



# Decentralization in Education: National Policies and Practices



## *Education Policies and Strategies 7*

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Section for Support to National Educational Development (ED/EPS/NED)

**Education Policies and Strategies 7**

**Decentralization in education:  
National policies and practices**

**U N E S C O**

This booklet, published by the UNESCO's Section for Support to National Educational Development (ED/EPS/NED), summarizes the presentations and debates of participants in the International Seminar on Decentralization Policies and Strategies in Education, organized by UNESCO in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 30 June to 3 July 2003, in collaboration with the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (UNTREF).

The following national representatives participated in the seminar and presented the country reports : Alberto Sileoni (Argentina), Karine Harutyunyan and Sahak Minasyan (Armenia), Renata Maria Braga Santos (Brasil), Andreas Panayides (Cyprus), Michel Mvogo (Cameroon), Gloria Mercedes Alvarez (Colombia), Abdessleam Zeroual (Morocco), Shah Dawood (Pakistan), and Carlos Ernesto Saavedra Sánchez (Peru). Mohamed Radi, Lucila Jallade, Roser Cussó and Alfredo Rojas also participated as UNESCO representatives or resource persons and facilitated the proceedings. Roser Cussó and Mohamed Radi helped to edit and summarize the contributions of the participants.

We wish to thank Mr Daniel Filmus, Minister of Education of Argentina, and his senior staff who participated in the opening session of the Seminar. We also extend our thanks to Mr Anibal Jozami, Rector of UNTREF, Mr Norberto Fernández Lamarra, Director in the Education Department of UNTREF, and their collaborators for being able to hold the seminar at the University.

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# PREFACE

This is the seventh volume in the series *Education Policies and Strategies* launched by UNESCO's Division of Educational Policies and Strategies. Deliberately eschewing an excessive concern with theory, it seeks above all to be a collection of good practices. Through the choice of themes addressed, UNESCO aims to share its experience not only with education planners, but more broadly with all those interested in the elaboration and implementation of education policies and strategies.

This volume, entitled *Decentralization in education: national policies and practices*, summarizes the presentations and debates of the participants in the "International Seminar on Decentralization Policies and Strategies in Education", which UNESCO organized in Argentina from 30 June to 3 July 2003, in collaboration with the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (UNTREF).

The question of decentralization in education is addressed in the Dakar Framework for Action as an option to be developed to achieve better governance of education systems. Through this publication we wish to contribute to the debate on decentralization policies in education in the context of the Education for All (EFA), while seeing how they can be taken into account in the preparation and implementation of national plans of action. The national experience of the 10 Member States analyzed reveals the complexity of educational reform and decentralization processes throughout the world. There are many factors involved, including the new linkages between the different actors and the different levels of responsibility, problems of reform financing and continuity, and the definition and implementation of new modes of participation, dialogue with teachers, training and evaluation. The challenges of decentralization in education are then just as much political as technical.

The country representatives had the opportunity to discuss and propose recommendations on the political, technical and administrative processes of decentralization in education. The recommendations highlight the complexity of the different levels of decision-making and reform involved, from the most general, relating to the progress of democratic processes in each country, to the most specific, such as the development of teacher training. The outcome and follow-up of national policies in this field are being publicized in response to the wishes expressed by the participants in the seminar and by professionals in many countries undertaking decentralization policies.

In view of the relevance of the topic, both to political decision-makers and to education specialists, UNESCO has decided to make it the subject of a publication for wide distribution. Through this publication, UNESCO hopes to disseminate more widely the lessons drawn from the diverse experiences of the participating countries to specialists of other countries. We hope that the different national contributions that we present here will provide food for thought and fuel useful debates so as to improve the processes of planning and implementation of education policies in other countries that are endeavouring to meet the challenge of attaining the goals of Education for All.

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Policies and Strategies

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## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AREF	Académie régionale d'éducation et de formation/Regional education and training academy
EFA	Education for All
EPSSim	<i>Education Policy and Strategy Simulation</i> , education policy simulation model developed by UNESCO
GIR	Gross intake rate
GDP	Gross domestic product
GER	Gross enrolment rate
GNP	Gross national product
IFM	Institut de formation de maîtres/Teacher training institute
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
NER	Net enrolment rate
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPA	National plan of action
OREALC	Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
PRODEC	Ten-year educational development programme
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNTREF	Universidad Nacional de Tres Febrero of Argentina
VAT	Value added tax

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The main aim of publications of this kind, which summarize the deliberations of international seminars organized by UNESCO, is to publicize national experiences and practices towards the achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals. The difficulties of national planning to meet the demands of the Dakar goals make it necessary for the international community to provide strong and continuous technical support. Here, this support is offered through exchanges of experience between countries with a view to strengthening the conceptual framework and feasibility of their national plans of action.

In this introductory part of the document we look more closely at the questions raised, the seminar objectives and the characteristics of the participating institutions and countries. We go on to consider national experiences and the challenges of decentralization policies in education. The salient aspects of each experience and crosscutting studies are summed up in the second part. The third part summarizes the highlights of the proceedings of the Buenos Aires seminar and the recommendations of representatives of the participating countries.

## 1.1. Disseminating good practices to achieve EFA goals

The aim of this publication is to set out and disseminate the results of the presentations and discussions between representatives of Member States who participated in the seminar on “Decentralization policies and strategies in education” organized by UNESCO in collaboration with UNTREF in Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 30 June to 3 July 2003. Nine countries from Africa, Asia, Europe and America took part in the discussions: Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cyprus, Morocco, Pakistan and Peru. The report of the representative of Mali, who was unable to travel to Buenos Aires, was also presented by a member of the UNESCO Staff.

At the meeting the participating countries were able to highlight the difficulties encountered in reforms concerning decentralization in education and to identify together the most suitable ways of addressing them. The group discussions gave the participants the opportunity to look more closely at the relevance and scope of the reforms, the processes and methods of their design

and implementation, and to analyze and sum up their conclusions and the lessons to be drawn.

Through this publication UNESCO hopes that other countries that may be faced with these types of questions when reviewing and implementing their EFA plan of action may be able to benefit from this international experience. This document may be used as a basic text to stimulate and enrich discussion between decision-makers, planners and researchers.

## **1.2. National planning for EFA goals**

The Dakar Framework for Action invited Member States to draw up a National Plan of Action by the end of 2002 with a view to achieving the goals of EFA (see box 1). Few countries were able to do so within the prescribed time limits. This is particularly true for those countries that have not yet started to draw up such a plan, but also for those who already had a long-term development plan or programme that needed to be updated or supplemented in the spirit of Dakar.

### *Box 1. The goals of EFA*

- (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- (ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- (vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

*Source:* Dakar Framework for Action, Dakar, 2000.

Regional and international surveys and meetings show that some countries are experiencing huge difficulties in designing the reform and development

measures advocated by the Dakar World Forum. Others are faced with crucial difficulties in the framing of operational strategies. A considerable number of these difficulties are directly caused by or result in shortcomings in information systems for planning and imprecise strategies and programmes of action. The plan must be credible to reassure financial partners about the merits of the national education policies followed. But more than anything else, it must also be in the interest of countries themselves, whether or not they need to draw on outside funding (see box 2). Once the plans have been drawn up and the financial arrangements worked out, they will not be able to be implemented unless they carry precise indications as to how the options chosen are to be achieved. Implementation must be underpinned by coherent organization of activities and by efficient national institutional capacities.

*Box 2. Credible plans*

The Dakar Framework for Action asks countries to develop National EFA Plans no later than 2002.

Each National EFA Plan will:

- be developed by Government leadership in direct and systematic consultation with national civil society;
- attract coordinated support of all development partners;
- specify reforms addressing the six EFA goals;
- establish a sustainable financial framework ;
- be time-bound and action-oriented;
- include mid-term performance indicators;
- achieve a synergy of all human development efforts, through its inclusion within the national development planning framework and process.

*Source:* Dakar Framework for Action, Dakar, 2000.

To support countries' efforts, the UNESCO's Education Sector has organized international workshops and seminars at which Member States have been able to exchange experiences. These activities have been run jointly by representatives of the participating countries and those of concerned UNESCO units at Headquarters and in the field. Their aim has been to disseminate good country practices in the matter of reform strategies among participating countries so as to help them to translate the EFA goals into reality.

### **1.3. Technical support for sound and feasible Plans of Action**

At each stage in the preparation and execution of their EFA plan, UNESCO must provide the necessary technical support to countries that request it. Besides the ad hoc assistance extended directly to individual countries, UNESCO gives support to groups of countries faced by the same problem. UNESCO promotes national capacity building by making its own expertise available to countries, but also by facilitating exchanges between countries belonging to different regions of the world. The dissemination of international experience in regard to different aspects of education is one of the means of transferring know-how in the design and implementation of development plans. By facilitating exchanges of experience in different regions of the world, UNESCO helps national policymakers to identify practical solutions best suited to the ways in which their education systems actually operate.

As noted earlier, experience shows that when drawing up their Plan of Action, some countries find that, while financial problems loom large, they also have difficulties in defining implementation strategies, owing in particular to the existence of options that were not sufficiently studied at the time of their adoption. In some cases the operational implications have not been clearly defined, while in others there is a lack of institutional and financial capacity (see box 3). In-depth examination of these options for the Plan and their embodiment in a specific programme of action are often postponed for want of time or because of a lack of information and national expertise in that area.

*Box 3. The challenges of planning : institutional resources and capacities*

National planners depend on internal and sometimes external financial resources as well as institutional capacity and monitoring to define and implement national educational development plans.

In most countries, the State has the main responsibility for managing and financing education as the majority of education services are public. The State draws essentially on its budget to finance education, through taxes and other fiscal measures. The budget depends then on the nation's total wealth and on the political decision concerning, for example, the share of GDP allocated to public spending on education. In addition, in many countries, the private sector (households and/or firms) covers part of the cost of education.

Closely linked to the processes of decentralization, the role of local authorities, families and "communities" has increased since the 1980s. In a context of financial difficulty, some local authorities levy taxes and manage their own education budgets. They

sometimes set their own financial and educational goals. At the same time, families, parents' associations and communities may be asked to cover all or part of the costs of education.

External resources derive essentially from regional banks and the World Bank, United Nations agencies, national and international NGOs and bilateral cooperation. Banks grant loans but may demand in return improved governance, the introduction of reforms or budget savings. The United Nations system supports technical cooperation programmes (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.) and sometimes gives grants. In some cases, NGOs stand in for the State, when it is not able to assume part of its responsibilities for education. Finally, bilateral cooperation (experts, material, capital) is often in the context of unequal economic exchange in the form of compensation extended to the least developed countries.

