printers with virtually no organizations capacity at present. It functions mainly as separate firms trying to encourage production of political and other documents in Mali, and rarely takes group positions. LINO as one member of AIM admits that it does not have the equipment to produce the volume and quality of school books which could be needed. LINO's gross receipts for last year were on the order of \$400,000.

Interests To increase the share of the printing business from official sources given to Malian printers. It participated with other Malian printers for example in the printing of electoral ballots for the 1992 elections. LINO, for example, argues that it could expand production and do quality work including bindings if it had a sizable contract allowing it to get bank loans to purchase appropriate equipment. This equipment would cost on the order of \$3 million, an investment currently far beyond the means of any Malian printing firm.

Obstacles Small size, weak organization, members compete among themselves for small contracts. Some, like Graphics Industries have been awarded major government contracts. LINO, however, was awarded the contract to publish 60,000 copies of the Official Journal which enabled it to purchase a new \$200,000 two color press.

Influence AIM can try to influence policy only through the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Employers. It and its member firms have no capacity to do so on their own.

Organization of Malian Publishers (Organisation Malien des Editeurs des Livres)

Hamidou Konate, Director of Jamana (tel: 22 62 89)

Position

On PRODEC The OMEL does not have a general overall position on PRODEC. It is mainly concerned about the book policy, and secondarily about spreading literacy skills. OMEL was not directly involved in the PRODEC consultations, but only indirectly through the selection of its director Hamidou Konate as a consultant to a PRODEC Technical Committee.

Contributions OMEL is a small and weak association of about 10 book publishers, founded in 1996. Its members are small businesses, none doing more than about \$350,000 a year in gross receipts. Only one firm (Graphics Industries) has a modern multi-color press. One firm, Jamana, is currently co-producing a introductory French grammar book in cooperation with a Canadian firm representing a breakthrough for Malian participation in the market.

Interests OMEL is generally interested in expanding the readership in Mali. It also has some specific policy interests— better access to the market for publishing schools books, which represents a huge potential economic market; lowering barriers to domestic production including high taxes (minimum of 21% on production). Jamana however, has a series of bookstore outlets throughout the country, and believes that it and other firms could produce quality work in given an opportunity to invest the needed capital. A share of the school book market would represent a tremendous economic interest for any Malian publisher. They state that Ivoirien publishers who have a share of the school book market gross over \$9 million per year.

Obstacles Tax costs, limited equipment, small size of enterprises, low readership due to illiteracy, limited capital investment, small number of members and weak organizational base.

Influence OMEL has little influence in the policy process, despite the fact that President Konare was a publisher (Jamana). They were consulted only indirectly. However, it is apparent that they have gotten some attention given the policy of both donors (like ACDI) and PRODEC to try to orient more production as well as distribution to the Malian private sector.

LOCAL DECONCENTRATED GOVERNMENT ACTORS

Commandants de Cercle and Chefs d'Arrondissement

Position on

PRODEC Recognize the need for overall educational reform. Given history of reforms, in particular the NEF, very doubtful as to whether the reform will actually ever take effect. No *chef d'arrondissement* was aware of PRODEC or of educational reform in general. When aware that there was reform, the *commandants de cercle* did not want to spread information concerning PRODEC because they doubted that it was ever going to really take place and they did not want to lose the confidence of the population in their *cercle* by promising a reform that would never occur.

Interests

Would like to have more information concerning what PRODEC is. Only visited commandants that had been visited in December 1996 by the PRODEC team. They had no contact concerning PRODEC since that time. Were not interested in discussing reform with the populations in their *cercles* because they doubted it would take place and did not want to be seen as lying to the community about upcoming reforms.

Contributions

These groups could provide key information to the communities and serve to help promote the reform on an administrative level.

Obstacles

The biggest obstacle described by the local administrators is the lack of information. Secondly, they fear that communities cannot support the schools or training for teachers.

Influence

These actors are waiting for instructions from the Direction Regional de l'Education concerning how to proceed.

Direction Regionale de L'Education (DRE)

Position on PRODEC	The DREs have been involved since the beginning of PRODEC. They argue that the process has been very participatory.
Interests	Believe that the division of responsibility of schools will be important. However one director seemed to see this as a way to wash his hands of poor quality community schools that will be the responsibility of the commune, not DRE.
Obstacles	The follow-up of schools will be essential. It is necessary that appropriate quality be maintained and this will depend on the CAP structure that will replace the IEF.
Contributions	Will provide oversight to CAP and will coordinate regional educational activities. Will also be responsible to provide technical support as needed to actors at different levels within the region.
Influence	DREs have played a key role in the creation of PRODEC. As implementation moves forward, they will need to ensure the proper implementation of the project. In addition, because they are the most well informed players outside of Bamako, their role in information distribution will be important.

