

**Civil Society and the Governance  
of Basic Education  
Partnership or Cooptation?  
Burkina Faso Country Field Study**

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## List of Acronyms

AMEs :	<i>Association des Mères d'Élèves</i>
APEs :	<i>Association des parents d'élèves</i>
BSONG:	<i>Bureau du Suivi des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales</i>
CBOs:	Community-based Organizations
CCEB:	<i>Cadre de concertation des ONG/Associations en éducation de base</i>
CRS :	Catholic Relief Services
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
DAF :	<i>Direction d'Administration et Finance</i>
DEP:	<i>Direction des Écoles Privées</i>
DPEBA:	<i>Direction Provinciale de l'Éducation de Base et de l'Alphabétisation</i>
DREBA:	<i>Direction Régionale de l'Éducation de Base et de l'Alphabétisation</i>
EFA:	Education for All
FAWE :	Federation of African Women Educators
FODECOM :	<i>Fonds de Démarrage des Communes</i>
FONAENF :	<i>Fonds pour l'Alphabétisation et l'Éducation Non formelle</i>
FTI:	Fast Track Initiative
GCE:	Global Campaign for Education
HIPC:	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
INGOs :	International NGOs
LOE :	<i>Loi d'Orientation de l'Éducation</i>
MDGs:	Millenium Development Goals
MEBA :	<i>Ministère de l'Éducation de Base et de l'Alphabétisation</i>
NFE :	Nonformal Education
NNGOs :	National NGOs
ODP-MT :	<i>L'Organisation pour la Démocratie et le Progrès – Mouvement du Travail</i>
OSEO:	<i>Œuvre Suisse d'Entraide</i>
PDDEB:	<i>Le Plan Décennal pour le Développement de l'Education de Base</i>
PRSP :	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTFs:	<i>Partenaires Techniques et Financiers</i> (international donor agencies)
SAGEDECOM:	<i>Service d'Appui à la Gestion et au Développement Communal</i>
SAP:	Structural Adjustment Program
SP/PDDEB:	<i>Secrétariat Permanent du PDDEB</i>
SWAp :	Sector Wide Approach

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**Table 1: Territorial Organization of Burkina Faso (2006)**

Regions	Provinces	Urban communes	Rural communes
Boucle du Mouhoun	6	6	41
Cascades	2	3	14
Centre	1	1	0
Centre-Est	3	6	24
Centre-Nord	3	3	26
Centre-Ouest	4	4	35
Centre-Sud	3	3	17
Est	5	5	22
Hauts-Bassins	3	3	18
Nord	4	4	23
Plateau Central	3	3	17
Sahel	4	4	23
Sud-Ouest	4	4	25
<b>Totals</b>			
13	45	49	285

### **2.3 Economic and Fiscal Status: Incremental Growth, HIPC, and the PRSP**

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world. With limited natural resources and rainfall, the country's per capita GNP is equivalent to about US \$400. Reliance on cotton exports for most of its foreign exchange revenue has rendered Burkina's economy remains vulnerable to external and climatic shocks and heavily dependent on foreign aid (UNDP, 2004). In 2003 an estimated 46.4% of its population lived within the internationally designated status of absolute poverty, and in 2005 Burkina ranked 175th out of 177 countries in the UNPD's Human Development Index (Ibid.). The recent political and economic crisis in Côte d'Ivoire also caused a strain on the Burkinabè economy through disruption of supply lines, higher transportation costs, loss of markets, and lower workers' remittances.

Nevertheless, despite these constraints, over the past ten years Burkina Faso has managed to sustain modest economic growth. Since 1994, gross domestic product (GDP) has increased by more than 5 percent every year, real per capita income has increased 20 percent, and the numbers of people living below the absolute poverty threshold has decreased from 54 percent in 1998 to about 42 percent in 2006 (World Bank, 2007).

Reflecting its steady economic performance, Burkina Faso has been the recipient of debt relief programmes for the last decade. In 1997 the country became eligible for debt relief under the original HIPC Initiative. This eligibility was renewed in 2000 under a revised set of terms established by the World Bank and the IMF (Brazier, 2006). Debt relief status was further enhanced in 2006 when Burkina qualified for the multilateral debt reduction initiative leading to cancellation of outstanding debts to the World Bank, IMF and African Development Bank.

Burkina Faso likewise became one of the first developing countries to prepare a full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) which was ratified in 2000. Key aspects of the PRSP include investment climate reform, increased public-private partnerships for infrastructure and energy development, and administrative and fiscal decentralization. This was significant in establishing a framework for the coordination and improved efficacy of foreign aid. As a result, several donor agencies – or *partenaires techniques et financiers* (PTFS) as they are commonly known – have aligned themselves with Burkina's



poverty reduction strategy by harmonizing aid flows and providing direct budget support for various social sectors, notably health and education.

**Table 2: Selected Economic and Social Indicators (1995 & 2005)**

Selected Indicators	1995	2005
Real GDP growth	6.3	7.1
Per capita income	240	400
External debt (% GNI)	51.95	40.8 (2004)
Debt service ratio (exports/debt service)	23	24.7
Poverty incidence (% of national threshold)	54.6 (1998)	42 (2006)
Gross primary enrolment (%)	39.6	56.8
Gross secondary enrolment (%)	7.2 (1990)	15.5
Population (millions)	9.8	13.2

Source: World Bank 2007a

### 3. Education in Burkina Faso: Overview

Despite Burkina Faso's incrementally stable economic performance, the government's efforts to expand and improve the country's educational system have been seriously hindered by resource limitations and a birth rate of more than 2% per year. Between 1960 and 1980 successive governments regularly allocated a large proportion of the public sector budget for education. In the mid-1980s, however, a combination of low revenues, rising recurrent social costs, and expanding budget deficits in the context of an essentially subsistence rural economy compelled the government to implement a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) of public sector downsizing and reduced state spending, particularly in education. By 1990 the educational budget was 17.5% of total public expenditure, a drop of 8.5% from 1984, and spending per primary school was less than it had been in 1980 (UNESCO, 1993).