The implementation of EFA plans depends next on the continuity of political commitment and institutional capacity. In many countries changes in government make it difficult to maintain commitments and ensure project follow-up. Institutional capacity means the technical and administrative training of key personnel and the organization of services for the effective and suitable coordination of activities and responsibilities within the managerial apparatus of the education system.

The issues involved are very often crucial and relate to goals or aspects of strategy for the implementation of education development plans. The notable priority issues most often cited concern decentralization, funding and options concerning teachers. Whether or not the plan was prepared before Dakar or more recently, there is a need to define and schedule actions in these fields in so far as a number of goals will not otherwise be able to be achieved. Although these issues are regarded as key options, they are often put forward as pious wishes. More often than not, they are neither dealt with in depth nor backed up by operational programming. This lack of stringency in the elaboration of plans of action has negative consequences down the line for their feasibility.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the seminars**

The seminars held in Sofia (Bulgaria) from 4 to 8 June 2003, Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 30 June to 3 July 2003 and Asan-si (Republic of Korea) from 17 to 20 September 2003 focused respectively on options concerning teachers, educational decentralization and EFA financing. They shared the following goals:

- Build national capacity to address issues that are important but that do not generally receive all the necessary attention from countries when they are drawing up their EFA plans;
- Understand which of the different practical measures applied best meet the development needs of education systems ;
- Compare the respective experiences of the participating countries in terms of design, strategies, processes and results;
- Offer participants the opportunity to better understand the stakes and the strategies adopted by those who have had to contend with the same challenges and have often found and applied original solutions to overcome them;
- Draw up and approve recommendations concerning the main problems encountered and the good practices noted by each of the participants on the basis of the subjects discussed; and lastly, identify priorities and modes of collaboration among and between countries and UNESCO in each of the fields studied.

Besides enhancing the ability of the participating countries to address the problems facing them, with a view to supplementing or reformulating their EFA planning, the seminars enabled UNESCO to draw lessons from the various national experiences studied (see the recommendations on decentralization in section 3.2).

### **1.5. The participating institutions and countries**

As with the other seminars, the Member States participating in the seminar on decentralization were chosen from among those that had expressed a desire to improve their own understanding of the issues involved. They undertook to describe the actual difficulties encountered in the implementation of the plans and the practical solutions proposed to overcome them. The participating countries offer a fairly representative sample of the world situation in regard to decentralization in education. They contributed substantively to the topic addressed by drafting a report on their national experience which they presented and discussed with the other participants. The national representatives were mainly decision-makers involved in the design and operational implementation of EFA plans. The 10 countries represented were: Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cyprus, Mali, Morocco, Pakistani and Peru.

In addition to the national representatives, Mohamed Radi, Roser Cussó and Lucila Jallade (UNESCO) together with Alfredo Rojas of OREALC and Inés Aguerro of IIEP-Buenos Aires facilitated the deliberations. Representatives of the Argentine central Government and of the province of La Pampa together with members of UNTREF also took part in the seminar. Opening speeches were delivered by the Minister of Education of Argentina, Daniel Filmus, the Vice-Minister of Education, Alberto Sileoni, and the Rector of UNTREF, Anibal Jozami.

## 2. NATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND THE CHALLENGES OF DÉCENTRALIZATION

### 2.1. Historical considerations

What may nowadays be referred to as "decentralization" policies are not altogether new, given that some modern nations were federal States from their inception (USA or Canada). The demand for political self-government on the part of certain communities also goes back a long way. Since the 1980s, however, there has been a paradigm shift in public management which has transformed our perception of the processes of decentralization and the functions that it serves. The legitimacy of the State's action has changed, as has its approach, especially in international forums, first in the sphere of the economy, and then in that of services regarded hitherto as public. This is the context in which we need to consider the decentralization of education systems, one of the most important phenomena in educational planning over the past 20 years. It is also against this backdrop of change that Governments are having to contend with the tensions arising from the restructuring or readjustment of public institutions, and their functions and management, including in countries with more or less decentralized structures. The trend towards decentralization has, however, in some countries, like Spain, been motivated by a desire to establish or consolidate democracy.

According to a recent survey, indeed most countries in the South are currently trying out new forms of decentralization or are planning to do so (Work, 2002)<sup>1</sup>. These countries, ruled by their own specific political traditions, are often faced with competition from different political legitimacies, in particular those linked to policies of more or less "socio-democratic" inspiration and those bound up with the resulting budgetary adjustment and restriction policies advocated over the past 20 years. The last-mentioned policies, tending towards greater decentralization, are usually underpinned by ideas of efficiency, participatory democracy or governance (McGinn et al., 1999). The European Commission's recommendations on education and French political tradition, which is rather centralized, illustrate the characteristics of these two "types" of policies. The presentation of these two examples served to highlight the social

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<sup>1</sup> In 1997, 52 countries had designed and carried out fiscal decentralization measures. In 1999, out of 126 countries, 96 had at least had one sub-national level of elected Government, while 46 countries had two levels or more.

and political significance of the new education strategies, with such concepts as law, equality or knowledge being gradually replaced by those of choice, equity or responsibility (see box 4). Consideration of the policies applied in the European countries over the past few years reveals however a convergence towards systems of shared responsibility. Some federal countries like Germany seek to introduce regulatory mechanisms, while countries with a centralized tradition like France have introduced elements of decentralization. The United Kingdom, for its part, has combined recentralization, in particular through the establishment of national curricula, with measures making it easier for families to choose. Indicators on decision-making in the education system (tables D6) in the 2004 edition of *Regards sur l'Education* clearly point to a system of shared responsibility in many countries.

Carlos Malpica's study includes a comparison of national experiences of decentralization in education in five countries of Latin America, a region where educational centralism has been a fairly widespread model, including in federal countries (Malpica, 2003)<sup>2</sup>. The State has directed education towards the goals of identity, national integration and development, sometimes benefiting certain regions out of national strategic interest. Despite the great efforts of the Latin American countries, problems of social, geographic and economic inequality and of the quality of educational services have remained. Decentralization is a widely adopted strategy in the subcontinent and one from which certain lessons can be drawn. The processes involved are complex and long-term. They demand planning, consultation and follow-up (see box 5).

<i>Box 4. The "French" and "European" political frameworks of decentralization in education</i>	
French framework	European Commission framework
Diversity of national education systems, reflecting the diversity of national identities.	European harmonization of educational goals, but education remains a national responsibility.
Educational policy-making remains fairly centralized with strong deconcentration and partial decentralization (deconcentration)	Decentralization in education in the broad sense, not only towards local authorities but also towards actual establishments
Idea of public service. Responsibility of	Development of user and parent

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<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico (Malpica, 1995). The representative of Peru, Carlos Saavedra, presented the study prepared by Carlos Malpica, who was not able to attend the seminar on account of his being appointed as Minister of Education of Peru a day before the opening. The report also includes an analysis of Peru's decentralization experience.

public authorities	responsibility. Greater openness to privatization. .
Standardization of curricula out of a concern for equality (Baccalauréat)	Greater adaptation of curricula to local needs, flexibility, long courses of study
Knowledge, continuing training. Increased availability of technical streams in secondary education, “learning of trades in school”	Competency. Lifelong education. Employability, corporative spirit. Promotion of technical courses from a concern to adapt to the job market
Education is regarded as a public good and a right	Education is regarded as a regulating factor (consensus)
Political control of resource management, avoidance of technocracy. Evaluation as a technical tool in a more general process of regulation.	Efficiency in resource management, autonomy, avoidance of bureaucracy. Evaluation as a normative instrument, steering of social action (adjustment, sanction)
Maintenance of the same status for public employees. Teachers as professionals capable of evaluating educational needs	Idea of choice, freedom, options offered to pupils. Parents and society define educational needs

It should be noted finally that, as indicated above, what is at stake today is not only the demand of certain communities for autonomy, but also other political aspects linked to contemporary processes of decentralization, in particular the new responsibility of civil society, the privatization of educational services or the changed status of teachers, to quote just a few examples. The importance of contemporary decentralization also lies in the changes it entails in the way both of designing and managing the education system and of designing and regulating citizen participation and the political arena in general. There seems to be a confirmation of the transformation of the representative democratic model (based on citizenship) towards "participatory democracy", half-way between the influence of a wide spectrum of social and political organizations and increasing management by the private sector of what was previously public business. From this point of view, national decision-makers and planners come up against political tensions in the process of decentralization in education between the available -- and possible -- legitimate choices and their implications and consequences. It is accordingly important not to lose sight of the fact that the goal of public policies is not only to solve problems, but also to propose and develop codes for interpreting the social and economic spheres.

*Box 5. Lessons drawn from the decentralization experience of five Latin American countries*

1. The influence of historic, geographic and cultural factors must be taken into consideration.
2. What is entailed are long-term social, political, economic and technical processes (acceleration produces tensions, conflicts and adverse effects). They must be planned and managed throughout the successive stages of their implementation.
3. It is necessary to modify the legal framework of decentralization in general and make it compatible with that of decentralization in education.
4. Decentralization occurs in the context of structural reform processes aimed at deconcentration, participation, regionalization, municipalization and privatization.
5. It is important to promote the influence and role of representative civil society bodies (follow-up, demand, requirement, intermediation, participation, provision of services).
6. Economic and fiscal crises can be factors that trigger, speed up or slow down decentralization processes.
7. The size and diversity of the country and its population, land use planning, and the development of communication systems and other infrastructures influence the process.
8. Some medium- and short-term emergency measures may jeopardise the process in the long term when they are not integrated into an overall strategy.
9. In response to demands mainly from outside the education sector for greater control and effectiveness of expenditure, the education sector argues in terms of quality and optimum cover of the school-age population.
10. The strategies adopted lie between two extremes, "normative strategies" and "open strategies".

## **2.2. Double-edged policies**

Decentralization may be defined as the transfer, in varying degrees, of decision-making powers from central government to intermediate authorities, local authorities, and educational institutions. The significance of the transfer varies, ranging from simple administrative decentralization (deconcentration) to a transfer of regulatory and financial powers of greater scope, to the regional and/or local level (see box 6).

Both more and less positive aspects of decentralization are noted by various observers. Some consider that the process of decentralization in education may considerably improve transparency, administrative efficiency and finance management, the quality and accessibility of services and the development of political responsibility in general. They believe that a decentralized education system would be more efficient, more compatible with local priorities and more

strongly encourage family participation, regarded as a factor of "democratization". Governments with serious financial problems may be particularly attracted by the potential that decentralization holds for progress. Systems of cost recovery such as community financing have thus become, for some central governments, a means of shedding financial responsibilities linked to the provision of educational services.

