Ministry of National Education and Literacy of Burkina Faso

Association for the Development of Education in Africa

Inter-Ministerial Conference of the Inter-Country Quality Node on Literacy and National Languages

From 2 to 4 May, 2013

Contents

I.   CONCEPTUAL NOTE

Conceptual Note

A.   THE SITUATION

The ADEA Biennale in Maputo, the Triennale in Ouagadougou in February 2012, the CONFEMEN Regional Conference for the development of the technical and vocational skills of young people, the PRAIA meeting in follow-up to CONFINTEA VI and other international gatherings have been unanimous in highlighting the need to revise our educational systems in order to promote a holistic, integrated and diversified approach. This is the *sine qua non* for Africa to catch up in education and to equip itself to cope with the rapid changes occurring in our global knowledge-based economy.

A holistic approach is also needed to ensure greater equity and justice for the poor and vulnerable, for all those left bereft of an education, without which we cannot speak of education for all.

This is ultimately one of the surest ways to draw on and put our cultures and endogenous know-how to use in this world of "give and take", where civilizations and cultures feed off each other, interpenetrate, develop synergies and globalize.

An undertaking like this requires pooling our capacities so as to confront the challenges together. It is in this spirit that an Inter-Country Quality Node on literacy was established during the Bamako meeting in 2007. At a meeting held afterwards in Lyon, the Minister of Education of Burkina Faso was entrusted by his peers to provide leadership in this field. A workshop was held in Ouagadougou in December 2010 with representatives from 13 member countries in an effort to agree on what could and should be our contribution within this vast movement and to identify the ways and means of ensuring quality non-formal education in Africa. One of the tangible results of this workshop was developing a draft three-year programme for the Quality Node.

Furthermore, the Windhoek conference in August 2005 on bilingual education and the use of native languages, along with the Ouagadougou regional conference in 2010 on African languages and cultures in education, both recognized that the integration of African languages and of multilingualism and cultural diversity in the educational process was essential to improve educational access, quality and efficiency in Africa. The Ouagadougou conference in January 2010 was part of this same process. Its starting point was the development of a policy manual on the integration of African languages in education, which was very useful for the promotion of African languages and taking into account cultural diversity.

In 2011, the Minister of National Education and Literacy of Burkina Faso agreed to integrate the issue of national languages into the Quality Node, giving birth to a new Inter-Country Quality Node on Literacy and National Languages.

The basic point now is to validate this project at a regional ministerial conference of the Inter-country Quality Node on Literacy and National Languages to be held in Ouagadougou from 2 to 4 May, 2013.

The occasion will be used to further reflect on the content of such a project, especially about the relationship we want to establish between "diversity" and "integration" within a holistic perspective.

To attune these two concepts in the context of the relationship between formal and non-formal education, several strategies are commonly adopted. There are those who seek to expand access to formal education by improving the quality of non-formal education, adapting it to the requirements of the former and creating mechanisms to give the better achievers in literacy and non-formal education access to classical schooling; there are, on the other hand, those who try to respond directly to the needs of the students in their own environments, including their linguistic environments, while here, too, developing bridges between the education and training sub-systems.

In any case, inter-sectoral collaboration is necessary. The regional ministerial conference on the challenges facing the Inter-Country Quality Node on Literacy and National Languages provides an ideal opportunity to examine these questions more deeply, to consider the most promising approaches, and to consider how to "**integrate**" profitably without losing the benefits of "**diversity**".

B.   WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE CONFERENCE?

The overall objective is to contribute to the cohesive and effective development of literacy and national languages and the widespread sharing of best practices in non-formal education in Africa.

More specifically, this means:

1. Validating the action programme proposed by the technical workshop of the Inter-country Quality Node on Literacy and National Languages;
2. Capitalizing on successful alternative educational approaches in the field of non-formal education and national languages;

3. Proposing concrete ways of implementing an approved joint three-year programme, with a particular focus on the partnerships to be forged, capacity-building and the mobilization of resources to achieve the objectives.

C.   WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES?

The seminar could examine two types of educational approaches:

 a) **Those that attempt to expand access to formal education through a judicious integration of non-formal education. These approaches should include:**

- **Burkina's community schools,** which seek to enable young people to raise their level, moving from one form of basic education such as non-formal to another such as formal education.

- **The Non-formal Basic Education Centres (CEBNF) of Burkina Faso** that target students age 9 to 15 who are early school leavers or drop-outs. The approach consists of providing an education for a period of four years that is relevant to the realities of their environment so that they can catch up with their peers who have followed a regular 6-year cycle.

- **The Tarbiyya Tatali gateway centres in Niger** from the "Network of Educational Action for Sustainable Development" ("AMSDE"), which aim to

build bridges in non-formal education, targeting children aged 9 to 12 who are early school leavers or not in school.

b) **Those that try to respond directly to the needs of disadvantaged learners in their communities**

- **The Tylay approach of CORADE in Burkina Faso and of AKA-T in Mali**, which seeks to develop the individual's potential by drawing on their experience to build a set of skills that will enhance their autonomy and contribute to the transformation of the environment.