The early 1990s saw a spurt in educational sector spending in the wake of the Education for All (EFA) fervor emanating from the Jomtien Conference and subsequent international commitments to basic education. Yet school enrolments in Burkina Faso are still strikingly low in relation to much of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. By 2001 the level of overall literacy in Burkina Faso was estimated at 26% and the gross primary school enrolment rate was only 43% (with female enrolments at approximately 34%) (UNESCO, 2004). Net enrolment ratios in secondary schooling and postsecondary education were likewise estimated at 9% and 1% respectively (Ibid.).

Within the context of the PRSP, however, basic education is regarded as a *sine qua non* of poverty reduction in Burkina Faso. Officially basic education comprises three components: a) pre-schooling for children aged three to six years; b) primary schooling for children aged seven to 12 years; and c) non-formal literacy training for adolescents and adults. Of these three, primary schooling receives the lion's share of public expenditures. The main body of the primary school system consists of state funded and administered "classical schooling" (*écoles classiques*) that offers a conventional French language subject-

based curriculum (e.g., history, geography, mathematics, literature) and has retained more or less the same structure since the 1960s. In recent years, in an effort to enhance the efficiency of the classical public system, two innovations have been adopted: multi-grade teaching in some rural areas where enrolment levels have been relatively low and early school leaver rates have been high, and double-cohort classes in urban areas where demand for schooling has tended to outstrip adequate numbers of teachers and classrooms. In view of the limited reach of public schooling in Burkina Faso, there has also been a steady growth of alternative community schools and private schooling, both tendencies that have been encouraged by the government and the international donor community.

In contrast to primary schooling, the other two sub-sectors of basic education are much smaller in terms of enrolments and resources. Pre-schooling has proceeded very slowly, largely because of resource scarcity and a general lack of conviction about the value of pre-school education (Faure et al., 2003). Likewise, indigenous language literacy training, although steadily expanding since the mid-1970s with support from international donors and the government's *Institut National de l'Alphabétisation* (INA), remains hampered by questions about its long term utility and status. On average an estimated one out







Despite being a relatively small proportion of annual PDDEB expenditures, the *panier commun* has helped to harmonize external aid to basic education and has fostered close cooperation between MEBA and most of the PTFs. Although it is ostensibly managed by MEBA's *Direction d'Administration et Finance* (DAF), a conditionality of budget support is that most of the *panier* funding is directed to the 20 provinces with the lowest primary school enrollment rates. It has likewise helped to generate coordinated implementation and procurement procedures, comparable systems of financial disbursement and auditing, and common procedures for monitoring and evaluation (Faure et al., 2003, p. 32).

**Table 6: Ten-Year Plan for Basic Education (PDDEB):  
Budget Breakdown by sources of finance for 2005 – 06**

Sources of Finance	Amount (1,000s FCFA)	Percentage
Central government	50,661,552	47.59
HIPC funding	10,268,991	9.46
"Common basket" funding	16,508,389	15.20
Islamic Development Bank	3,990,239	3.68
African Development Bank	6,896,908	6.35
UN Agencies/NGOs/Associations/Others	12,139,179	11.18
Special projects attached to MEB	7,087,604	6.53
Total		



**Table 7: Typology of CSOs & Corresponding Educational Activities**

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ACTIVITIES	International NGOs	National
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concentrate more on the development of non-state community-based schooling, and on curriculum innovations designed to enhance links between schools and local communities. Generally, as well, INGOs have been involved in supporting various forms of nonformal education and literacy training for out-of-school youth and adults (Interviews, 2006).

INGOs play a significant, cross-cutting role in supporting as well as complementing official policies pertaining to the expansion and improvement of basic education in Burkina Faso. With guaranteed resources and latitude for autonomous action, these organizations are generally able to undertake numerous activities, in both formal and nonformal educational spheres, that relate to the three main PDDEB goals of enhanced access, quality, and capacity. Besides specific inputs in support of basic education, INGOs are usually engaged in community mobilization activities and are also often associated with innovations related to curriculum and pedagogy. Invariably they conduct their programs of educational support in collaboration with ministry officials and with other national CSOs and with local CBOs.

Of the INGOs contributing to basic education in Burkina Faso, three have established prominence in terms of their scope, innovativeness, and relative autonomy of action. Although each of these organizations has a different mandate, they nonetheless play a significant collaborative role in the provision of education in the country. Each of these is summarized in Boxes 1 – 3.