*Box 6. Some basic definitions*

*Centralized power.* This designates the centralized organization of political and administrative decision-making, responsibility and management in a country where the executive and legislative powers are structured within the framework of a State.

*Centralization.* In some countries, and in some historical contexts, the centralization of political and administrative decision-making, responsibility and management forms part of the process of the consolidation of the State and its unity. It may thus meet the need to organize and strengthen executive power and the other institutions that ensure the cohesion of the national community, such as education.

*Deconcentration.* Deconcentration means the transfer or delegation of responsibility for managing the activities or services in question (education, health, etc) from the national level to a local level of a ministry or central institution. This devolution of authority concerns the application of regulations, but not of their formulation. Decision-making and policy formulation remain largely centralized.

*Decentralization.* Decentralization involves the transfer of all or part of the decision-making, responsibilities and management vested in the central authority towards another regional, provincial or local authority (districts, municipalities, "communities") or towards schools themselves. Decentralization is therefore political and financial. The regional and local authorities may change and/or adapt educational priorities, curricula, teaching methods and educational management while managing their budget and the expenditure. Some people speak of *devolution* when the local units of government are autonomous and independent and their legal status separate from central government. The central authorities exercise only indirect control and monitoring of the local units but may set up machinery to regulate and evaluate local policies. This process is basically different from privatization, which is a transfer of authority to private companies or individuals. The degree of decentralization may differ greatly from one country to another. Decentralization may be limited to the material and financial management of educational institutions, but also concern curriculum design

*Privatization.* Privatization denotes the transfer of school decision-making, responsibilities and management towards a private entity. In this context decentralization is akin to the privatization of the entire public service.

Other commentators consider however that the decentralization process may in the long run increase inequality between regions in terms of the financing and quality of education and the working conditions of teachers. They believe that central governments would be freed of responsibility over local administrations and "communities" (associations, enterprises...) without providing adequate resources to the poorest or most disadvantaged regions. Centralization would ensure greater equality through compensation and control over resource allocation. It would also offer a protection against privatization and often a more solid form of political and democratic control than that provided by local authorities, which are more easily influenced by local pressures.

In any case, educational decentralization and planning in general raise the question of how far decision-making should be decentralized for each level or type of education (primary, secondary, higher, but also pre-primary and literacy training) and how responsibilities will be allocated for the development of curricula and teaching methods, evaluation, textbook production and distribution, recruitment and remuneration of teachers, school building and maintenance, the establishment of links between parents and teachers, etc.

Lastly, various international organizations are taking an interest in the question of decentralization in education from different vantage points (see box 7). Generally, the attitude is positive. UNDP lays emphasis on the stability of public institutions and national capacity for organizing and evaluating different responsibilities, while for the World Bank decentralization is more a synonym for privatization and the active participation of communities in the overseeing of school management, the recruitment and remuneration of teachers, etc. UNESCO offers a stocktaking of the issue in its latest edition of the EFA Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2003). Special attention is given to case studies. Positive aspects and more problematic issues are both addressed. In some countries (Burkina Faso or Senegal) decentralization has accentuated inequalities.

*Box 7. Decentralization and EFA in international organizations: World Bank and UNDP*

“Decentralization is the process of reassigning responsibility and corresponding decision-making authority for specific functions from higher to lower levels of government and organizational units.” (Fiske, 1996). “From the official perspective, much of the attractiveness of community financing lies in the extent to which it is able to relieve governments of the burden for educational financing [...]” (Bray, 1996 : p43-44).

“Decentralization tends to be successful when the central government is stable, solvent and committed to transferring both responsibilities and resources, when local authorities are able to assume these responsibilities and when there is effective participation by poor people and by a well-organized civil society”. (UNDP, 2003: p.137).

It is not always easy to demonstrate clearly how far decentralization in education has an impact. Analysis of the statistical data and qualitative information available does not allow conclusions to be drawn as to a strict causality between the strategies implemented and the results achieved in terms of enrolment, equity between regions or other significant variables. Some evaluation is possible however, even when the decentralization process is still recent. For this reason detailed study of different national experiences is crucial. The reports considered in the following chapter offer some material for analysis and reflection with regard to the different positive and less positive aspects of decentralization. It should be noted that empirical research findings have not so far demonstrated the effectiveness of decentralization reforms. As is shown by Nathalie Mons in an article in the *Revue française de pédagogie* (n°146), decentralization reforms in education do not automatically lead to an improvement in educational quality. They do not in themselves entail any change in teaching methods. Decentralization could, however, when it brings greater parental involvement, have positive effects on pupil attendance, as has been observed in Brazil. And for the majority of researchers, local governance is potentially a source of social and territorial inequalities.

### **2.3. National reports: main issues raised**

The national officials participating in the seminar prepared a report and an oral presentation on their national experience in the matter of decentralization in education. Their contributions, particularly written, attempted in most cases to cover the following issues:

- (i) A general presentation of the political, economic and social context of the country, and of the education system considered (structure, organization);
- (ii) The political, intellectual, pedagogical and other foundations underlying the ongoing or planned reforms;
- (iii) Relevant information about objectives and the institutions (statutory responsibilities and actual achievements) set up in the country to design and implement the reforms;

- (iv) Nature of the human and material resources mobilized in support of these development policies and strategies;
- (v) Successes and failures are noted. How are failures accounted for? What measures need to be taken in order to avoid them and consolidate successes?

UNESCO has prepared “Guidelines for national reports” containing more precise questions on decentralization strategies with a view to harmonizing the reports (see Annex).

### *General characteristics of the participating countries*

By way of introduction and before looking in detail at national decentralization policies and strategies, it is interesting to dwell on the general characteristics of the countries participating in the seminar. Relating as they do to different regions of the world, the national experiences of the countries represented may be considered from numerous standpoints. The cultural, historical and socio-economic diversity of the countries rules out any real direct comparison between them. The differences in income, population size and public expenditure on education are to be emphasized. In 2002 per capita GNP ranged from \$240 in Mali to \$12,320 in Cyprus, while Brazil’s population of 178 million contrasted with the 800,000 inhabitants of Cyprus (see table 1). In 2000 the latter country devoted 5.7% of its GDP to education, while Pakistani earmarked barely 1.8% of national wealth for public education

The educational situation also varies. Pakistan, Mali, Morocco and, to a lesser extent, Colombia still need to make efforts to enroll all children who have reached the official age of primary school attendance (net enrolment rates under 100%), whereas Argentina, Peru and Cyprus have in principle achieved universal primary education. Survival rates in the fifth year of primary education reveal a high proportion of repeats and dropouts in some countries. The education system of Colombia, for instance, seems to experience particular difficulty in holding on to children up to the end of primary education. This is also true in Cameroon, Mali and Morocco and, to a lesser extent, Peru. In Argentina the 90% of children reaching the fifth year of primary schooling point to the ill effects of the economic difficulties experienced by that country in the late 1990s. Then again, gross secondary school enrolment rates in Mali, Pakistani and Morocco are under 40%. Furthermore, those countries are likely to have difficulties in achieving parity between girls and boys by 2015.

Table 1. Profiles of the participating countries: selection of indicators

Country	Population (in millions) Estim. 2003	Per cap GNP (in dollars) 2002	NER P (in %) 2000	5th year survival rate (in %) 1999	GER S (in %) 2000	Educ. expend. as % GDP 2000
Argentina	38,438	4060	100	90	97	4,6
Armenia	3,061	790	...	...	...	2,9
Brasil	178,470	2850	97	...	108	3,8
Cameroon	16,018	560	...	*81	...	3,2
Colombia	44,222	1830	89	67	70	5,1
Cyprus	0,802	(2001) 12320	...	99	(1996) 97	5,7
Mali	11,340	240	*43	*79	*15	**2,8
Morocco	30,566	1190	78	80	**39	5,5
Pakistan	153,578	410	60	...	25	1,8
Peru	27,167	2050	100	*87	86	**3,3

\* Data for 1998.

\*\*Data for 1999.

Source: UIS-UNESCO (2003); World Bank (2002), and UN (2002).

The representatives of the participating countries prepared rather comprehensive reports on their national experiences of decentralization in education. The salient points of the reports are summed up below. The adaptations of the simulation model (EPSSim, developed by UNESCO's Division of Educational Policies and Strategies in 2001) to decentralization policies in education are also summarized. The model was adapted to Mali, a country that has a rather centralized political tradition, and to the Province of La Pampa, as a pilot example to assist in planning at the provincial level in Argentina.

### Argentina

With its 24 provinces, Argentina<sup>3</sup> has been a federal country since the 19th century. Although the national Constitution of 1853 establishes the responsibility of the provinces for primary education, the majority of schools remained national. Secondary and higher education were the responsibility of the national State. In 1978, under the military dictatorship, responsibility for almost all primary schools was transferred to the provinces. In 1992, the remaining

<sup>3</sup> Federal decentralization through the redistribution of functions and responsibilities and the maintenance of a centralized control mechanism.

primary schools together with secondary schools and institutions of higher education were placed under the authority of the provinces. In 1993, the Federal Education Act established the new distribution of responsibilities and functions between the different governing and administrative bodies of the education system. The central idea is to combine federalization of the system (self-government) with centralized control mechanisms (national unity). The decentralization process is being pursued in the context of a calling into question of the previous State model, economic globalization (see box 8) and tension between different, sometimes competing or indeed contradictory types of logic (see box 9).

*Box 8. Argentina: The context of decentralization*

The historical watershed that strongly conditions sectoral policies in all social fields is the exhaustion and subsequent discarding of the Keynesian model of accumulation. According to that model, the national State is compelled to decide on resource distribution and to steer the economic process. It has been replaced by a model in which the logic of the market prevails.

This change has produced a colossal reconstruction which polarizes the social structure, reverses the dynamics of social ascension in a downward movement that radically affects the middle classes and creates a marginalized population mass. The other side of the coin is the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a minority, internationalization of the economy and the development of an ultramodern system designed to meet the consumption needs of the newly rich sectors.

The second contextual element that has to be considered is that of globalization and the demand, for markets and individuals alike, to be competitive in order to be able to participate in the exchange of commodities and services. In the case of national markets, this is reflected in the production of conditions of competitiveness, an increase in the productivity of the economy, a lowering of costs, an improvement in the educational profile of the economically active population, the implementation of legal guarantees, etc. In the case of individuals, the basic concern is to secure and develop the social and cultural capital that will enable them to be competitive on the formal job market.