- **The Multi-Stakeholder Literacy Programme in Mali** (PMA-Mali), which supports literacy activities through the development of infrastructure and equipment, and which is also responsible for the allocation of supplies and develops a literate environment through the creation of community libraries.

- **Bi- and trilingual education programmes** in Burkina Faso, Congo-Kinshasa, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal, which aim to facilitate learning, to better adapt the school to the learner's environment, to reduce school attrition, to provide learners with know-how through the introduction of practical activities and to respond to the need expressed by parents and communities.

- **Supporting Literacy and Health in Niger ("SALSANI")** is active in the field of gateway centres attended by children aged 9 to 13 who are early school-leavers or not in school.

- **The World of Children (Monde des enfants)**, which is a Nigerian NGO that has established a non-formal community education programme on behalf of adolescents aged 9 to 14 who are early school leavers or not in school. The purpose of this education is to train adolescents who are capable of socially and economically integrating into their communities.

- **VIE Kande Ni Bayra**, a Nigerian NGO that specializes in the field of basic education, which has developed in Tillabéry, Dosso and Maradi with the goal of strengthening teaching activities and vocational activities that don't require relocating.

D.   QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE DURING THE SEMINAR

For all of these approaches, the participants will have a mandate to consider:

1) **The certification of learning and of the gateways**: How is learning validated? What is the role of State institutions in the validation? What are the options for training and/or work available to those leaving your centre? And what are the major challenges in the immediate future?

2) **Language support**: Is there instruction in the national languages? Are languages other than the local language taught in the centre? How do you approach the problem of official and foreign languages in your centre (French, Arabic, English, etc.)? What approaches are used to integrate official languages into the curriculum? What challenges are encountered with bi-and

trilingual approaches (French / Arabic, French / Arabic / African languages)? What are the major challenges in the immediate future regarding language?

3) **Financing methods:** How are initiatives funded? By whom? How sustainable are they? And what are the major challenges in the immediate future?

4) **Programme sustainability:** What methods of monitoring, evaluation and feedback are used in the programme? Describe the proposed expansion plan. What are the challenges posed by the dissemination of promising initiatives locally, nationally and internationally? How can synergies be developed with other programmes operating in your field? What are the major challenges in the immediate future for sustaining the programme?

All the proceedings will feed into the discussion during the work of technical and policy validation.

The details of the seminar and the conference itself are specified in Document II containing the terms of reference.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of reference

A.   CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

Illiteracy is a phenomenon that is simultaneously national and cross-border: it is persistent and widespread throughout the world. Its harmful effects, which are felt most strongly in the African space, are a frightening source of vulnerability for people.

In this context, the numerous consultations and initiatives undertaken by UNESCO, the African Union, the ADEA and other institutions during the decade, particularly in the context of Education For All, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Decade for Literacy (UNLD 2003-2012), the First and Second decades of Education for Africa and the LIFE initiative, have reinforced the understanding of the African countries of the role that education in general and literacy in particular play in the continent's economic and social development.

According to the global reports monitoring EFA, the MDGs and other summaries of the world situation, education and training for all represents a persistent challenge for most countries, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa. In this sub-region, about 150 million adults, two-thirds of them women, have not yet mastered the core skills needed for their own autonomy and to play an effective role in development.

This situation has been aggravated by economic poverty, the undermining of the foundations of social cohesion, policies that do not sufficiently include educational and cultural components, the financial and economic crisis, which is being accompanied by a reduction in foreign aid, the effects of climate change, and pandemics.

For all these reasons, access to education should be seen not simply as a right, but rather as a meta-instrument through which the individual and the community acquire other basic rights, as well as skills and knowledge to gain access to a decent economic activity, so that they can contribute to a culture of peace, to democracy and to gender equality, throughout their lives.

To support this new vision of education, countries are increasingly being questioned about the fundamental issue of the quality of literacy provision.

In the field of non-formal education specifically, findings reveal a diversity of successful practices across our respective countries. There are a variety of innovative and alternative educational approaches that can be adapted to the different conditions of people who are illiterate and children who have never attended school or left early. These can be shared in order to facilitate the overall achievement of the qualitative and quantitative objectives of literacy and training.

The African regional conference in Bamako held in September 2007 and the recent resolution of UNESCO's General Conference recommended that the States cooperate more closely and continue to establish partnerships, in particular in the field of literacy and training.

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) supports this strategy for mutually supportive development and is encouraging the countries to create quality nodes designed to help the African states to confront their common challenges and to make use of a process of inter-learning and pooling experience in

order to eliminate illiteracy and develop common core skills for basic education and training.

The international technical workshop on the challenges facing the Inter-Country Quality Node on Literacy held in Ouagadougou from 20 to 22 December 2010 was part of this process. Thirteen African countries took part in the workshop, which focused on discussion on the strategies needed to identify the common challenges and priorities for our countries with respect to literacy. The countries represented included Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Chad, Togo, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Gambia. Similarly, the Ouagadougou conference held from 20 to 22 January 2010 took as its point of departure the development of a policy manual on the integration of African languages into education, which was very useful for the promotion of African languages and for taking cultural diversity into account. This conference involved a number of the continent's countries. Consequently, the issue of national languages has now been integrated into the Inter-Country Quality Node, thus giving birth to the new Inter-Country Quality Node on Literacy and National Languages.