#### **Box 1: Œuvre Suisse d'Entraide (OSEO)**

As its nomenclature indicates, OSEO is supported primarily with funding from Switzerland. Active in Burkina Faso since 1974, for many years OSEO focused principally on the delivery of vocational training programmes and the production of literacy program materials. Since the early 1990s, however, drawing upon its experience in promoting national language literacy training among adults and out-of-school adolescents, OSEO has turned much of its attention to the development of bilingual community primary schooling. An alternative to the oft-criticized state-run French language 'classical' school system, bilingual schooling connects children's education more closely to the languages and socio-cultural realities of diverse community settings. In conjunction with Catholic Relief Services (see below), and with the support of other international donors, most notably UNICEF, OSEO has introduced a five-year school curriculum (le *Programme ALPHA*) that offers initial teaching in local languages followed by the use of French as the language of instruction in the third to fifth years of school. There are now approximately 100 bilingual schools sponsored by OSEA, all of which are accredited by MEBA. In keeping with the 'alternative' nature of these schools, teachers do not receive pre-service training in teachers college prior to being assigned their teaching positions. Instead they are jointly recruited by OSEO and local communities, and are provided training directly by OSEO (Ilbouda, 2002).

While approximately 70% of its annual budget now goes to support the expansion and sustainability of these alternative bilingual schools, OSEO also allocates technical and financial support for numerous community nonformal education centres (*centres de formation continue*) that are designed to provide an array of locally initiated training activities for purposes of improving community health and productivity. In contrast to Plan International, which has opted to contribute mainly to the expansion and improvement of the existing 'classical' primary school system, OSEO strives to foster more direct connections between NFE and adult literacy programmes on the one side, and children's schooling and the socio-economic and cultural realities of local communities on the other (Interviews, 2006; OSEO/MEBA, 2005; Tiendrébeogo et al., 2005).

**Box 2: Plan International**

**Box 3: Catholic Relief Services**

Since its inauguration in Burkina Faso in 1962, CRS has established itself as the key nongovernmental actor administering a school meals program through a vast network of primary school canteens. In 2004 CRS was distributing food to 1,754 schools with an estimated total population of just under 300,000 pupils. In recent years, however, the school canteen project has been a collaborative venture between CRS and parents' associations, many of which have been required to pay for transportation costs as well as the upkeep of the canteens themselves. In keeping with the PDDEB emphasis on capacity building and local mobilization, CRS has also focused on strengthening the ability of regional education authorities, community groups and parents' associations to assume increased responsibility for the overall management of the school meals program, particularly in provinces that are reasonably self-sufficient in food production. In addition, within the last few years, as a specific contribution to the PDDEB, CRS has sponsored *Opération de farine*, a program that extends compensatory food assistance to households that send their girls to primary school and to 25 community pre-schools (*bisongos*) in six provinces. In conjunction with regional school authorities, a CRS-sponsored food-for-work program has also been established as a contribution to school construction and renovation projects. As noted above as well, CRS has worked collaboratively with OSEO in supporting the development of community-based bilingual schooling, notably in providing school books and subsidies for girls. In terms of advocacy, CRS has also initiated a campaign (*Information-Éducation-Communication*) designed to raise awareness of the value of girls' education and has launched a curricular development program (*Santé Scolaire et Nutrition*) oriented towards increasing children's understanding of health and nutrition (Interviews, 2006; CRS, Burkina Faso, 2004).

**5.3 National NGOs**

National NGOs (NNGOs) comprise organizations and associations that generally have emerged as federations or umbrella institutions that are representative of particular national constituencies. Although generally not as well endowed as INGOs, either financially or in terms of permanent personnel, in many respects they resemble their international counterparts in that they have a national and even international stature and are often the recipients of substantial external support. Often as well they have come to assume a similar status in the education sector and they tend to be led by individuals who have past professional experience within the government – as teachers, researchers, or bureaucrats – and who generally maintain close cordial relations with government officials. All NNGOs offering services in basic education are officially regarded by the state as partner organizations, capable of working autonomously, but usually in collaboration with other governmental and nongovernmental entities, and all are deemed to contribute value added towards the PDDEB goals of enhanced basic education access, quality, and capacity (Interviews, 2006).

While space does not permit us to provide a descriptive outline of all national NGOs working in the field of education in Burkina Faso, two of the most prominent, FAWE and *Tin Tua*, exemplify the types of interventions undertaken by NNGOs (Boxes 4 – 5).

#### Box 4: FAWE

The national Burkinabè branch of the Federation of African Women Educators, FAWE's principal role is to promote the education of girls and women, and to support other organizations and associations that share the same mandate. Specifically FAWE has undertaken three broad activities. First, it has focused a substantial amount of resources and advocacy work towards girls' nonformal education. A key FAWE objective here is to expand training from traditionally designated female activities (e.g., sewing, knitting, and hair-dressing) to new subjects such as women's rights, reproductive health, citizenship training, and non-traditional vocational training for such occupations as electronics, lorry driving, and mechanics. In recognition of the gap between training received and possibilities for employment, FAWE has also initiated a co-op programme designed to enable young women to make the transition from training into the labour market. FAWE-sponsored programs are all-inclusive in terms of female recipient populations – primary school graduates unable to enroll in secondary school, those who have dropped out of primary school (generally more than half of all girls who initially enroll in the first grade), and those who have never attended school at all.

A second objective of FAWE is to ameliorate the conditions of classroom learning among girls. To that end resources are devoted to teacher training, specifically the pre-service and in-service sensitization of teachers with regard to the specific challenges and constraints confronting girls enrolled in primary schools, and to the promotion of specific activities in schools that are designed to enhance girls' self-esteem and overall scholastic performance. In both these objectives FAWE has received strong endorsement from MEBA and numerous PTFs. FAWE's involvement in teacher training is now an integral feature of national pre-service teacher training programmes, and its work in the schools – notably its sponsorship of girls' clubs that emphasize performance in maths and sciences – is conducted in cooperation with school principals and teachers. In addition, FAWE offers a limited number of scholarships to girls who are eligible for secondary school entrance.