Under the 1993 Act, the Ministry of Education has the following main functions: (i) establish the core objectives and basic contents of curricula for the different levels of education; (ii) evaluate the quality of education throughout the national education system; (iii) maintain the statistical bases of the education system; (iv) develop continuing teacher training through a federal network, and (v) implement plans and programmes to correct regional inequalities. These

functions have largely become possible through the availability of funding from international organizations. Furthermore, the Federal Council of Culture and Education, composed of the provincial Ministers of Education, reaches an agreement on the policies proposed by the National Ministry of Education in regard to core educational content, equivalence and validity of diplomas and policies to correct regional inequalities. The provincial governments, for their part, have the following main responsibilities: (i) direct management of educational services; (ii) detailed curriculum design for each province on the basis of national core content, and (iii) promotion of the participation of educational stakeholders in the management of the education system. The 1993 Act also introduced a reform of the education system through the establishment of basic general education (10 years of compulsory education) and polymodal (secondary) education.

*Box 9. Argentina: The principles of decentralization in Latin America*

*Economistic principles:*

- reduce public spending;
- distribute social expenditure at provincial and municipal levels ;
- improve the efficiency of the education service by privatizing it.

*Technocratic principles:*

- monitor the decision-making process and make it more effective;
- delegate powers of implementation, but with criteria pre-established by the central authorities.

*Pedagogical principles:*

- decentralization as a mechanism for improving educational quality.

*Principles of participatory democracy:*

- allow local and regional authorities to enjoy greater autonomy in their decision-making, in their exercise of authority and in their use of resources.

The goals of decentralization are many and include: greater knowledge of local needs; more effective use of resources; closer contact with users; development of greater responsiveness and capacity for adjustment to local diversities; strengthening of the positive link between decentralization and autonomy; stronger participation of citizens (strengthening of the democratic system); freeing the central authority so that it can devote itself to other questions. However, decentralization in education has been introduced in the context of tension and deep-seated regional inequality, as reflected in the different socio-economic conditions of the population, the varying technical and administrative capacities of the provinces and the different historical traditions of the education systems. Some provinces have been able to draw on financial resources to maintain the transferred educational services, but others have been

entirely dependent on the transfer of national resources. At the time of the transfer, some provinces had well-developed teams for the administrative management and governance of the education system, while other authorities were compelled to put in place new systems to manage the transferred services. In some provinces, because of differences between the conditions and characteristics of the national education services and those of the provincial education systems, the educational community put up resistance to the transfer process.

Lastly, the decentralization process took place in a context in which it was possible to count on the resources of international organizations, in view of the strong political legitimacy of the national State (parliamentary support for the executive, good relations between central government and a large number of provinces). After the profound crisis of the late 1990s, there was a substantial change in the managerial context of education systems. Mention may be made among other factors of the lack of international credit, the political crisis, and increased poverty and destitution. These realities call into question certain aspects relating to the viability and "sustainability" of decentralization. The national State finds itself having to contend with situations that had not been anticipated at the beginning of the decentralization process, namely: an educational crisis triggered by the suspension of courses in some provinces and a lack of financing needed to maintain the lines of action established in the 1990s (distribution of resources, financial assistance to the provinces for the implementation of the new structure of the system, etc).

### ***Armenia***

Armenia<sup>4</sup> was part of the Soviet Union for 70 years. The education system there was extremely centralized, from Moscow. Since its independence, the country has taken steps towards the liberalization of prices and foreign trade (integration into the international market), strong privatization and reform of the tax system, public administration and the social security system. It is important to note that the percentage of GDP devoted to education dropped from 7.2% in 1990 to 2.5% in 2002.

In order both to face up to economic problems and to set in motion socio-political reform in the country, Armenia has since 1999 been engaged in a process of rapid decentralization offering greater financial and managerial

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<sup>4</sup> After a long period of strong, centralized State control, this country has begun to move towards the liberalization of education..

autonomy to educational establishments. Decentralization has also gone hand in hand with a process of privatization, either through the privatization of institutions, particularly in higher education, or through an increase in private support. In this regard, reform has also led to the development of new systems of financing for schools and families (see for instance the formula of paid loans of school textbooks, as a component of a project financed by the World Bank). It is important to note that the decentralization process forms part of a wider programme to reform the entire education system (see box 10).

*Box 10. Armenia: Educational reform since 1997*

The educational reform undertaken by the Government includes:

- (i) diversification of financing by concentrating public resources on central, curriculum-related activities and increasing private support for additional activities;
  - (ii) restructuring of the education system to include decentralized management and finances, increased autonomy of educational institutions and rationalization of the system;
  - (iii) continued improvement of the curriculum and teaching methods, and renewal of evaluation methods to bring them into line with international standards.
- This has all been supported by a new EMIS information system.

Educational establishments are governed by school committees whose members are elected from among parents, teachers and members of the community. They are financed from the budget of the State, which grants them a lump sum payment based on the number of pupils in the school. Schools are responsible for drawing up their own budgets, executing them and accounting for expenditure. The Government of Armenia continues to assume responsibility for developing and adopting the national curriculum, which is compulsory for all schools. The process of rapid transition was preceded by a four-year pilot scheme of decentralized school management in around 10% of Armenian schools (the transition period should be completed in 2005). For the purposes of decentralization in Armenia it was considered important to try out procedures and regulations before introducing them on a wide scale. By doing so, the authorities were able to identify the difficulties and advantages of decentralization and thus to improve the relevant laws and regulations (see box 11).

**Box 11. Armenia: Lessons learnt during the 2001-2005 pilot programme**

The lessons learnt from decentralization, in particular the need to grant a financial allocation to the school and to put in place a board of management, were the following:

- One consequence of the lack of preparation and awareness of the stakeholders at the beginning of the reform process was weak support from the population and some slowness in getting started;
- At all levels of government, fear and a refusal to let go of power created artificial difficulties and resistances;
- The local elite took over the management of schools, leading the Ministry of Education to make sure that all of the stakeholders were informed about and aware of the implications of the reforms so as to make sure that all social groups participate in elections of the board of management;
- Training and consultation should be developed as much as possible;
- Before undertaking the reform a great deal of work should be done to develop regulations and laws while ensuring their compatibility with other laws.

The introduction and/or extension of self-management, responsibility, efficiency and accountability of schools, together with the participation of the different stakeholders in society, are the expected results of decentralization and of educational reform in general. Considering that the decentralization process is recent, it will be some time before a clear idea can be formed of the successes and setbacks of the process of empowerment of schools and liberalization of education in Armenia.

***Brasil***

Brazil<sup>5</sup> is a federal republic (Union) composed of 27 States grouped into five regions of very mixed characteristics. Of its 169 million inhabitants, 32 million are enrolled in public basic education. The education system consists of pre-primary education (0-six years), basic education (7-14 years), secondary and technological education and higher education. Regional and social equality and the quality of education for all are the main objectives of the reforms undertaken in Brazil. There still remain wide disparities between regions and between social groups. According to UNDP, 20% of the richest people in the country possess

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<sup>5</sup> A federal country which is trying to even out the wide disparities between regions and within regions and to raise the quality of education for all.

some 64% of national wealth, while 20% of the poorest have only 2.5%. Poverty is concentrated in the north, north-east and west central parts of the country.

The Ministry of Education of the Union has a normative, redistributive and local policy support function. The National Board of Education designs the curriculum (common core), which the public and private sectors have to adopt, while remaining free to decide on their pedagogical and methodological options. Monitoring and evaluation of the education system are the responsibility of the National Institute of Educational Research which produces and analyzes quantitative and qualitative information on education. The Union offers technical and financial assistance to the States and municipalities. It is responsible for higher education and for a small part of secondary education, the universities being autonomous. According to the Constitution, the Union must devote to education a minimum of 18% of its revenue, transferred in part to the other two entities of the Federation, namely, States and municipalities. The latter are responsible for basic education and enjoy autonomy of financial and educational management. They are required to contribute to basic education a minimum of 25% of their revenue from taxes and transfers.

Administrative decentralization, whose origins go back to the 19th century, was given a boost by the 1891 Constitution which instituted a federal system of Government. The military dictatorship of 1964, while maintaining administrative decentralization, favoured centralization of the tax system and decision-making, tending to promote pre-existing regional inequalities. The first stage in the decentralization of part of the responsibilities for educational management concerns the period 1980-1995. The Constitution was amended and a minimum level was set for educational expenditure. The federal Constitution was promulgated in 1988. Decentralized social policy gave more power to States and municipalities. Responsibilities were transferred, however, without much order or planning. Thus, while a process of municipalization of basic education got under way, there was a lack of mechanisms and clear criteria for financial cooperation between the federated units. A large number of municipalities did not have sufficient revenue to take on the new responsibilities. Overall, power and resources continued to be unequally distributed between the federated units. In fact, what occurred may be described as a shift from authoritarian centralism to oligarchical decentralization which lasted until the mid-1990s.

The second stage in decentralization concerns the period 1995-2002. In 1996 the Constitution was amended (no.14/96) and the Directives and Bases for Education Act was passed. The responsibilities of the Union, States and municipalities were redefined following a more rational and streamlined

distribution of resources between the three entities. Curricula were decentralized. This stage culminated in the fixing of an average salary for teachers, in the elaboration of a decentralized model of teacher training and in a strengthening of the coordinating role of the federal State. Technical and financial support was offered to States and municipalities to assist them in the implementation of local programmes.

The strategies pursued until 2002 had varying effects. Regional inequalities in access to resources were reduced and school enrolments increased. Municipalization of education continued apace, while teachers' salaries rose significantly (in some municipalities they were below the minimum wage). A minimum level of expenditure per pupil was established. When municipalities find this to be beyond the possibilities offered by their revenue, the Union makes up for the shortfall. In 2001 this was the case in 40% of municipalities, where two thirds of the children enrolled in public basic education were living. The reform also entailed the establishment of social monitoring boards for curricula. In terms of qualitative impact, educational results still give cause for concern, as half of fourth-year pupils cannot read. Production of course materials for teacher training remains centralized. The Union is still in charge of training, with the support of specialists. Curricula and educational policy are rather unconnected from decentralization, while educational results remained low. Lastly, resources have been earmarked mainly for basic education, to the detriment of other levels and forms of education.

The challenges of decentralization under the Lula Government are first and foremost consolidation of the Republic and support for the federal covenant for the suppression of social, regional and racial inequalities. The next concern is to introduce qualitative changes in education. It is estimated that 9.6 million children do not have access to pre-primary education and that 2 million children between the ages of 7 and 14 work without studying (the harshest forms of work, including prostitution). The repetition rate is 22%, while 40% of children are in a grade which does not correspond to their age (they are generally older). Of 100 pupils who begin basic education, only 40 complete the eight-year course; 59% of fourth-year pupils are functionally illiterate and 52% do not master basic mathematical operations. 18 million young adults are functionally illiterate. In 2000, out of 3.2 million students completing secondary education, only 1.2 million went on to higher education.

