# Digest - Day 1: Monday, 21 February 2022

Mr Paul COUSTERE, Deputy Director of the UNESCO IIEP in Paris, welcomed the participants and expressed his satisfaction at the holding of this second regional workshop. He hoped that it would serve to gather elements for reflection in order to improve the management of quality in the Member States.

First presentation: The main strengths and weaknesses of the management of the quality of education in the countries that carried out the diagnosis - Illustrations by some country cases

Link to YouTube video: https://youtu.be/fwBWXRqtU9w
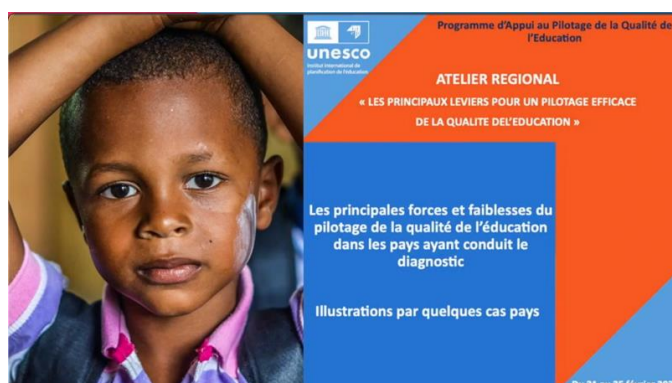
Link to the narrative PDF

Two lessons can be drawn from these diagnoses:

- There is a tendency to change educational policy when things go wrong, without paying sufficient attention to the issues of monitoring implementation, assessing the effects of action and regulation.

- Continuing to carry out reforms without improving the capacity of education systems to perform these two steering functions will not bring more results.

Presentation 2: Priority issues that are common to the countries and the approach to address them

Link to YouTube video: https://youtu.be/QfFMhl0DzQg

Link to the narrative PDF

The priority themes identified by the diagnoses are five in number:

- Repositioning assessments to serve learning and academic success
- Strengthen pedagogical support systems through closer strategic practices
- Promote dialogue and consultation between the different levels of the education system
- Supporting the decentralisation process and community mobilisation
- Promoting innovations in education

The approach adopted to act on these problems is based on three benchmarks:

- Design, with the stakeholders, a set of proposals (solutions) in response to these issues;

- Experiment with these proposed actions in a small circle to identify the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of these activities (theory vs. practice);

- Formulate and propose recommendations for submission to the Ministry's work plan.

Presentation 3: How were the members of the national research teams that carried out the diagnosis trained and how did they work?

Links to YouTube video #1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEUba_LOuZE

Link to the narrative PDF N°1

Links to YouTube video: 2https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg26ilgyn8w

Link to the narrative PDF N°2

The training of the ENRs involved support from a distance supervision team, the challenge of which was to devise support that could transform the professional postures of the ENR members.

This complex change of posture, because it is based on psychological and psycho-social aspects, implied developing a training environment that involved both the reinforcement of technical skills (conducting an explanatory interview, leading a participatory workshop, constructing a semi-structured questionnaire, etc.) and the promotion of an approach based on analysis and confrontation between peers

Questions/answers following the presentations on day 1

This document presents the main questions raised by the debates at the end of the presentations, as well as the answers provided. These questions have been deliberately grouped by theme for easier reading.

Articulation between goal setting and capitalisation within education systems

- *How can we have a good capacity of systems to define objectives and, at the same time, a weak capacity to capitalise on previous experiences?*

  o The capacity to define objectives is understood as the capacity to produce strategies: actors are able to set targets and define objectives, they do not navigate by sight.

  o However, this effort is not sufficiently effective for a number of reasons: the difficulty of building on lessons learned, the tendency to compile data without interpreting it, and the succession of partner interventions.

  o The answer to this question will be explored in depth throughout the webinar, as it is one of the main challenges of quality management.

The main levers to be mobilised to develop continuity and structurally improve the systems

- *The conclusion raises the question of our presence at the workshop if nothing has probably changed. What are the main levers to mobilise?*

  o The main lever identified consists in developing the posture of the reflective practitioner, which implies developing the capacity of agents to diagnose themselves the obstacles they face (interpreting the information at their disposal) and to develop themselves approaches to respond to them.

  o Tomorrow's presentation will focus on this issue in relation to school assessment data.