A third objective of FAWE is to promote gender parity in alternative community schools such as those supported by OSEA, CRS, and Unicef as sites for girls' learning. As a result, alternative schools have generally achieved a more equitable gender balance than the conventional public school system (FAWE/BF, 2005; Interviews, 2006).

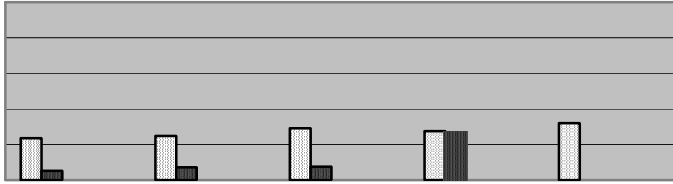
#### Box 5: Tin Tua

Beginning as a small support vehicle for literacy promotion in the province of Gourma, *Tin Tua* has since evolved into the representative organism of a quasi-federation of village committees in eastern Burkina Faso that undertakes a range of rural development projects. Given its genuine grassroots origins and autonomous planning and administrative capacity, *Tin Tua* currently has a four-year, 5 million euro plan that is financed by a group of external bilateral donors and international NGOs. With approximately 30 permanent staff, *Tin Tua* now focuses on three inter-related activities : expansion and reform of basic education, food security, and community level institutional capacity building. Given its expertise and experience in developing sustainable, good quality literacy programmes, *Tin Tua* is now considered as a



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**Table 8: Evolution of Private Schools, by type**



Somewhat ironically, therefore, this acknowledgment of a partnership role has strengthened the legitimacy of SYNATEB critiques which are leveled less at the objectives of the PDDEB and far more at what many regard as top-down decision-making and the corresponding failure to realize the precepts of participation and partnership that are inherent in the text of the PDDEB.

### ***5.7 Research Organizations & Networking***

In contrast to most CSOs in the field of education, research organizations in Burkina Faso play a



themselves as small entrepreneurial enterprises aiming to provide educational services (mainly literacy training) to village communities.

While initially relying on support from local village committees and occasional funding from international NGOs, all four of these organizations have benefited from financial allocations from the *Fonds pour l'Alphabétisation et l'Éducation Non formelle* (FONAENF) (see below). To be eligible for a FONAENF grant, each association had to submit a proposal relating to the expertise and experience of its staff, the curriculum and *modus operandi* of the proposed training program, and the estimated number of villages, training centres, and potential male and female village auditors who were to benefit from training. Other conditions for a FONAENF grant include working under the direct supervision of the DPEBAs in Namentenga and Koudougou and submitting an annual report to provincial education authorities and to the FONAENF. In return, the senior administrators of these CBOs have benefited from FONAENF-sponsored training in aspects of organizational administration and have been encouraged to continue and indeed expand on their self-defined mandates of community-based NFE (Interviews, 2006).

In common with these four examples, the work of most autonomously managed educational CBOs focuses on literacy training and other forms of NFE. Despite support from FONAENF and occasional assistance from INGOs and NNGOs, these CBOs have few resources at their disposal, often relying on local contributions for recurrent expenditures such as routine travel and accommodation in neighbourhood villages. While clearly regarded as important players in the provision of basic education, rarely are they involved in any aspect of formal schooling, nor are they engaged in policy and program decision-making beyond their own specific pedagogical mandates. Reflecting the popular jargon, theirs is a partnership role that tends to be confined to that of *opérateurs* (Interviews, 2006).

## **5.9 Parents' Associations**

Since 1991, a condition underlying the establishment of public primary schools in Burkina Faso has been the creation of parents' associations that serve as the official liaison bodies between representatives of public schooling, most notably school principals and teachers, and the communities served by the school system. Within the past five years, parents' associations have been of two types: the originally established *Associations des parents d'élèves* (APEs) and the more recently articulated *Associations des mères d'élèves* (AMEs).

### ***Associations des parents d'élèves (APEs)***

In every community with a primary school APEs are mandated to facilitate and reinforce the school's role as an institution contributing to the wellbeing of children and the community at large. As such APEs are expected to meet regularly with teachers, to inform the community about school activities and the significance of schooling for children, to encourage full enrolment and high levels of school completion, to periodically contribute labour and materials in support of the school, and to raise and administer funds for local school related expenses (e.g., maintenance or replacement of basic infrastructure, payment for transportation and preparation of school meals, etc.). In addition, as outlined in the PDDEB, in view of their considerable responsibilities as 'frontline' CSOs, APEs are regarded as important actors in annual provincial and regional educational planning exercises.

All APEs are statutory entities, each with a president, vice-president, treasurer, and executive membership who are ostensibly elected every two years. In reality, anecdotal evidence suggests that executive membership of APEs at the community level is often determined by other selective processes (e.g., nomination of literate parents only, selections by traditional authorities, and self-appointments) (Interviews, 2006). Likewise, all APEs are members of the national parents' association, the *Fédération*

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in deliberations leading up to the initial promulgation of the ten-year plan. While numerous individuals within CSOs known for their expertise in specific aspects of education were invited to participate as consultants in the planning process, CSOs as discrete organizational entities, particularly those located outside Ouagadougou, were largely excluded from PDDEB planning deliberations and decision-making (Faure et al., 2003; Interviews, 2006).