Consolidation of decentralization presupposes a strengthening of democratic participation in school management (forums, committees and councils) and establishment of a fund to upgrade the teaching profession. Improved linkage

between the Union and the States is sought through collaboration and the contributions of companies to the financing of the education sector. Consolidation of decentralization also implies greater transfers of resources to education systems and to the schools of States and municipalities, and promotion of participatory school management.

Massive government investment in the teaching career forms part of this consolidation. There exists a national teacher training policy through the establishment of a national proficiency examination, a federal grant designed to encourage continuing training and a national research network on basic education, along with teacher training agencies. Lastly, it remains very important for the States to provide support for the elaboration and improvement of evaluation systems for basic education.

### ***Cameroon***

Cameroon<sup>6</sup> presents considerable physical, human and economic diversity. It is composed of more than 200 ethnic groups, resulting in many different ways of life and social, cultural, religious and linguistic organizations. Cameroon set in motion the process of reform and decentralization of its education system after the World Conference on EFA held in Jomtien in Thailand (1990). This reform has been shaped both by the principles articulated at that conference and by the realities of an economic crisis whose negative effects have marked all sectors of national activity, and particularly that of education. The crisis erupted in 1986 and worsened in 1994 with the devaluation of the CFA franc. One of its most notable aspects is servicing of the debt, which alone represents nearly 57% of the State budget.

The process of reform and decentralization can be divided into four stages. The first concerns the establishment, at the Education Forum held in 1995, of guidelines and basic principles for the reform. The participants in the Forum, representing the public and private sectors, international organizations, international and scientific circles, the business world, trade unions and parents' associations, various religious denominations, traditional authorities, etc, proposed a series of measures to reform the education system. The contribution of the representatives of international organizations (UNESCO, World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP...) consisted in determining the conditions under which they could provide support for the reform. The second stage concerned the adoption of the reform law. Cameroon's Education Framework Act no.633/PJ L./ATN,

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<sup>6</sup> Decentralization policy in a context of educational reform and economic crisis

adopted in 1998, establishes the legal framework for the reform. The third stage consisted in the drafting of a strategy document. The report « Stratégie du secteur (formel) de l'Éducation » (2001) proposes a series of measures in priority fields, namely: access and equity, efficiency and quality, system management and governance and costs and financing of the entire strategy (see box 12). It sets out the global context in which the strategy must be set, offers a diagnosis of the system and presents the objectives of the process of momentum-building.

*Box 12. Cameroon: Resources allocated to education*

At the present time, the resources allocated to education originate from:

- the State, through appropriations to the different ministries responsible for education;
- households, through the payment of school fees;
- parents' associations, which generally fund: the purchase of specific equipment (furniture and blackboards), building repairs, construction of classrooms, latrines, waterholes, laboratories, and the payment of temporary teachers' salaries;
- the private sector;
- bilateral and multilateral partners.

Under the new law, decentralized local communities and other partners are expected to contribute to the financing of education.

The fourth and final stage was the elaboration of the EFA National Plan of Action. Cameroon's education strategy was updated to bring it closer into line with the six Dakar goals, to which was added a seventh goal consisting in the development of a culture of responsible citizenship, based on shared values. The new strategy reflects: a broader view of education, which is not reduced solely to the formal aspect; a concern for better planning of the reform scenario on the basis of a methodology consisting in translating each of the seven goals adopted into operational challenges; a concern to identify and broaden partnerships at all levels of the process. Cameroon's EFA National Plan of Action was formally adopted in 2002. It is designed to serve both as a strategy document at national level and as a tool for the use of partners at international level. It includes a decentralization methodology and an implementation strategy. Activities will be carried out in accordance with the following time frame: short term from 2003 to 2005, medium term from 2006 to 2010, and long term from 2011 to 2015.

Decentralization is starting off in a difficult educational context. There are inadequacies in terms of educational supply and quality of education, including in the private sector (see box 13), leading to high dropout rates. Teaching conditions are shaky: 16% of teachers are on temporary contracts and the teacher: pupil ratio is one to 52. Recognized as one of the few countries to have a primary GER close to 100% at the end of the 1980s, Cameroon has seen this rate decrease to 71% in 1995. According to the latest data available, in primary education there is a considerable lack of classrooms and only 80% of registered teachers were actually in service. Significant disparities exist between the provinces: Adamaoua, the north and the far north have fewer teaching staff and fewer classrooms.

*Box 13. Cameroon: Private education*

With nearly 30% of pupils enrolled in pre-primary and primary education (1998), the contribution of private education to the national education system is considerable. Private partners fall into two categories: religious private education and secular private education. Each type of education (Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, secular) is placed under the responsibility of a national secretariat.

While, in general, private education is expected to contribute to the implementation of education policy as stipulated by the Framework Act, each category or type of education maintains its specificity with regard to the aims and contents of the education provided. This is also true of the internal organization and management of educational institutions (recruitment, salaries of staff, etc).

Private education has always benefited from State subventions. However, this type of education faces a number of problems: inadequate infrastructure; inadequate services; barely qualified and excessively underpaid teaching staff; patriarchal and antiquated management of persons and property. The Education Framework Act provides for a new framework of cooperation between the public authorities and their important private partner. Private educational institutions may accordingly be classified as "free" (fully private) or "under contract" (semi-private).

The primary objective of decentralization in education is therefore the universalization and democratization of basic education. This means: (i) bringing the school back to the local community; (ii) involving the local community extensively in the organization of school life; (iii) facilitating access for all children, particularly in the most disadvantaged social groups, and thereby reaching those excluded from the system.

This has been translated into the following measures: (a) transfer to the decentralized local authorities of responsibilities for education<sup>7</sup>; (b) setting up the "educational community", defined as all the physical and legal entities contributing to the operation and development of the education institution; (c) establishment of school councils (for nursery and primary schools) and college councils (for secondary, post-primary and teacher education), which are bodies responsible for supervising, monitoring, evaluating and issuing recommendations on the operation of the school or institution; (d) abolition of school fees and establishment of a "minimum package" in public primary schools.

The second objective of decentralization is improved effectiveness of the education system. The system is supposed to be sufficiently effective for it to make young people better able to compete in a globalized world. Effectiveness does not mean simply renewing curricula but, in the case of Cameroon, "reapportioning responsibilities on a controllable, recognizable and human scale" and "ensuring better controlled distribution of roles, functions and actions". Presidential decree no.2002/004 of 14 January 2002 on organization of the Ministry of National Education seeks to put this into practice, in particular by (i) dismantling certain structures in the central services (General Education Inspectorates) and (ii) giving a more specialised focus to pedagogical monitoring in the various levels of education.

The main problems encountered in the reform and decentralization process are: (i) unavailability of statistical data; (ii) lack of a budget to support expenditure on activities and motivate the participants; (iii) conflicting roles of the EFA National Coordinator and the Representative of the UNESCO Cluster Office. In addition, there is a lack of commitment by the various ministerial partners to the implementation programme, each ministry preferring to follow its own plan of action. This is the case with the Ministry of Youths and Sports, which has set up its own national literacy programme. The final problem is how to finance the activities provided for in the plan and how to ensure synergy of action between the different actors.

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<sup>7</sup> The new Constitution will replace the administration of the provinces in which the territory is currently organized by decentralized territorial entities (regions) governed by elected regional councils. The regions will enjoy administrative and financial autonomy. The provinces are subdivided into departments and the departments into arrondissements. The President of the Republic appoints the governors of the provinces, the prefects of the departments and the sub-prefects of the arrondissements.

## *Cyprus*

Cyprus<sup>8</sup> is a small island with fairly decentralized educational management, which has begun the process of decentralizing some educational services, such as school building infrastructure and maintenance (see box 14). The trend is towards giving greater autonomy to the schools through the establishment of school boards. The case of Cyprus may be regarded as a good combination of centralization (of management) and decentralization (some autonomy to schools).

The Ministry of Education and Culture designs the curriculum for all levels of education on the basis of suggestions made by teachers and inspectors. Policy regarding teachers is completely in the hands of the Government. The Educational Service Committee (ESC) recruits teachers from a list of qualified personnel having at least a university degree. The ESC is responsible for the promotion and placement of teachers in cities and districts and transfers of teachers from one district to another. The teachers are evaluated by inspectors. Salary scales are fixed by the Government after negotiations with the Ministry of Finance and the unions. Teachers' salaries are paid directly by the Treasury Department.

Public education is mainly financed by the Government, either directly or through allotments to local authorities or school boards, while private education is supported by individuals and governing bodies. The Government provides the financial resources for public schools and awards annual grants to local authorities to finance services under their responsibility. In the public sector, financing covers every education need, including the provision of textbooks. Public tertiary institutions come under various ministries but essentially their costs are covered by the public budget.

### *Box 14. Cyprus: The scope of decentralization*

Decentralization of education management is concentrated on minor matters such as school building infrastructure, determining the educational districts for each school, and providing the appliances and all the furniture and fittings required for the proper functioning of schools. These responsibilities have been transferred to the School Boards. For each municipality a School Board is established which is responsible for the schools operating within the area of the municipality. The Government of Cyprus appoints members of the School Boards which, once

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<sup>8</sup> A small population for whom decentralization is not a major concern. There is however a process under way to empower educational institutions.

established, become self-governing entities. The School Boards have their own budget, approved and financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and by the Ministry of Finance.

In addition to the School Board, authority is passed on to the principal of every school through the management regulations set by the Ministry of Education, which refer to the activities and daily organization of the school, such as students behaviour and absences, curriculum, teaching staff responsibilities, etc.

At the pre-primary, primary and secondary level, overall responsibility for supervising the functioning of the schools rests with the Inspectorate. In the case of public education, the Inspectorate has responsibility for implementing the Government's education policies, and particularly for curriculum development and the evaluation of teachers. The Ministry of Education has responsibility for supervising and accrediting tertiary institutions. However, an independent body accredits private tertiary institutions.

Introducing and implementing decentralization in the education system in Cyprus is difficult (on the decentralization of culture, see box 15). Cyprus being a small country, decentralization is not always the best solution<sup>9</sup>. The only areas in which decentralization can be effective concern school building infrastructure and maintenance. The Government can transfer greater responsibility to School Boards or local authorities, providing them with the necessary financial aid and technical assistance. Instead of just implementing the rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Education and Culture for school management, the School Boards could present their own ideas about school administration. For this process to be successful, every principal should administer a sum of money granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture so as to be able to put his ideas into practice.

Unfortunately many School Boards are very small, with a very low budget and few personnel. Since they do not always have the ability to assume responsibility for school building infrastructure and maintenance, it would not be desirable to transfer additional authority to them. To do so would increase their management costs and result in more delays and bureaucracy.