The contribution of communities and civil society to quality management

- *What would be the place of communities in contributing to quality improvement? What would be the place of civil society in this quality steering process?*

  - The definition of quality education adopted by the programme integrates the place of communities in the definition of the four steering functions. The role of these actors is therefore analysed in the same way as that of the agents of the education system.

  - They have a major role to play in organising and steering all elements related to strengthening the school environment, from monitoring pupils to improving school provision (participation in school construction, recruitment and payment of community teachers, etc.).

  - Support for community actors must necessarily take into account the dynamics of decentralisation and deconcentration currently underway, the articulation of which conditions the efficiency of their interventions by clarifying their positioning.

  - This is one of the priority issues identified by the programme in various countries and will need to be the subject of substantial work.

What is a space for dialogue?

- *Is there no formal space for dialogue on evaluation data? Could you give examples of spaces to help everyone understand better?*

  - There are spaces for sharing evaluation data, but the way they are managed is most often characterised by practices with very limited logics: ranking of actors, stigmatisation of failing actors.

  - A specific presentation of the dialogue spaces will be made on this theme on days 2 and 4.

Are there any model countries for quality management?

- *There must be some African countries that are successful in quality management. How do they do it? What is the role of actors at the local level? How do they interact with the central level? How have they led the evolution of the process?*

  - Although there is no model country in terms of quality management according to our diagnoses, there are nevertheless converging problems that concern all

countries and on which it is therefore necessary to learn to act together, whether it be the Ministries or the partners...

o This question refers to the creation of a community of practice which is one of the objectives of this workshop, namely to think in a network without trying to replicate practices without having sufficiently analysed them.

o Throughout this workshop, examples of current change management experiments will be presented to you so that we can analyse them together.

What role should tools play in quality management?

o Tools have their place in quality management provided that they serve the actors and not the other way around.

o The diagnoses underline that the tools are "sacred" in the agents' representations, even though they alone cannot support the development of practices.

o On the contrary, there is a need to promote efficient and intelligent support approaches where the tools are adapted in a support strategy that fits the needs of the learners in the training systems.

How can the status of innovations be enhanced?

- *On the innovations developed by teachers, they can be accused of deviance, and therefore appropriate training is needed to sensitise the actors at the deconcentrated levels, to share them. What should be done for the lowest structure to get out of this omnipotence of the decision-makers...?*

    o From compliance with standards to channelled autonomy, what is at stake?

    o One participant mentioned the idea of the "gendarme" advisor versus the advisor who seeks to understand with the actors on the ground. This allows us to extend the following question: how can we distinguish between what comes under the norms and what comes under the autonomy of the actors? What then is 'channelled autonomy'?

    o In order to answer this question, the problem must be seen as a cursor to be positioned between compliance with standards on the one hand and the autonomy of the actors on the other: as many situations, as many different choices to be made.

What is the scientific and methodological motivation for the selection of inspectors as members of national research teams?

- *Why not academic observers of the system to see fresh, external eyes?*

  o The choice of inspectors was a strategic one. It was precisely a question of targeting agents internal to the systems, i.e. agents likely to contribute to the transformation of the system. However, academics are also directly involved in the coordination of these teams.

How has the evolution of professional postures been supported?

  o *Deconstructing ingrained habits is a whole process. That is to say, to bring out prejudices and beliefs - to confront representations with the aim of deconstructing habits. What approach did you use to deconstruct the habits of pupils or teachers?*

    o The presentation concerned the training of the National Research Teams (NRTs), which took place over several months, a long period of time that enabled them to develop their professional posture.

    o The programme also sought to support the development of shared diagnoses, thereby influencing the social representations of teachers and other stakeholders.

How can assessments be repositioned to serve learning?

    o The issue of evaluation is at the heart of the interventions and presentations planned for Day 2. We therefore invite you to follow tomorrow's activities to learn more about this topic.

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