Apart from the government's own tendency to exclude CSOs from educational policy-making, two other factors underlay the rather restricted nature of the elaboration of the PDDEB. First, three key aspects of the plan – a growing shift towards the development of a basic education SWAp, the corresponding establishment of budget support (the *panier commun*) for basic education, and decentralization as a central element of educational governance – were strongly promoted as fundamental operating principles by the the World Bank, Netherlands, and CIDA – the core donors of the *panier commun*. Consequently, while dialogue with national stakeholders was an integral feature of the elaboration of the PDDEB, deliberations were focused essentially on how best to implement donor supported principles.

Second, there were veiled concerns that civil society involvement in the formulation process might actually derail the development of the plan, either through the encumbrance of dialogue involving too many players with too many competing interests or through outright opposition to aspects of the plan (Interviews, 2006). The teachers' unions in particular were regarded as a potential source of destabilization, since the focus on educational decentralization and enhanced cost-effectiveness incorporated an agenda of 'rationalizing' the relatively high proportion of recurrent educational expenditures allocated for teacher training and teachers' salaries and benefits (Interviews, 2006). In effect, somewhat ironically, CSOs were largely excluded from the formulation of a plan that was specifically designed to increase their involvement in expanding and improving basic education. It was little wonder, therefore, that when the PDDEB was launched in 2002, most stakeholders in the education system regarded it as essentially a well funded educational project, representing no fundamental departure from previous large donor-funded projects (Interviews, 2006). Even today, as some of our respondents attested, there is uncertainty concerning the degree to which implementation of the PDDEB reflects a genuine partnership of CSOs, the state and donor agencies.

## **6.2 Implementation of the PDDEB and the Evolving Role of CSOs in Policy Deliberations**

Despite the top-down orientation of the deliberations underlying the formulation of the PDDEB, within the last half decade CSOs have become major actors in implementing the plan. In addition, many have become attuned to educational policy-making and are more prepared to participate in policy oriented dialogue. In large part this can be attributed to the responsibilities that CSOs have been called upon to assume within the context of the 10-year plan. As fieldwork for this study revealed, there are four points of entry that have facilitated CSO involvement in policy dialogue. These are as follows:

### **Regional Annual Planning**

A key conditionality of the implementation of the PDDEB is that disbursement of a substantial proportion of annually budgeted funds is to be conducted on a regional basis, and that these disbursements are in turn dependent on regionally drafted annual educational plans submitted to MEBA. Operationally, therefore, each regional prefecture coordinates the planning process by convening meetings of representatives of all stakeholder groups – teachers, head-teachers, superintendents from regional and provincial education offices, parents' associations, educational CBOs, and national and international NGOs working in the region (Interviews, 2006). This annual planning process entails a review of activities within each province, informal assessments of such activities, deliberations on prospective educational actions and needs in both formal and nonformal educational sectors, and the elaboration of a corresponding financial

plan for the subsequent fiscal year. Although proportionately these regional plans cover a relatively small percentage of MEBA's overall budget – of which most continues to be allocated for teachers' salaries – they nonetheless are supposed to be developed through dialogue and shared input from local and regional CSOs.

The annual submission of regional action plans is a pre-condition for the transfer of funds from the PDDEB *panier commun* to the regional and provincial education offices. Although brought about by an essentially top-down directive articulated as a key principle of the ten-year educational plan, the obligation of regional governments to submit annual educational plans and assume increased responsibility for the administration of educational programs funded in accordance with the PDDEB has contributed significantly to an expansion of the role of CSOs from operating almost entirely as deliverers of education to participating officially – if not always effectively (see below) – in processes of coordinated regional educational planning and monitoring.

### ***Missions Conjointes***

Approximately every six months, a two-day meeting open to all educational stakeholders is convened in a designated region of the country. Commonly referred to as *missions conjointes*, these meetings are relatively open-ended affairs that are attended by representatives of MEBA and the international donor community, by INGOs and NNGOs, and by various provincial CSOs and CBOs. The purpose of each meeting is to conduct an ongoing review of all PDDEB components, particularly within the six-month period preceding the meeting. Attention is also devoted to a review of the objectives and processes of the annual plan of the host region. By reviewing implementation of the PDDEB in local areas, the *mission conjointes* help to generate critical appraisals of efforts to decentralize educational administration and to engage CSO activity in the delivery of educational programs (Aides mémoires, 16 décembre 2005; 5 mai, 2006). As a result, by serving as forums of dialogue among distinctive institutional stakeholders, these *missions conjointes* have contributed to the sense of a shared mandate and collegiality among diverse groups of educational stakeholders.

Following each joint mission an *aide-mémoire* is produced that summarizes the discussions of the meeting, and itemizes recommendations that deal not only with specific issues related to PDDEB implementation within the host region, but as well to broader government and donor agency responsibilities pertaining to the PDDEB. As various respondents for this study indicated, MEBA and the PTFs have generally demonstrated a willingness to solicit the voices of local and regional groups, regardless of whether they emanate from regional government authorities or from diverse CSOs (Interviews, 2006).

### ***Le Fonds pour l'Alphabétisation et l'Éducation Non formelle (FONAENF)***

Since its inauguration in 2002, the largest proportion of the PDDEB budget has been directed towards the expansion of conventional state-administered primary schooling – the *écoles classiques*. Nevertheless, in order to address perennially high levels of adult illiteracy, a small grants fund, the FONAENF, has been set up to support approximately 10% of the annual *panier commun* portion of the PDDEB budget for national language literacy training projects and other forums of NFE. Established as an integral feature of budgetary support, the FONAENF is an officially registered association administered on a quasi-independent basis by a directorate and an 11-member governing council that consists of three government officials, three national CSO representatives, three senior PTF personnel, and two private sector representatives. As discussed above, resources that are administered by the FONAENF are made available mainly to educational CBOs that submit sound proposals for the development and operation of literacy training projects throughout the country.