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<sup>9</sup> In order to ensure all students equal opportunity for university admission, the Ministry of Education and Culture prepares them for entrance examinations for Cyprus University or the universities in Greece. The examinations, but also curricula, particularly some subjects that are taught in upper secondary education, must be the same for all students.

Box 15. *Cyprus: A cultural decentralization programme*

In order to ensure the quality of life of people living in rural areas and to give all citizens in Cyprus access to the island's cultural wealth, the cultural services have extended the decentralization project "Athena" to include more areas and a wider range of activities, traditional Cypriot music, theatre performances, films and lectures. Ten municipalities and two communities have been included in the cultural decentralization programme, and a total of 100 events have so far been organized.

In order to encourage the participation of children in the process of artistic creativity, the cultural services organized during the summer period a series of workshops on art and ceramics and a shadow theatre workshop at the cultural centres in rural areas.

### ***Colombia***

In Colombia<sup>10</sup>, since the 1980s different forms of decentralization have been implemented (political, administrative, towards the private market), using various methods (administrative, delegation and devolution). The goals of the decentralization process, including in the field of education, are improvement of local services (coverage and quality), better territorial equity, enhanced democratic participation, an increase in the tax effort and an improvement in management and administration.

The period of nationalization (1960-1985) was characterized by the centralization and concentration of administrative functions with a view to greater economic rationality and equity in the salaries of teachers, between regions and between social groups. Municipalization (1986-1991) was set in motion following demands for political and administrative autonomy by the territorial entities. Deconcentration towards the municipalities consisted in the first instance in the transfer of a part of VAT resources previously under the responsibility of central government. A good number of municipalities also take care of staff administration and determine budgets other than those covering staff costs. Planning for the entire system remains national.

Departmentalization (1991-2001) began and grew with the promulgation of the Constitutional Charter of 1991 and Act 60 of 1993 which, among other

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<sup>10</sup> A process of increased decentralization with difficulties in resource allocation.

things, increased the resources granted to the social sector and allowed municipalities of more than 100,000 inhabitants to manage their own tax resources. It followed on from a reform entailing the participation of the education community in decision-making. Act 115 of 1994 mapped out a complete and complex institutional structure comprising several bodies at each national, regional and local level. The results of departmentalization have been mixed. Services have not always been provided as efficiently and as effectively as they might owing to inadequate mechanisms; fair allocation of resources has not yet become a firm reality; a full assessment of how far democracy and participation have developed has not been able to be made for lack of information. The differing interests in decentralization are also to be noted (see box 16).

Act 715 of 2001 gave further impetus to the decentralization process, in particular by seeking to make up for the lack of direct correspondence between the objectives of the process and the tools for achieving them. The Act sets out a new method of resource allocation, introducing results-based incentives (see box 17) together with different functions and responsibilities by level. Central government is responsible for policy formulation and the elaboration of technical criteria for the distribution of human, physical and financial resources. The departments administer the municipalities' resources and provision of services, provide technical assistance, are responsible for the educational information system, and supervise and monitor the work of the decentralized entities. The districts and municipalities (of more than 100,000 inhabitants) ensure educational service within their area and administer human, physical and financial resources.

*Box 16. Colombia: The context of decentralization: differing interests*

Those concerned by decentralization have been driven by a multitude of contradictory motives. National policymakers were seeking to municipalize education, weaken teachers' unions and neutralize expenditure to the greatest possible extent in the face of the different policies of the parties. Teachers wanted guaranteed payment of acquired services and the least possible decentralization. The private sector, and in particular Catholic schools, wished to maintain its freedom to provide education and reduce State intervention to a minimum (Vargas et al., 1997).

The technicians saw to it that transfers that had replaced the VAT contribution would go to the municipalities and that the national budget would be used for the financing of the private schools. Teachers maintained the services guarantee and succeeded in having the transfer of tax resources apply only to departments and

municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The private sector managed to elude State control and the previously accepted demand that schools be non-profit-making.

The main problem in the decentralization process grew out of the tax responsibilities that central government transferred to the departments and districts. The calculation was geared more to covering the costs noted in the past than to increasing school enrolments. Thus, for example, the distribution was largely based on the number of teachers in 1993. Resources were therefore apportioned in such a way as to pay for teachers wherever they were and less to provide financing in places where there were children and young people. Some departments and districts thus received five times more resources per capita than others. In addition, the distribution of the departments' tax resources among their municipalities proved to be to the advantage of those with a greater capacity for resource production. In most of the departments the posting of teachers paid out of tax resources was to the disadvantage of the small municipalities since those teachers were mainly assigned to the biggest cities, without taking into account the educational needs of each municipality. Another consequence of this was that the smallest and poorest municipalities had to recruit teachers using their own resources, thus reducing their investment capacity and their ability to manage local budgets unaided. Moreover, while those municipalities' own resources decreased because of external factors, the general budget of the nation ultimately covered their needs, with obvious repercussions on public finances. Other difficulties stemmed from the fact that the measures to secure the active participation of communities remained purely formal while some clientelism occasionally persisted in regional and local management.

The report includes an analysis of educational and financial data by department, by rural and urban area and by economic level of children's families. It is however too early to establish links of causality between the educational situation expressed by the indicators and the decentralization process. Figures on educational coverage and quality show rather how much effort is still required to provide all Colombian children and young people with schooling.

*Box 17. Colombia: Resource allocation since 2001*

Resource allocation takes into account the number of children in school, the school-age population out of school, differences in cost by region, area (urban, rural) and educational level, among other factors.

This system of resource distribution offers an incentive for the territorial entities to be

more effective, to extend coverage and improve quality.

In-school population: the first basis for calculation is the number of children in school in the immediately preceding year, multiplied by the cost per pupil determined by central Government. After determination of the allocation corresponding to the in-school population, the balance of available resources will be distributed according to the following criteria:

- Population for effective school enrolment: the value resulting from multiplication of the percentage increase in the number of children in school by the percentage of the cost per pupil.
- Equity: the amount to be distributed to each district or municipality according to the poverty index set by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE).

The resources earmarked for municipalities of more than 100,000 inhabitants are allocated to them directly, while the others depend on their respective departments. The resources for educational quality are administered directly by all the municipalities.

Efforts have also been made to strengthen schools, which are required to produce results in the matter of quality. Principals are given responsibility for administering the personnel assigned to the establishment and managing the funds allocated to them.

In order to ensure the financial viability of education it is necessary to slow down the present growth rate of costs. This means that neither central government nor the territorial entities can take decisions that increase costs to a level higher than the resources placed at their disposal.

## ***Mali***

The process of decentralization in education in Mali<sup>11</sup> is one of the major options of the 10-year educational development programme (PRODEC) approved in 1998 with a view to reforming the education system (see box 18). This reform covers the entire education system: pre-school education, basic education, non-formal education, secondary education and higher education. It seeks to ensure universal education through the basic schools, the education for development centres (CEDs), and the improvement of educational quality at all levels of the education system (see box 19).

PRODEC forms part of a policy aimed at transferring responsibility to the local authorities, communities and outlying structures of the Ministry of

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<sup>11</sup> Recent decentralization within the framework of the reform of the education system and the goals of EFA.

Education. It seeks to bring schools closer to children, in particular by developing the goal of "one village, one school or CED"; teacher training and recruitment; putting in place of a sustained policy of communication, dialogue and consultation among all the stakeholders; development of a dynamic partnership around the school in which all partners play their role; and the implementation of School Development Projects (PDEs) by school management committees. PRODEC is being carried out with the technical partnership of a larger number of international and bilateral agencies through a programme of sectoral investment in education (PISE), 49% of whose financing comes from external sources.

*Box 18. Mali: Priority concerns of PRODEC (1998)*

PRODEC is keyed to 11 priority concerns, namely:

- quality basic education for all;
- vocational education adapted to the needs of the economy;
- revitalized, results-oriented general and technical secondary education ;
- financially-sustainable quality higher education adapted to priority needs ;
- use of mother tongues in formal education concurrently with French;
- a policy to promote books and effective teaching materials (gradual privatization of the design, elaboration and distribution of school textbooks);
- a sustained policy of teacher training;
- a genuine partnership around the school;
- the restructuring and institutional adjustments needed to recast the education system;
- a policy of communication centred on dialogue and consultation with all partners;
- a sustained, rebalanced, rational financing policy aligned with decentralization.

*Box 19. Mali: Some of the goals of PRODEC*

- Raise the gross enrolment rate from 56.7% in 2002 to 95% in 2010;
- Reduce disparities between regions and between urban and rural areas;
- Raise the gross enrolment rate of girls from 40% in 2000 to 90% in 2010 while enabling them to go as far as possible in their studies;
- train and recruit some 25,000 new teachers by 2010;
- increase the adult literacy ratio from 28% in 2000 to 55% in 2010, including 45% for women;
- make in-service teacher training more practical and more tailored to teachers' needs;
- strengthen continuing training while tailoring it more closely to teachers' needs;
- provide each pupil with a textbook for each main field of study;
- gradually introduce mother tongues in the formal system concurrently with French.

Mali is divided into eight administrative regions and one district, the district of Bamako, equivalent to a region. Each region comprises between four and eight circles, themselves formed of urban and/or rural districts. The regions, the district of Bamako, the circles and districts constitute territorial communities. The districts are new entities established within the framework of decentralization and only became a reality after the 1997 district elections. The territorial communities are endowed by law with legal personality and financial autonomy. Under the provisions of articles 3 of Act no. 93-008 of 11 February 1993, they are responsible for designing, programming and implementing actions to serve regional or local economic, social or cultural development. The territorial communities are freely administered by elective assemblies or councils who deliberate within their fields of competence. The assembly or council of the territorial community elects from among its members an executive body whose composition is fixed by law. Each territorial community has at its disposal services set up by itself and deconcentrated State services. It has its own budget and resources consisting in taxes that it is authorized to collect and State subventions; remunerative taxes on services rendered, property revenue, loans, gifts and bequests.

In order to reach a consensus on a school management structural model and a shared understanding with regard to the transfer of competencies and resources, the Ministry of National Education organized a national forum bringing together all the stakeholders. The forum adopted the principle of a gradual transfer of resources to the territorial communities. Several avenues are to be explored, such as the establishment by the territorial community of a consultative structure for education; the definition and gradual establishment of *Comités de Gestion Scolaire* (CGSs), or school management committees; identification of areas and schools where CGSs will be set up; the training of the members of the management committees in the "school project" approach; training of personnel and elected representatives of the territorial communities in decentralized school management; identification of competencies and resources to be transferred on a priority basis to the territorial communities or in the form of shared management (e.g. basic infrastructure, teaching materials, secondary school scholarships, school furniture, teaching personnel, etc.).

