



Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Éducation Educational Research Network for West And Central Africa

ERNWACA News No. 5 February 2004

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This is the first issue of ERNWACA News in 2004, so let us wish all our regular and new readers Happy New Year. ERNWACA News, a quarterly electronic newsletter of the **Education Research Network for West and Central Africa**, informs members in 13 countries and partners about ERNWACA activities and highlights education research in the region. Several of our national offices print and distribute copies to policymakers and other people interested and involved in education who do not access email. This issue focuses on **MALI**, which is implementing its 10-year education reform program (PRODEC, 1998-2008). PRODEC, a priority for the government, seeks universal education and includes 11 main strategies spanning early childhood development to higher education and including continuing education for teachers, national language instruction, partnerships, and communication campaigns to promote public awareness of the decentralization process. For more information on PRODEC: [Les Grandes Orientations de la Politique Educative](#) (January 2000, available in French, PDF Format, 3.4 Mo).

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1. National Activities – Mali

• **General Assembly** – At their General Assembly of 10 October 2003 in Bamako, ERNWACA-Mali members elected Prof. Urbain Dembele as the new National Coordinator. A sociologist, filmmaker, and novelist with a PhD in education from the University of Cardiff in the United Kingdom, Prof. Dembele taught education at the *Institut Supérieur de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée* (ISFRA) in Mali for 11 years. The Assembly thanked former coordinator Brehima Tounkara (currently at UEMOA) and Cheick Oumar Fomba who served as interim coordinator for one year. At a second meeting on 28 October 2003, the new coordinating committee and scientific committee were created. Coordinating Committee members: Urbain DEMBELE; alternate National Coordinator: Bonaventure MAIGA (advisor to Minister of Education); Scientific Secretary: Cheick Oumar FOMBA (National Education Center (CNE)); Treasurer: Ms. Fatimata Maiga DIALLO (CNE); Assistant Treasurer: Oumar TRAORE (Director of Yena Issa private primary school); Communication Officer: Ms. Djeneba Guindo Traore (University of Bamako); Accounts controller: Tiegue DEMBELE (University student). Scientific Committee members: Urbain DEMBELE, Cheick Oumar FOMBA; Ogobara DOUMBO (Faculty of Medicine); Denis DOUGNON (ISFRA); Ms. Comba Ba KEITA (Ministry of Environment); Ms. Koura DIALLO (UNICEF); Mamadou Iam DIALLO (Ministry of Information/Communication); N'golo COULIBALY

(National Institute of languages). Membership fees and annual dues were each set at 5 000 F CFA. A dozen members have already paid their 2004 dues; others are invited to pay theirs by March.

• **Research** – ERNWACA-Mali has conducted almost 20 studies over the past 5 years, on community participation in education, the role of NGOs in the education sector, teacher training, girls' education, national language instruction and Koranic schools. Click to consult the list of [research reports](#), including a [review of research on the quality of basic education in Mali, 1992-2002](#). ERNWACA-Mali is participating in the transnational study on ICTs and education (see Section 2 below). Seven researchers were retained after a competitive selection process: Boubacar Mondy GUINDO (National Science and Technology Research Center) and Djeneba Guindo TRAORE (University of Bamako) as lead researchers, along with Kadiatou Maiga BABY (FAWE), Daouda Dougoumale CISSE (ENSUP teaching training school), Moussa Fama DIARRA (PAGEEM for environmental studies), Mohamed MAIGA (University Faculty for Science and Technology) and Yaba Toure TAMBOURA (National Education Center and women's association). They are pre-selecting case study schools that will be visited before the end of the academic year.

• **ERNWACA-Mali contacts** – S/c d'ISFRA annexe, sis à Badalabougou, Bamako, Mali, tel/fax: (223) 223 65 78, cellphone: 638 90 80, mali@rocare.org, urbain@ml.refer.org.

