



Digest - Day: 4 Thursday 24 February 2022

Presentation 1: What are the issues relating to dialogue and consultation between the central and deconcentrated levels?



Link to YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/cXU5Bv7iis0>

[Link to the narrative PDF](#)

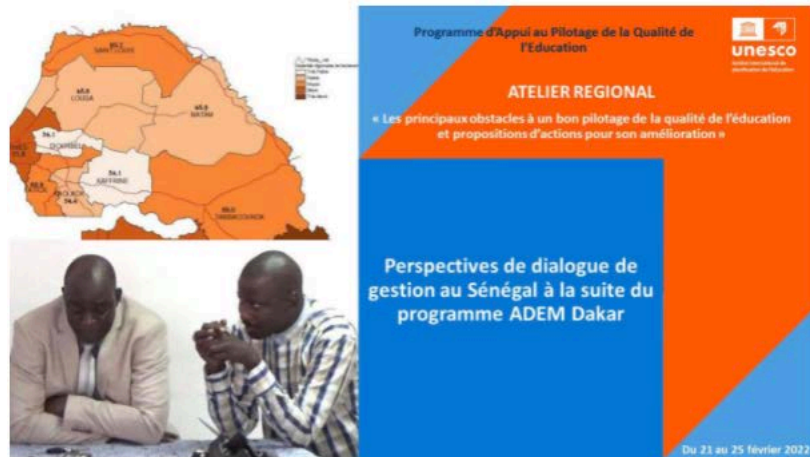
Management dialogue marks the transition from directive management to **participatory management**, leading to the signing of a **performance improvement contract** (aimed at transforming the resources mobilised into results). It is a **process of regulation of the system**, of **exchanges and decisions between two levels of the hierarchy**.

The presentation focuses on showing that, while there are many spaces for exchange between actors within education systems, these are marked by :

- a **highly injunctive and compartmentalised operation**.
- a **"stop and go" phenomenon** in public policies: the lack of continuity in reforms, or the redundancy in the production of tools or training.
- **Professional practices and work habits** that can be counterproductive (tendency to compile data, falsify results, mechanistic application of management tools, etc.)
- A tendency to create and follow **norms**, rather than to allow or capture **room for manoeuvre**

Finally, the presentation emphasises that the generalisation of contractualisation leads to the need for a management dialogue that makes all actors involved in achieving results accountable.

Presentation: 2 Perspectives on management dialogue in Senegal following the ADEM Dakar programme



Link to YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/avTnPv5gIgc>

[Link to the narrative PDF](#)

In order to illustrate the theme of the day, this presentation shares an experience of setting up a **management dialogue in Senegal**, within the Académie de Rufisque. This experiment, conducted within the framework of the project to support the development of secondary education, was part of the transition from a sectoral management approach based on compliance to one based on performance and accountability.

The Académie de Rufisque has therefore experimented with a new model of dialogue to develop its academic project, via a **management dialogue based on a participatory and inclusive diagnosis and concerted management of education and training issues**.



The aim of this approach is to encourage a **strengthening of the powers of officials at the deconcentrated level** as well as a greater **accountability of local authorities for a real management of proximity**.

Following this experiment, Senegal intends to extend and generalise management dialogue as a governance strategy, particularly in relation to the WAEMU reforms.

## APPENDIX: Questions/answers following the presentations on day 4

This document summarises the main comments and questions raised during the debates following the presentations, as well as the answers provided.

The analysis of the participants' contributions reveals three main lines of thought:

1. A proliferation of dialogue mechanisms
2. Management dialogue is a "political process"
3. Management dialogue is different from an "institutional communication process".