*but it was quickly done, and there hasn't been much follow-up or good monitoring (NNGO representative).*

There are likewise questions about the degree to which CSOs can substitute for the state. Although NGOs such as FAWE, Plan International, and Tin Tua have become increasingly involved in pre-service as well as in-service teacher training, it is unlikely that these CSOs can make up for the state's dramatic reduction in pre-service teacher training from two years to one year. Similarly, the inexorable interface between schools and the communities in which they are situated – manifested particularly in teacher/parent relationships – is invariably a critical factor in either facilitating or undermining local level capacity. As numerous respondents indicated in this study, many of today's newly recruited teachers are young, feel little if any affiliation to the villages in which they are posted, and tend to regard parents' understanding of school activities as limited.

*Many teachers are young and come from elsewhere – they are not affiliated to the villages to which they are posted – so it makes it difficult sometimes for APEs and teachers to work together – there is a lack of communication and understanding (APE representative).*

Such lack of communication and understanding can clearly weaken relations between APEs and teachers. A further conundrum relates to the circular effects of abiding poverty and illiteracy. As respondents in this study frequently indicated, in the poorest provinces – notably those without dams for irrigation and the possibility of seasonal farming – poverty inevitably undermines the capacity of CBOs and parents' groups to become involved in a process that authorities ironically hope will contribute to a reduction in poverty.

*Poverty and lack of rainfall are a problem in many regions – can education be part of the solution to poverty, or is it an end to poverty and an end to long dry seasons necessary for enhancement of education? For now what is obvious is that expansion of education is very much dependent on external aid, especially to poor regions as we are here. . . . [Many] parents can't pay APE [parents' association] membership fees, and they don't have enough even to pay for children's notebooks and pens (Local CSO representative).*

As poverty and illiteracy are closely related in poor communities, there are often not enough literate parents able to ensure adequate representation and turn-over in APE leadership. In such circumstances, the envisioned participation of civil society in policy formation, implementation, and monitoring assumes a capacity that many parents' associations do not yet possess, a weakness that manifests itself in the context of larger meetings in which most local level associations cannot always participate effectively. Speaking about the capacity of the involvement of APEs in regional educational planning, one APE representative stated:

*The PDDEB is something for teachers and the education system – APEs are not involved in discussions concerning PDDEB – villagers don't know about it. Even participation in*

(Interviews, 2006). Anecdotal evidence suggests that many AMEs see themselves as fund-raising bodies and therefore concentrate on selling small items in local markets for school support.

Confronted with profound complexities and constraints, educational decentralization – and indeed, the whole process of devolving responsibility for public sector governance to regions, provinces, and communes – will require ongoing sensitivity and attention towards the perspectives and evolving educational aspirations of the myriad NGOs and CBOs that constitute civil society in Burkina Faso. For the time being it is fairly clear that across-the-board stakeholder support for the PDDEB is a guarantee that substantial resources will continue to be allocated to basic education. Yet the expansion of primary schooling as specified in the PDDEB seems to be generating a burgeoning dilemma for the government and for external agencies. While training and technical support for parents' associations are useful, sustainability of the system will for the foreseeable future continue to depend on a resource-poor government and an international donor community that has slowly and differentially embraced SWAs as a framework for effective aid to education. The current availability of ample external resources is unlikely to last for many years. In this context, the injection of external funding for education may prove to be a tenuous social investment, with today's nation-wide initiatives facing the prospect of rapid dissipation in the event of reduced external funding. For example, as one respondent indicated to the research team, the recent rise in girls' enrolment may not outlast the provision of scholarships for girls and various other subsidies and incentives for girls' education.

Despite SWAs and the advent of limited budget support for the education sector, in the long run, decentralization of the educational system and CSO capacity to participate effectively in educational governance cannot be sustained by external aid, but will have to be grounded in the development of local economies able to absorb a young work force and generate a sustainable resource base upon which and ever-expanding educational system can be maintained. This in turn raises questions about the very nature and content of mainstream education in Burkina Faso, and the policies and programmes that have long sustained it – questions to which we will turn in concluding this paper.

## **7.2 Government & Civil Society: A Relationship of Cooperation or Co-optation?**

All NGOs working in Burkina Faso must be accredited by the government and be signatories to the *Convention cadre d'établissement entre les ONG et le Burkina Faso* (see Appendix 3). Except for a history of occasional tensions between teachers' unions & the central government, which came to an apex in the mid-1980s (noted above), relations between the state and CSOs, particularly those situated in the field of education, have been remarkably collaborative and cordial. According to the director of the Bureau du Suivi des ONGs (BSONG), there has been only one recorded suspension of NGO activities, in the early 1990s, and this stemmed from a case of fraud perpetrated by the founder of a small religious organization in several villages. Overall, the relationship between the state and CSOs with regard to education in Burkina Faso has been characterized by a general understanding of complementary roles and a shared interest in the national agenda of expanding and improving basic education throughout the country.