Various regional and international organizations, civil society and the private sector were also represented at the workshop and the conference.

The process of ongoing exchange around the priority issues identified in the course of the workshop laid the foundation for developing a joint three-year development programme to be validated; hence the need to organize a regional ministerial conference to deal with the conclusions of the technical workshop and the conference and to adopt mechanisms for their implementation.

This would also provide an opportunity to continue the discussion about alternative approaches, certain of which were presented at the 2012 Ouagadougou Triennale. This conference could also contribute to disseminating and better taking on board the numerous best practices that exist in the field, thereby facilitating the difficult transition from rhetoric to action.

The results of the implementation of this programme will serve as a basis for the proposals and recommendations to be formulated for the post-2015 period.

B.   OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

2.1 General objective

To help foster the cohesive and efficient development of literacy and the national languages and the more widespread sharing of best practices in non-formal education in Africa.

2-2 Specific objectives
1) To validate the action programme proposed by the technical workshop for the Inter-Country Quality Node on Literacy and National Languages;

2) To strengthen South-South cooperation by capitalizing on successful alternative educational approaches in the field of non-formal education and the use of national languages;

3) To propose concrete methods for implementing an approved joint three-year programme, with a particular emphasis on the partnerships to be forged,

capacity building and the mobilization of the resources needed to achieve these objectives.

C.   RESULTS EXPECTED

1. An action programme that takes account of the common concerns of the participating countries will have been examined and approved;

2. A summary document of successful alternative educational approaches will be available and have been submitted for the attention of the ministers;

3. The methods for implementing an initial three-year programme will have been defined and realistic proposals formulated with respect to the functioning of the Node, partnerships, capacity-building and the mobilization of financial and human resources.

D.   METHODOLOGY

The work will take place during a seminar; the first two days will be essentially technical, with a conference on the last day.

1. The **seminar** is planned for the experts and administrators of literacy and national languages programmes from the ministries concerned, from civil society and from the development partners.

Several alternative approaches will be presented, each for about 15 minutes. At the end of the presentations, a 45-minute period will be set aside for discussion. After that, the participants will gather in groups to draw lessons with respect to the themes identified. The lessons will then all be summarized so that they can be presented to the ministers.

The document on the challenges facing the Node will also be presented for discussion and technical validation.

In light of these two documents, a document on the implementation of an initial joint three-year plan will be drawn up.

2. The conference, which is planned for the ministers or their representatives, will focus on the presentation, discussion and adoption of the three proposed documents:

i.   The Node's programme of action, drawn up by the heads of literacy and national languages during the meeting from 20 to 22 December in Ouagadougou and then validated technically by the experts during the technical workshop from 18 to 20 March 2013.

ii.   The document on promising alternative approaches.

iii. The document on the methods of implementing the initial joint three-year programme, which includes proposals on the ways the Node should function, the partnerships to build up around the Node, capacity-building and the mobilization of the required financial and human resources.

The documents containing the action programme adopted by the ministers for the Node will be distributed to the financial partners and serve as a basis for negotiations.

E.   PARTICIPATION

There will be about 80 participants, broken down as follows:

1. The 14 countries already contacted, including Burkina Faso. Each country will send 3 categories of participants, *i.e.* the Minister or their representative (14, for 2 days each); a national level official (14, for 4 days each); specialists in non-formal education and literacy, in particular from civil society (a total of 7 experts for the 14 countries, for 4 days each).
2. Civil society (about 7 representatives, including the APENF).
3. The development partners (about 10), including the UIL and BREDA.
4. The African Union (1 representative).
5. The SEP/CREAA and UCP/CREAA (2 representatives).
6. The ADEA (7 representatives, including 1 from the Secretariat, 2 from the WG EMPS/Ouagadougou and 4 from the WG NFE/Ouagadougou).
7. National level from Burkina Faso other than those already mentioned in point 1 (10 representatives).
8. Unplanned last-minute (to be decided, with the total number of participants not to exceed 80).

F.   ORGANIZATION: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL

An Organizational Committee will be set up with the mission of establishing effective organizational arrangements to ensure the harmonious coordination of the various elements required for the workshop's success.

G.   PLACE

Ouagadougou – Burkina Faso

H.   PERIOD

From 2 to 4 May, 2013, subject to the confirmation of the main parties.

I.   SCHEDULE

Day 1	o Morning: official opening of the seminar o Discussion and technical validation of the recommendations on the challenges facing the ICQN o Afternoon: seminar on promising alternative approaches to non-formal education and literacy
Day 2	o Morning: seminar on promising alternative approaches to non-formal education and literacy o Afternoon: joint discussion and summary of the three dossiers to be submitted to the Ministers o Evening: dinner
Day 3	o Morning: presentation of the seminar summaries; presentation and adoption of the documents on challenges and on the methods of implementation o Afternoon: policy validation of the documents by the ministers of the ICQN member countries or their representatives o Closing ceremony