Public School Directors

Position on Reform	The only public school directors that were aware of reform were those visited in 1996 by the PRODEC team. They were very wary of the success of a supposed “decentralized” process of reform that was seemingly so centralized. Some doubted that the reform would ever become reality.
Interests	Want to ensure teacher training, decrease teacher/pupil ratio and thus improve the quality of education that they can provide.
Obstacles	Primary concern was the complete lack of information concerning PRODEC and the history of failed reforms. They doubted that this would ever happen. Also concerned about the ability of communities to sustain schools. There will be too much of a financial burden on the communes.
Contributions	Could provide technical/pedagogic support to ECOMs as they are created. The collaboration between schools will be important in terms of promoting the harmonization of schools and thus the ultimate success of PRODEC.
Influence	Very little influence.

National NGO

GROUPE PIVOT/EDUCATION DE BASE (GP/EB)

Zoumana Koné, Coordinator

Salif Kampo, Chargé de Projets

Position on

PRODEC As the group that combines all national education NGOs, GP/EB has been very active in PRODEC since the beginning.

Interests GP/EB has been a key player in the development of ECOMs throughout the country. As the organization that links all local NGOs they have worked closely with PVOs and other donors. They clearly see the financial benefits for their organization concerning the role they might play in organizing training and management workshops for local actors in education.

Contributions They support the local NGOs by providing a network. The extent to which they contribute to the implementation of PRODEC will be tied to this already existing network.

Obstacles The lack of NGO/civil society inclusion in the Pilot Committee of PRODEC was a major concern. Another issue was who would manage the implementation of PRODEC. The combination of Decentralization, PRODEJ, PRODES and PRODEC will be too overwhelming for communities. The fact that this was not considered and that there was no collaboration between all of these programs is viewed as a problem.

Influence As the NGO that organizes all of the national NGOs in education, GP/EB has influence considering they are organizing the partners of PVOs with respect to ECOMs. These NGOs have no resources themselves however they have extensive experience in the management of ECOMs and the problems concerning education in Mali. They are very likely to insist on the role of national NGOs in PRODEC.

ECOM Management Committees

Position on PRODEC	No members of ECOM Management committees were aware of PRODEC.
Interests	These committees currently manage the funds for ECOMs. With the harmonization of all schools under PRODEC, these schools will not take part in the commune allocation of resources to the schools. A newly formed Communal APE will be created for this function and those parents that are part of the Management Committees may be elected to these APEs. These committees ought to serve as the watch dog to make certain that their teachers receive the appropriate training from the CAPs as well as equal consideration for funding from the community.
Obstacles	Members expressed concern about yet another reform and wondered if the reform would actually take place. Also very worried about the ability of communities to pay the salaries of teachers. Every committee member we met with expressed concern regarding the lack of sustainability of schools.
Contributions	Until these groups are made aware of the reform, they will not contribute to its implementation.
Influence	The extent to which these parents work together with APE at the commune level will be critical to the effect of PRODEC on each community. If indeed APEs are given “utilité publique” then ECOM management committee members will have to ensure their representation on this APE and thus their ability to lobby the rural commune effectively.

Other Interests Interviewed but not summarized here

Government

PRODEC
Togo Barthlemy, Abou Diarra
Tel: 23 84 12

INP- Institut Pedagogique
National- Abou Diarra
(Acting Director)
Tel: 23 84 12 (via PRODEC)

Mission de la Decentralisation
Noel Diarra
Tel: 24 06 80

Coordinatrice Regionale des Femmes, Sikasso
Aissata Coulibaly

Malian Experts on Community Education

H.E. Cheick Oumar Diarra
Cheibane Coulibaly
Urbain Dembele
Prof. Guindo (CNRST)
Bakary Diakité, (IMRAD, ASARED)
Mme. Koné Mariam Traoré (Executive
Director of Association Malienne
pour la Promotion des Jeunes (AMPJ)
and Head of the Education NGO
Pivot Group
Tel:USA,202-332-2249
Tel: USA
Tel: 22 17 15
Tel: 21 90 85
Tel: 22 27 93, 77 32 71

Operational Actors

World Vision
Ahna Soumano
Tel: 21 51 89
Tel: 21 38 20

Civil Society Actors

ADEMA, Party (Ibrahima N'Diaye)
Tel: 22 03 68, 77 10 87

Groups Which We Would Have Liked To Interview But Could Not

UDD (Musa Balla Coulibaly)
Tel: 21 63 11

Association des Femmes Enseignants
Mme Toure Djeneba Camara

Equilibre (NGO)

Tel: 22 49 43

Association Malienne Pour
l'Education et la Culture
Islamique (re. Medersas)
Prof. Sangho

Tel: NA

FENAPEM (National Federation of
Malian Parents of Students)

Ministry of Secondary and Post-Secondary Education
Denis Douyon

Tel: 23 35 22

DNAFLA
Soussin Dembele

Tel: 22 41 62

National Assembly
Committee on Education
Bintou Sanankoua (MP)

Tel: 21 57 24