Yet until recently it has also been a relationship skewed by the power of the state. While CSOs have participated in numerous state-sponsored forums examining the issues and challenges of basic education (for example, the 1989 seminar in Koudougou on basic education and the 1999 National Forum on Literacy in Burkina Faso), by and large MEBA's decision-making processes have been determined



Although community involvement was regarded as a key feature of what in fact was a major 5-year school expansion program, communities and individual beneficiaries had little say in identifying local





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*lot of worry, especially regarding payments for infrastructure building (NNGO representative).*

In addition, although the PTFs in Burkina Faso are virtually unanimous in espousing the role of civil society as being significant for the expansion and sustainability of the country's educational system, those from within civil society tend to see themselves as the "poor cousins" in a partnership relation that is shaped by the donors. The thrust of the following comments was not atypical among respondents:

*The donors sub-contract with NGOs. . . But they still have a tendency to lack confidence in working with us – they prefer to go through MEBA (INGO representative).*

*Sometimes one has the impression that the donor agencies consider the NGOs a bit of a nuisance . . . that we are either agitators or we are standing cap in hand for their PDDEB money (NNGO representative).*

In order to allay these perceptions, it is our view that PTFs must move beyond acknowledgment of the value of greater civil society engagement in Burkina Faso's educational system, and pay closer heed to the modalities of civil society partnership in educational governance and the ways in which external support can facilitate this partnership. To achieve this end, a broader, more cohesive, more direct relationship between PTFs and CSOs needs to be developed. One clear possibility would be to either expand the scope and mandate of the FONAENF or to establish other similar collaborative mechanisms of educational monitoring, planning, and resource allocation. An increase in budgetary support transfers to FONAENF and to other such joint state-CSO-donor agency entities responsible for the development and expansion of all forms of basic education other than the "classical" school system would likely reinforce efforts to expand educational innovations and reforms, and ensure greater CSO involvement in fundamental educational changes (see Lavergne & Wood, 2006). In addition, international donor agencies are in a position to strengthen international CSO connections with civil society groups in Burkina Faso – among parents' groups, teachers' federations, researchers, and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). Such nongovernmental linkages are likely to reinforce the status and effectiveness of CSOs in educational governance in Burkina Faso. And lastly, PTFs should strive to heed the

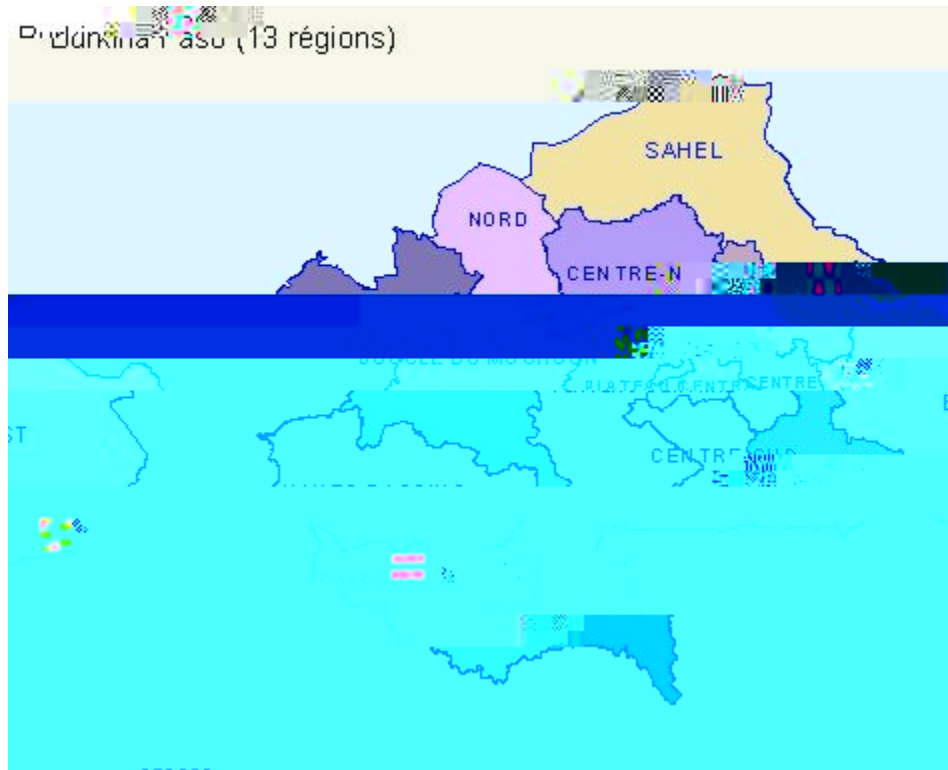
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**APPENDIX 2 : Organizations Interviewed (June 2006)**

INGOs : 7

National NGOs : 4

Networks (national & subnational) : 6

CBOs : 8

Faith-based Organizations : 2

Teachers' Unions : 1

APEs: 3

AMEs: 2

Community School: 1

Research Associations: 4

PTFs: 5

**APPENDIX 3 : List of NGOs & Member Associations of CCEB**

N°	ORGANIZATION
01	Association Burkinabé des Oeuvres Laïques (ABOLA)
02	Association Burkinabé de Recherche Action et d'Autopromotion pour le Développement (ABRAAD)
03	Association Développement Sans Frontière ( DSF) Ouahigouya
04	Association Femme 2000 ( AF- 2000) Ziniaré
05	FAWE Burkina
06	Association Benebnooma
07	Association Nationale pour la Traduction de la Bible et l'Alphabétisation ( ANTBA)
08	Association des Parents des Enfants Encephalophytes (APEE)
09	Association Sirayiri Formation (ASF) Bobo
10	Association Tin Tua ( ATT) Fada
11	Association Wend Panga pour le développement (AWDS) Kongoussi
12	Association Wuro–Yire pour le Développement (AWY) Bobo
13	Christian Relief and Développement Organization (CREDO)
14	Groupe de recherche Action pour le Développement Endogène de la Femme Rurale au Burkina Faso (GRADE/FRB)
15	Groupe de Recherche et d'appui pour l'Autopromotion des Populations (GRAAP) Bobo
16	Promo – Femmes / développement Sport (PF/DS)
17	Sahel Solidarité
18	Secrétariat Nationale de l'Enseignement catholique du Burkina (SNEC)
19	Association Nodde Nooto ( A2N) Dori
20	Association Féminine pour le Développement Buayaba (AFD/Buyaba) Fada