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2. Regional Activities

• **ICT and education research** – In August 2003 the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) awarded a 2-year research grant to ERNWACA to study “ICT integration in West and Central African Education: case studies of pioneer schools.” Five national research teams – in Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali and Senegal – have been created and a methods research workshop held in Bamako, Mali from 7-9 January 2003 under the auspices of the national ministry of education and the ministry of information in collaboration with the University of Montreal (Canada). Click for [articles from l’Essor](#) (a daily newspaper in Mali) on the workshop. With input from a ministry of education focal person and oversight from the national scientific committee for the project, each team is currently selecting 8 pioneer schools for the study, using criteria defined at the workshop, and will visit all schools before the end of the 2003-2004 academic year. Findings will be available in 2005 and will assist policymakers invest in ICT to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

• **Regional Coordinator discusses education research needs** with ADEA, ADB, IDRC. NOTE: Hyperlinks send you to PowerPoint presentations.

(i) **Formative Research to inform education policy implementation in Africa**, prepared for Working Group on Education Sector Analysis seminar at [2003 Biennale](#) of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), 3-6 December, Grand Baie, Mauritius.

(ii) **ERNWACA 2002-2005 Program**, prepared for education advisors of the African Development Bank (ADB), Tunis, Tunisia, 19 December 2003. ERNWACA-Cote d’Ivoire National Coordinator, Francois-Joseph AZOH, also participated. Click for [presentation](#).

(iii) **How can IDRC better incorporate education research in its programs?**, for sub-Saharan Africa Regional Matrix Meeting of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), 20-22 January 2004. Click for [presentation](#).

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3. Research and reports

• **Concept and Evolution of Literacy in Mali** (L’alphabétisation au Mali : concept et évolution), *N’golo Coulibaly, ERNWACA-Mali, 2003, 26p. with references* (paper reviewed by Laouali Malam Moussa of ERNWACA-Niger and Clemence Sanou

Ariste of ERNWACA-Burkina Faso and used to open the 8th ordinary session of **Mali’s Economic, Social and Cultural advisory board** on “Literacy as the base for consolidating democracy and decentralization” held in Bamako from 2-16 June 2003)

The author describes different projects and strategies for literacy in Mali since independence and highlights both failures and successes before recommending ways forward. Mali was one of a dozen countries to participate in a global experimental program using national languages for literacy, which led to the creation of a publishing house for the national language of Bambara followed by ones for other national languages in Mali. After the experimental program, Malian authorities decided to integrate literacy programs into development projects – for agriculture, animal husbandry, and textiles. Results were remarkable when substantial resources were available, for example in the region of the Malian company for the development of textiles (CMDT). In 1973, the World Bank and UNESCO initiated a literacy project using action-research and encouraging reduced workloads for women. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) strategy from 1976-78 emphasized not only production but more importantly, participation in village matters. During mass literacy campaigns, the government opened 770 literacy centers from 1986-88, mainly in disadvantaged areas, and provided trainers with bicycles to travel from one center to another. The author insists that massive post-literacy training is essential to empower neo-literates to participate fully in the democratic and decentralized governance of the country. Between 1992 and 2002, the literacy rate went from 21% to 35%. The government seeks to increase the rate to 46% by 2005 by hiring qualified NGOs to implement programs. Currently, 66% of literate persons are men and 34% women. The author advocates for a culture of reading in his country of 10 million people, and, within the context of PRODEC (see introduction) and the UN Literacy Decade (2003-2012), calls for accelerated and better coordinated action, increased and sustained resources, and a policy of bilingual functionalism – national and official language. Study available in French: http://www.rocare.org/alpha8_cesmali.pdf

• **Gender Analysis of primary school textbooks in Mali** (Analyse genre de manuels scolaires au premier cycle de l’enseignement fondamental au Mali), *Hamidou Naparé, Mamadou Lamine Haidara, Kourakoro Bakayoko, ERNWACA-Mali, 2003, 52p.* (study financed by 2002 ERNWACA/IDRC small research grant, for its

relation with the quality of teaching and learning, an ERNWACA research priority)