### 1. A proliferation of dialogue mechanisms

#### The existence of many spaces for dialogue whose effectiveness is questioned...

*"It seems to me that statutory frameworks for exchange do exist in the administrations, whether in the horizontal or vertical direction. What is regrettable is the low functionality of the frameworks.*

*"In Niger, every year a meeting is held between the central level and the officials of the deconcentrated level, commonly called a management meeting, which always ends with recommendations. But the shortcoming is that no follow-up mechanism for the implementation of these recommendations is put in place. Also, at the next meeting there is no assessment of what has been done by the actors of the previous recommendations.*

#### ...as they are generally limited to sharing information or instructions

*"In Niger, spaces exist in a formal way.*

- *At the central level, there is the management meeting which brings together the heads of the central, regional and departmental services.*
- *At the deconcentrated level, there is the meeting of inspectors, the meeting of pedagogical advisors, the meeting of school headmasters and the meetings of the Communal Federations of Decentralised Management Committees of schools.*
- *At school level, there is the teachers' council and meetings with participatory structures. But it is clear that if the central level and the FCC/CGDES are functioning, the other spaces are rarely functional.*

*Often these spaces are limited to sharing information and instructions on education policy. The conclusions of this workshop could contribute to the revaluation of these spaces.*

## 2. Management dialogue is a "political process

### Postures that do not favour the emergence of a management dialogue between the central and deconcentrated levels...

*"In order to improve professional practices and work habits, a pattern of dialogue and consultation must be established at both vertical and horizontal levels. At the top level, people think that they have nothing to learn from their constituents and that they should only give them orders. At the level of the citizens, we think that we should receive everything from above. So no personal endeavour. No reflection in view of a solution specific to one's environment. So we need to open up a window of opportunity to listen to everyone in their place.*

*"Dialogue presupposes an arrangement where 2 poles or 2 entities have the capacity to interact in a fluid way. However, the habits of our systems show that the central level is generally part of a command and control/sanction paradigm vis-à-vis the deconcentrated level. On this basis, the deconcentrated level is in a position of execution leading to formality practices. There is therefore not enough exchange centred on reality, but on formalities.*

*"The obstacle to dialogue and consultation between the central and decentralised structures remains the complex nature of each level. Those at the top think that they are in charge and that the opinions of subordinates do not count. Those at the bottom also find it difficult to make proposals to their superiors so as not to get into trouble if they are not well received. So we need to find a system to remove this complex crisis between the top and the bottom. In this respect, we welcome the advent of this programme.*

*"We can hypothesise that in our systems, collective and individual mentalities are formatted in such a way that the actor at the central level takes on the role of prescriber/controller and the actor at the decentralised level submits to the role of executor, who will be appreciated according to his or her faithfulness to the prescription. This is strongly rooted in the mentality.*

These exchanges revealed a **challenge relating to the "margins of autonomy"** available to actors at the deconcentrated levels. This is an eminently political decision because the actors at the central level must learn to detach themselves from their role as prescribers in order to play the role of facilitator in order to :

- Facilitate the definition of a common vision of what is expected
- To reach a consensus on the roles and responsibilities of the actors to achieve the objectives
- To guarantee this dynamic over time

## 3. The management dialogue space is different from other "dialogue" spaces

*"More often than not, communication between the central and deconcentrated levels and down to the school level is not fluid. This lack of fluidity means that information is not passed on in time, let alone to the actors on the ground.*

*"The conditions for smooth communication from the central level to the classroom are not met: there is no communication plan, no communication officers and no communication budget.*

The speakers pointed out that **the word "dialogue" is confusing**. This calls for a point of vigilance which consists in specifying that **management dialogue is not an experience sharing or an institutional communication process**.

The management dialogue differs from these other forms of "dialogue" in its **configuration**, which is specified below:

- ✓ The purpose of the management dialogue is to prioritise interventions. It is a matter of defining a strategy to identify the territories most in difficulty.
- ✓ Management dialogue implies two distinct administrative levels: There can be no management dialogue within a single administrative level, it implies that a territorial unit has a dialogue with its superior hierarchical level.
- ✓ The dialogue concerns a specific territorial unit: (e.g. between a school inspectorate - two administrative levels and a territorial unit)
- ✓ Management dialogue requires upstream preparation: The topics to be covered by the management dialogue must be defined in advance in order to be able to bring together the key people who will participate in the dialogue and who will have an added value in the exchanges.
- ✓ The management dialogue necessarily leads to a "contractualisation".