The State then observes the principle of gradual transfer, as and when the territorial communities fully achieve the conditions to take on these new responsibilities. Risks of dysfunction and duplication are thus able to be avoided or mitigated. There are however several constraints that make the task difficult. The major constraints are legal, institutional and material. Article 4 of Act no.

93-008 of 11 February 1993 laying down the conditions for the free administration of the territorial communities provides that any transfer of responsibility to the territorial community must be accompanied by the concurrent transfer by the State to the community of the resources and means necessary for the normal exercise of those responsibilities. When the State has not the necessary means or resources to undertake a transfer, it should not do so. The coexistence of a number of legislative and regulatory texts concerning the same responsibilities assigned to different structures and/or bodies (the State's technical services on the one hand and the territorial communities on the other) is also to be noted. Reference may be made in particular to texts relating to sectoral education, health and water management policies, which were not abrogated by the texts on decentralization.

### ***Morocco***

The recent reform of the education and training system in Morocco<sup>12</sup> marks a break with past reforms both methodologically and in terms of the topics addressed. It is the outcome of intense debate and national consensus regarding the aims, approach and components of the system and of the management of available resources. The purpose of the reform project is to put in place mechanisms for coordination between State and non-State authorities concerned by the activity of the system, to improve quality, in particular through continuing training and motivation of personnel and, lastly, to involve society as a whole within the framework of a responsible and lasting partnership. The principle of participation is at the basis of regionalization.

The objectives of education in the country in the 1960s were universalization, unification, Moroccanization and Arabization. The goal was to put an end to the diversity of schools and their segregational function inherited from the Protectorate. Notwithstanding obvious advances, the achievement of universal schooling for children between the ages of 6 and 12 and the spread of quality education remain to some extent aspirations. In 1999 the work of the Special Commission on Education and Training (COSEF) resulted in the elaboration of a national charter on education and training. This charter calls for a major reform of education over the period 2000-2009, seen as a decade of reform. In addition to the general policy lines and strategic choices that it sets out, and apart from educational reforms, the charter singles out regionalization as the principle of governance (see box 20, lever 15). It should be noted that since 1999, when the

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<sup>12</sup> More than 40 years of deconcentration were followed by a new law in 2000 which marked the beginning of a more far-reaching process of decentralization.

charter was adopted, the governance system of the Ministry of National Education has never been decentralized although a process of deconcentration has long been under way (see box 21).

The institutional organization of the education system is of the pyramid type with, at the base, the education and training ground plan (primary, lower and upper secondary schools and training centres); at the intermediate levels, provincial delegations and regional education and training academies (AREFs); and at the apex, the central administration. These structures existed well before the national charter on education and training. The changes concern the nature of relations, currently characterised by deconcentration and decentralization of the mode of governance. Notable changes are the establishment of a regional linking mechanism between the provincial delegations and the central administration and the institution of supervisory and no longer purely hierarchical control over the AREFs. The AREF in fact represents the level of decentralization of the governance system of the Department of National Education. The provincial delegations represent the level of deconcentration in relation to the AREF. Schools, with their boards of management, represent for their part the simultaneously deconcentrated and decentralized local level.

*Box 20. Morocco: The National Education Charter*

The national charter on education and training identifies six areas for improvement, set out below under 19 levers for change.

Area 1: extension of education and its anchorage in the economic environment

Lever 1: universalization of basic education

Lever 2: literacy training and non-formal education

Lever 3: adaptation of the education and training system to its economic environment

Area 2: organization of education

Lever 4 : reorganization and coordination of education-training stages

Lever 5 : evaluation and examinations

Lever 6 : educational and vocational guidance

Area 3: improved quality of education and training

Lever 7: revision and adaptation of curricula, methods, school textbooks and teaching materials

Lever 8: timetables, educational scheduling

Lever 9: improvement of the teaching and use of the Arabic language, mastery of foreign languages and approaches to Tamazight

Lever 10 : use of the new information and communication technologies

Lever 11: encouragement of excellence, innovation and scientific research

Lever 12: promotion of sports activities, physical education at school and university and out-of-school activities

Area 4: human resources

Lever 13: motivation of educational and administrative human resources, upgrading of their continuing training, improvement of their working conditions, revision of the criteria for recruitment, continuing evaluation and promotion

Lever 14: improvement of the social and material conditions of learners and care for persons with special needs

Area 5: governance

Lever 15: introduction of decentralization and deconcentration in the education and training sector

Lever 16: improvement of governance and continuing evaluation of the education and training system

Lever 17: diversification of building and infrastructure methods and standards, adaptation to their environments and rationalization of their use and operation

Area 6: partnership and financing

Lever 18: encouragement of private sector education and training and regulation of its standards and operation

Lever 19: mobilization of funding resources and optimization of their use

Act 07-00 of 19 May 2000 establishes the AREFs as public bodies possessing legal personality and administrative and financial autonomy under the control of the State. It lays down their functions and responsibilities and their mode of administration and management. The AREFs are required to exercise at regional level the responsibilities assigned to them by the central administration, such as supervision of education and training plans, supervision of building and infrastructure projects, general functioning of education and training, management of human resources, supervision of examinations, evaluation and educational research. The provincial services in charge of education and training need to be strengthened, in terms of responsibilities and resources, and must, with a view to full integration, be coordinated and placed under the supervision of a provincial authority on the new model of the academies. Each local education and training network is to be supervised by an office of management, composed of principals of schools and institutions belonging to the same network, representatives of teachers, parents and local professional groups. Each establishment of education and training is to be directed by the principal and a board of management in which teachers, parents and local partners will be represented.

Box 21. *Morocco: Deconcentration of the Department of National Education*

- Period of the Protectorate. Only primary education was deconcentrated, in the form of inspectorates for Muslim primary education and inspectorates for European primary education, serving excessively large geographical areas. These inspectorates had a mainly pedagogical function. Secondary education, for its part, was directed from the Central Administration. The central structures of the Department of National Education were set up in the 1920s.
- From 1956 to 1962. The Ministry of National Education turned the primary education inspectorates into regional inspectorates located in the major cities of the Kingdom, by ministerial decree of 4 June 1959, in which only the grade of regional inspector of primary education was created and the responsibilities attaching thereto fixed.
- From 1962 to 1976. Ten provincial delegations were created by royal decree no. 1.61.380 of 19 July 1962, establishing the responsibilities and organization of the Ministry of National Education. The criteria for the appointment of provincial delegates were laid down by royal decree no.610.67 of 8 April 1968. Eight years later the functions of the delegations were spelled out by decree no.2.75.837 of 19 January 1976 pertaining to the responsibilities and organization of the Ministry of Education. In terms of deconcentration, the delegates, apart from their general functions, are not vested with specific powers enabling them to ensure true administrative and educational management.
- From 1976 to 1999. New external services, the academies of the Ministry of Education, were established in 1987 with the reform of the baccalaureate. Their main functions were to manage examinations at regional level. Like the provincial delegations, the organization of the academies is not covered by any regulation. To fill this gap, the Ministry of Education established an organization chart for the delegations by ministerial decree of 5 August 1999.

Apart from temporary staff who are paid locally, the permanent or trainee personnel assigned to the AREFs come under the Department of National Education. They continue, however, to be subject to the legislation and regulations in force concerning them. The AREFs might gradually, according to their needs for human resources, draw up a particular statute for their own personnel according to the relevant laws and rules in force, on the proposal of the governing board.

By way of evaluation, it should be said that the deconcentration and decentralization process is still in its early days, even though much has been achieved at the legal level. Effective implementation calls for a gradual approach, taking into account the actual difficulties that arose in the regionalization of the

sub-system of governance. The setting up of the AREFs should begin with the few academies meeting such "criteria of eligibility" as pupil numbers, infrastructure, availability of resources, etc. The other academies should prepare for the change, in particular by drawing up a regional educational development plan, and a staff training plan, while redeploying their human and material resources. There are at present 16 AREFs, i.e. one academy per region, as the regions are currently defined. They are all provided with governing boards, comptrollers and accountants.

Supporting measures for decentralization relate essentially to the training of AREF personnel and consciousness-raising for all of the regional and local actors concerned by education and training. Central administration should design pre- and in-service training plans or modules for AREF personnel, with the collaboration of the ministerial departments concerned in particular with administrative and financial management. The second type of supporting measures concern the motivation of all actors operating at the regional and local levels to contribute to the success of the new undertaking to regionalize the system of governance. Consciousness-raising campaigns should accordingly target educational and administrative personnel, pupils, parents, authorities, communities, economic operators and NGOs.

### ***Pakistan***

Pakistan<sup>13</sup> is a federal country with his four provinces and three regions, which are divided into districts. There exists a parliament, a Federal Senate and assemblies in each province. Since 2001 the Government of Pakistan has been decentralizing authority from the provinces towards the districts. Decentralization forms part of the action plan for the reform of the education system (2001-2005), designed in the context of debt and poverty reduction strategies (see box 22).

The main problems besetting the education system are: teacher absenteeism, a high pupil dropout rate, particularly in primary education, high repetition rates, low completion rates in elementary education, inequalities between the sexes, regions and social groups, low literacy rates, inefficiency of schools and shortage of qualified teachers. These issues have been noted by decentralization plan officers and in consultations with local communities.

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<sup>13</sup> Recent decentralization aimed at increasing the participation of the population in the educational development effort in a context of action to alleviate poverty.

*Box 22. Pakistan: Reform of the education system 2001-2005*

Decentralization forms part of the action plan for reform of the education system 2001-2005 designed in the context of debt reduction strategies advocated by the World Bank. The reform takes account of the following aspects:

- programme linking together education and poverty reduction
- expansion of basic education
- introduction of technical education at secondary level
- improvement of educational policy through teacher training
- reforms of the tertiary education sector
- public-private association
- innovative programmes.

In the process of decentralization, the federal State maintains a part of decision-making at federal level, such as curriculum design, setting of teacher salary levels, teacher accreditation and evaluation of pupil achievement. The State also guarantees access to education and equity in the education system. At district level, education departments have been established, with responsibility for administering the system. The district is responsible for planning, directing and evaluating the education system and for the salaries of teaching and non-teaching personnel. In addition to the resources transferred by the federal and provincial governments, the district has to generate other, additional resources. The district is responsible for all expenditure on education. Lastly, at the level of each school, it is too early to speak of autonomy in respect of educational institutions in Pakistan. Decision-making has not yet been transferred to the schools. In the future each district will have a Citizen Community Board and will consolidate the school management committees (see box 23).