How can we achieve harmonious development, reform the educational system, and meet the challenges of regional integration and globalization without the active participation of women? Why do only 50% of girls in Mali go to school when education for

all is a national priority? Do school textbooks depict both women and men as actors in the development process in Mali? Such interrogations led these young ERNWACA researchers to study the image of women and of men communicated in three recently published textbooks used in primary schools – 3rd grade reading, 5th grade reading, and 6th grade math. The researchers contest that books are still at the center of learning and teaching, the development of individual and collective identities, and the acquisition of work methods and attitudes toward life. Their content influences the academic path of boys and girls. The methodology for the study is a content analysis involving the interpretation of images, texts, and ... the unsaid. Results show that:

- Most actors are male: among 140 personages in the math book, 14% are female;
- When present, women play traditional roles of mother, homemaker and educator;
- No image presents a woman scientist, political leader or trader, yet they exist in contemporary Mali;
- The image of women is not in sync with modern Malian society.

The study suggests the following actions:

- Train textbook authors to represent women as dynamic actors in the development process;
- Include equal numbers of male and female personages in textbooks;
- Train teachers to adapt texts that present negative stereotypes of women;
- Research impact of discriminatory representations and organize seminars to share and discuss findings;
- Survey parents, teachers, and students to determine their opinions of the textbooks;
- Train parents on gender and education issues;
- Follow the above recommendations when rewriting curricula within PRODEC, the education reform.

http://www.rocare.org/genre_manuelscolaires.pdf

• **Impact of training on classroom practices of contractual teachers** (Evaluation de l'impact des

formations des contractuels de l'éducation sur leurs pratiques de classes), *Cheick Oumar Fomba, Moussa Fama Diarra, ERNWACA-Mali for UNICEF, 2003, 52p.*

Do we have to accept temporary sacrifices in the quality of teaching and learning to increase access?

The student/teacher ratio in primary schools in Mali, particularly in urban areas, averages 72 students per teacher. To respond to the high demand for education and the lack of teachers, the government of Mali, like that of many countries in the region, began hiring non-licensed individuals on a contractual basis and training them. In 1997-98, 25% to 50% of all secondary school teachers were "contractuals." Despite their numbers, data on them is lacking. This study sought to understand the performance of contractuals in the classroom and recommends how to improve their teaching. It was conducted in December 2002 in the regions of Kayes and Mopti, where UNICEF has education programs, using qualitative research methods. A total of 133 licensed and non-licensed teachers of grades 1 through 6 were observed in class and 200 teachers, school directors, regional level administrators and pedagogical advisors as well as community members were interviewed. Education levels of the contractual teachers varied greatly; 64% had obtained a Certificate of professional aptitude (CAP = 9th grade + 2 years) and a few had attended teacher training institutes. Contractuals in the sample group were 32 years old on average, with an average of 4 years of teaching experience. Most had received initial training but 2/3 said it did not sufficiently prepare them for the classroom and needed to be longer (at least 6 months) and more practical. Contractuals used active teaching methods less than licensed teachers and contractuals in classrooms using convergent pedagogy (national + official language) were not trained in the approach. While some school directors criticize the use of contractuals as merely a "cheap" solution that lowers the quality of education, most admitted that many schools would close without them. The directors explained that some contractuals lack basic notions in psycho-pedagogy and general culture but are very motivated to learn. Many school directors developed "model lessons" with their teachers and the researchers recommended that this practice become weekly. Some community members perceived contractuals as persons lacking the basics to teach and driven by material gain, but most appreciated their contribution and believed their performance levels were acceptable. The authors recommend raising the entry level for contractuals to 9th grade + 2 years (CAP diploma) while favoring graduates of teacher training