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27	Association Nasongdo-Boulsa
28	Association Pagla biig Yidgri- Boulsa
29	Association Wend Panga de Boulsa
30	Association pour le soutien de l'Education pour Tous (ASEPT) Koudougou
31	Association pour la promotion et l'Intégration de la Jeunesse du Centre Nord ( APII/CN) – Kaya
32	Union Namanegbzanga des Groupements de Tanlii-Ziniaré
33	Association pour la Gestion Holistique des Ressources au Burkina Faso ( AGEHOR/BF) – Boulsa
34	Association pour Agir au Burkina Faso - Ouagadougou
35	Association d'Aide aux Enfants et aux Familles Démunies (ADEFAD) – Ouahigouya
36	Association Féminine de Koudougou ( AFK) Boulkièmdé
37	Association DEWRAN – Ouahigouya
38	Association Bangr la Yidgr Soré (ABYS )– Kaya
39	Association zoodo pour la Promotion de la Jeunesse (AZPF) Ouahigouya
40	Association Koom pour l'Auto Promotion des Femmes du Burkina Faso (AKAFEM/BF) – Ouagadougou

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56	Sous commission Nationale du CERMA- Banfora
57	Association Munyu des Femmes de la Comoé – Banfora
58	Office de Développement des Eglises Evangéliques (ODE)
59	Association Etre Comme les Autres (ECLA) - Ouahigouya
60	Union des groupements Féminins Cedwane Nyee ( UGF/CDN) – Sanguié
61	Association la Boabab – Boulkimedé
62	Association FINDIMA – Komandjari
63	Association des Femmes Educatrices et Développement / FANDIMA
64	Association pour le Développement des communautés Villageoises ( ADCV) – Gourma
65	Association TIN SOAN ( ATS )
66	Association d’Appui et de Promotion Rurale du Gulmu (APRG) – Gourma
67	Association Formation développement Ruralité (AFDR) – Yatenga
68	Appui Conseil pour la professionnalisation des produits Agricoles (APPA) Yatenga
69	Association des Femmes Burkinabé de Ouahigouya ( AFBO) – Yatenga
70	Association pour le Développement des communautés Villageoises de Irin/ tarwendpanga( ADCVI / TWP)
71	Organisation Recherche Formation appui aux communautés de base (ORFA)- Yatenga

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112	Association pour le Développement de l'Artisanat Rural ADAR –Bourzanga
113	Association Koom pour l'Auto Promotion des Femmes du Burkina Faso (AKAFEM/BF) – Ouagadougou
114	Association pour la Défense des Droits de l'Enfant (ADDE)
115	Association Cri de Coeur pour les Enfants Déshérités (ACCED) – Ouagadougou
116	Association Burkinabé pour la Scolarisation des Filles (ABSF)
117	Association Seyoore Sahel
118	Association pour la Sauvegarde de l'Environnement et la Promotion de l'Élevage (ASEPE) –Yatenga
119	Association pour la Promotion de la Femme et de l'Enfant du Passoré (APF) – YAKOfant du

#### **APPENDIX 4 : La Convention cadre d'établissement entre les ONG et le Burkina Faso**

Le Burkina Faso représenté par le Gouvernement d'une part, et l'Association \_\_\_\_\_ ci-après dénommée 'l'Association', d'autre part,

Désireux de consolider les relations et la coopération entre les peuples.

Soucieux d'harmoniser et de rendre complémentaires leurs action conformément aux orientations et aux objectifs de développement économique, social et culturel définis par le Gouvernement du Burkina Faso ;

Considérant la volonté manifestée par le Gouvernement d'associer les Organisations Non Gouvernementales à l'œuvre d'édification de la Société Burkinabè ;

Sont convenue d'organiser par le biais de la coopération les conditions de participation de l'Association aux tâches de développement entreprises au Burkina Faso.

##### Engagements de l'Association

Article 1 : L'Association s'engage, conformément aux objectifs définis dans ses status et en harmonie avec les priorités nationales à mobiliser les ressources humaines, financières et techniques nécessaires à l'appui des projets et programmes de développement initiés et exécutés par les populations des zones rurales et urbaines du Burkina.

Article 2 : Aux fins de réalisation desdits projets et programmes de développement, l'Association nouera toute collaboration utile avec les collectivités locales, organismes publics ou privés agréés par le Gouvernement.

Article 3 : L'Association s'engage à assurer l'africanisation de ses cadres ainsi que la formation de Nationaux Burkinabès dans les tâches et les domaines de son intervention.

Article 4 : L'Association prendra à sa charge les frais découlant du recrutement, du transport et de l'installation de son personnel engagé à l'extérieur et affecté aux programmes mis en œuvre, elle en assurera les traitements et les charges sociaux.

Article 5 : Après consultation du Gouvernement, l'Association désignera son représentant pour superviser l'ensemble des programmes et projets mis en œuvre.

Article 6 : Les agents recrutés par l'Association et mis à la disposition des services gouvernementaux devront se soumettre aux devoirs et règles de discipline applicables au personnel de l'administration concernée.