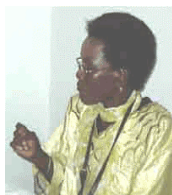
institutes or persons with equivalent training. Providing teachers with more documentation including didactic material so they may continue to train themselves should enhance the impact of initial training. Continuing education close to the classroom is essential and peer learning among teachers in the school and with the school director already takes place and should be encouraged more vigorously. Study available in French:

http://www.rocare.org/contrctuels_unicefmali.pdf

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4. ERNWACA Member Profile

Dr. Koura Diallo, advocate for girls' education



Ms. Koura Diallo obtained a PhD in psychopedagogy from the University of Laval (Quebec) in Canada in 2001, an MA in education from the Unieristy of Connecticut in the USA in 1996, and an MA in educational psychology from *Ecole Normale Superieure* in Mali in 1986. After researching for her MA « Why do fewer girls than boys go to and remain in school in Segou (Mali)? », she wrote her thesis on « the influence of family, social, and individual factors on retention of girls in primary schools in rural Mali. ». Having taught in rural Mali for several years, Ms. Diallo was inspired to research these issues after seeing how 3 out of 5 city girls go to school while only 1 in 5 in rural areas attend and witnessing how many girls dropped out of school before completing 6th grade. Ms. Diallo is a member of the national Committee to Mobilize Resources for the education of girls (CMR-SCOFI) in Mali and of the American Educational Research Association. Member of ERNWACA since she returned to Mali in 2001, she attended ERNWACA's 2002 Dakar Strategy Session and oversaw the review of literature on the quality of education in Mali from 1992-2002 (see link from Section 1 above). She is a member of the scientific committee of ERNWACA-Mali. Ms. Diallo has worked for the school statistics division and the research and evaluation division of the Ministry of Education, where she was responsible for continuing education programs for teachers, pedagogical innovations, test development, organization and supervision of exams, and

program and learning assessment. She has also consulted for Canadian CIDA and USAID. Currently Koura Diallo is education advisor for the girl-friendly school project of UNICEF and is based in Segou, 240 km northwest of Bamako. Fluent in French, English, Bamanankan, Khassonke, and Peuhl and born in 1957, she has three adopted children.

(Extracted from **ERNWACA Researcher Profiles database**, available by clicking "Researchers" from ERNWACA's homepage. Search by research area for education consultants from West and Central Africa.)

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5. General Information

- **African Development Review**, bi-annual publication of the African Development Bank Submit policy-oriented papers for publication. ERNWACA members wishing to publish articles based on data from ERNWACA research projects should submit them in advance to the Regional Coordination for review by ERNWACA's scientific committee. Email r.bangurah@afdb.org for contributor guidelines or subscription information (US \$39 for individuals).

- **Right to Education in the South and the North**, International Colloquium Organized by the Francophone Association for Comparative Education (AFEC), the Family and Schooling in Africa network (FASAF), and other partners, **8-12 March 2004, Ouagadougou**, Burkina Faso. For more details: marc.pilon@ird.bf.

- **HIV/AIDS and African Youth Regional Workshop – CALL FOR PAPERS** Sixth ISSBD International Africa Regional Workshop on "HIV/AIDS and African Youth: Theory, Research and Practice with Youth in Peer Education, Families and Communities" solicits papers for **25-31 July 2004** workshop, in **Yaounde**, Cameroon. Submit 250-word abstract by March 31. For more information, contact Prof. Therese M. Tchombe at tmtchombe@yahoo.co.uk or Dr. Euphresia Yuh at e_yuh2001@yahoo.com or read [Call for Papers](#) TOR (Word document).

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ERNWACA / ROCARE • Tel: (223) 221 16 12, Fax: (223) 221 21 15 • BP E 1854, Bamako, MALI
 Bénin • Burkina Faso • Cameroon • Côte d'Ivoire • Gambia • Ghana • Guinée • Mali • Nigeria • Niger • Sénégal • Sierra Leone • Togo
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