*Box 23. Pakistan: Citizen Community Boards*

1. Established to enable communities to participate in development-related activities in both urban and rural areas.
2. The establishment of committees may be facilitated by a locally elected body or by the citizens themselves.
3. Such committees are recognized by being registered in the district. To be so registered, they must provide 20% of the funds.
4. The committees organize themselves, decide how they will operate and choose their leaders.
5. The committees may also receive State support after being registered, when they mobilize local resources for local development micro-projects.

In many districts there already exist school management committees, also known

as Village Education Committees (VECs) or Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) according to province. These committees have greatly contributed in various ways to the education system, particularly in guiding the school, in solving the problem of teacher absenteeism, and in providing information about students or in disbursing funds for repairs and other services.

The main goal of decentralization is eventually to manage, plan, mobilize and use resources, implement plans, monitor and evaluate the education system in order to improve educational service at local level. The rural populations, who account for 68% of total population, do not currently participate in the decision-making process and have limited access to social services.

As regards the difficulties and successes of decentralization, the process is recent, having been launched only on 14 August 2001. It is therefore still too early to assess the successes and failures of the implementation plan. The following achievements may however be stressed: less cumbersome procedures for the approval of agreements of limited scope, improvement in the exercise of responsibility by government officials, improvement in teacher assistance and public awareness concerning the right to education. The lessons learnt in this connection are shown in box 24.

*Box 24. Pakistan: Lessons learnt*

1. Decentralization of the education system would have been more successful if it had been put into application on the basis of pilot projects rather than in all regions at the same time.
2. Educational results will not be improved unless all the factors influencing education are affected by decentralization.
3. The decentralization of the education system would have been better supported by qualified personnel familiar with the philosophy and goal of the new system.
4. Effective collaboration and coordination between governments of the provinces and districts could have provided a basis for more effective execution of the reform.
5. Technical assistance to each district would have facilitated swifter progress towards the resolution of procedural problems.
6. Decentralization cannot be imposed by law but calls for goodwill, commitment and promptitude on the part of the personnel responsible for bringing in the changes.
7. The chances of success would be greater if the federal and provincial governments strengthened the infrastructure of the district and other local levels before putting the new system into application. There was a need to develop a plan for the implementation of education system decentralization.

8. A changed title does not mean a changed attitude on the part of officials who seem reluctant to share power with other decision-makers.
9. It is possible that decentralization will become effective only upon the establishment of a decentralized management system placing emphasis on institutional autonomy.
10. The school management committees are considered to be a powerful resource for the creation of a local management culture through participatory decision-making. The committees cannot be a viable mechanism for such decision-making until their members receive due authorization.
11. The success of decentralization will depend greatly on the level of responsibility of the stakeholders. It will emerge from the development of a sense of moral and professional responsibility.

During implementation of the reform and of decentralization some problems arose, in particular uncertainty about the tax transfer, lack of clarity in the delegation of financial authority, the increased number of interlocutors at district level, the unavailability of the necessary funds and the insignificant role of the school management committees and Citizen Community Boards in school management and fund allocation (centralization at district level, and committees unable to provide the 20% of funds requested of them). The following difficulties have also been noted: outstanding issues between the province and the districts (the former are still responsible for important aspects of educational management); centralization of financial authority at district level (the municipalities have no role in education); adoption of a top-down planning approach on the part of coordinators between province and district; non-satisfaction of demand for education by public sector; lack of training and experience of officials working at district level, in particular coordinators and officials responsible for implementation who are not familiar with the new structure; ambiguity in the distribution of officials' responsibilities; and delegation of responsibility without delegation of authority.

### ***Peru***

Since 2002 Peru<sup>14</sup> has been engaged in a process of decentralization organized around three levels of government: national, regional and local. Decentralization is political, economic and administrative. The process was initiated under Constitutional Reform Act no.27680 and Organization of the Bases of Decentralization Act no. 27783 (both dating from 2002). Several chapters of the 1993 Constitution were thus amended. The general agreement on

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<sup>14</sup> A country with a decentralized tradition which has recently embarked on a rather innovative decentralization policy.

"governance", entailing further legislative measures, was adopted in July 2002. It was the outcome of a long process of dialogue and consultation with stakeholders in the country in the context of democratic transition following the end of the dictatorship in 2000.

The decentralization process is therefore very recent, and transfers of political, economic and administrative authority are gradual. Responsibility for managing the process has been entrusted to the National Decentralization Council established by Act no. 27783. The purpose of the reform is to promote greater democratic participation by citizens, make the State more effective and transparent, and reduce social and economic inequalities between regions. More general objectives relate to education for all and respect for differences (see box 25).

*Box 25. Peru: The main objectives of decentralization in education*

First main objective. Democracy and the rule of law

[...] 1.5 institutionalize dialogue and achieve agreement on the basis of recognition of shared concerns and respect for differences, while establishing institutional mechanisms for consultation and control which ensure citizen participation in public decision-making.

Second main objective. Equity and social justice

2.3 ensure universal access to all-round quality education directed towards work and culture, stressing ethical values and free public service, together with the reduction of existing disparities in terms of quality between public and private, rural and urban education, involving the periodic accreditation of educational establishments, strengthening and upgrading the status of teachers and an increase in the education budget up to an amount equivalent to six per cent of GDP.

In the decentralization process the national government is not supposed to weaken or reduce its role, but to evolve and change so as to coordinate its action with that of the new regional and local governments. The regional governments have been elected and set up initially at the level of the departments, which will gradually become macro-regions. The local governments have three levels of action: province, district and "populated centres".

As regards the responsibilities of the national government, the Ministry of Education will be more a political than an administrative body without schools directly under its responsibility. It will be concerned exclusively with

monitoring and evaluating the national education system. It will share responsibilities with the regional and local governments for technical support for national educational goals. The Ministry of Education will define the responsibilities (programmes, projects) to be delegated through agreements with the regional and local governments. It will develop policies to compensate or even discriminate in favour of disadvantaged areas or populations (priority State action). The Ministry will also be responsible for the promotion system for teachers, but decisions in this regard will be decentralized. The Ministry of Education will assume responsibility for the information system on teachers, and on the scale of basic salaries by level of education and by step, in accordance with the results of collective negotiations on the financing of salaries through the annual public budget. National agencies and other services will perform a role of technical assistance and coordination of international cooperation, national and international funds, training and scholarship programmes, purchases in the country and abroad, support and financial management. The Ministry of Education will continue to coordinate major strategic projects, especially those funded from external resources. These projects include: decentralization; introduction of new technologies at school; education policy and curriculum development; the EFA national plan; the adult literacy programme; and the teacher remuneration and status development plan.

As for the responsibilities of the regional governments, they will be exclusively concerned with such tasks as: formulation of the regional educational project; regional educational plans and budgets (in coordination with the Ministry of National Education); regional school mapping and country-wide planning of educational supply; programmes of public investment in school infrastructure and maintenance. The regional governments will share responsibilities with the Ministry of Education, in particular for curriculum design, evaluation and accreditation. The regional and local governments will be in charge of managing promotions and supplementary remuneration for teachers and the management of non-teaching personnel.

As for the local governments, their exclusive responsibilities will include the formulation of local educational projects; local educational plans and budgets (in coordination with the Regional Education Board); local school zoning and mapping of educational supply as well as programmes of public investment in school infrastructure and maintenance. The local governments will share responsibilities with the Ministry of National Education and the regional government for curriculum development, evaluation and accreditation.

Establishments of education will enjoy greater autonomy and will have their own institutional development project. The largest schools will have their own resources (school fund) and greater educational and administrative autonomy. Smaller schools can join together in cooperation networks.

It is still too early to evaluate the decentralization process in Peru (see box 26) but a number of risks may already be noted. First, Peru is going through a difficult period of democratic transition, with economic problems and rather inconclusive experience in the matter of reform. Peru is an extreme case of political, demographic, administrative and economic decentralization. There is a risk that "decentralization" may be reduced to "regionalization" or, even worse, that it may block regionalization at the level of "departmentalization", thus delaying the establishment of the future macro-regions and disturbing their relations with local governments. The role of the future local governments is not clear. The division of responsibilities between regional and local governments for education needs to be spelled out and respected. Care should be taken to ensure that the national government does not precipitously transfer today to the new regional governments what should go tomorrow to the new local governments. Lastly, several laws to round out the general legal framework of the decentralization process have not yet been passed.

*Box 26. Peru: How to analyze the results of decentralization in education*

It must be ascertained (by means of indicators) whether decentralization in education produces :

- changes in:
  - roles (formulation, regulation, decision, execution, leadership, responsibility, control, evaluation)
  - relations (consultation, consensus, subordination, coordination, autonomy, contractual relations) between
  - actors (institutions, associations or individuals)

established at:

- central level (Government)
- intermediate level (regional, departmental, provincial, district)
- local level (district, municipality)

in the exercise of

- political power (policy-making) or economic power (production, allocation and use of financial resources)

and

- authority (functions or responsibilities)

while

- intervening (legislating, supervising, monitoring, evaluating)
- managing (direct provision of services)

involving

- operations (processes and services)
- behaviour (of actors)
- results (outputs of processes)
- effects or impacts (of products)

while adapting

- approaches, methods, techniques and instruments of:
  - planning (plans, programmes, projects)
  - regulation (norms, standards)
  - management (administrative or educational)
  - coordination (plan, dialogue, consultation, search for compromise and consensus)
  - participation (non-bureaucratic actors)
  - leadership (strategic leadership)
  - monitoring

with regard to

- the strategic resources of the education system: human, material, financial and technical resources

### ***Case studies: Simulation models in the process of decentralization in Mali and Argentina***

#### **Case of Mali: Development of simulation model in the context of the decentralization process**

Effective implementation of decentralization requires a mastery of the tools of forecasting over several years. The Planning and Statistics Unit accordingly developed a regionalized simulation model in collaboration with UNESCO and UNDP. The regionalized model should enable communities to evaluate their requirements for infrastructure and human, material and financial resources in order to achieve their educational goals. All of the goals set have been widely debated by representatives of every circle at the level of the region.

The aim in making elected representatives more responsible for management of the education system is to speed up school enrolment (universal school enrolment by 2015) but also and above all to reduce disparities, at national level between regions and at regional level between circles. Regional and sub-regional

goals, while taking local specificities into account, must remain in line with the national goals set by PRODEC. Any change or developments in the model must be the subject of a consensus between the central and regional levels. For each region, the goals are set according to its own realities and the national goals already established at central level. The regional structures, in consultation with local representatives, draw up regional educational development plans which they can then submit for examination and approval to the decision-making authorities.

The simulation model used starts off from the primary gross enrolment rate (GER) set for regional level. This rate was estimated on the basis of trends in gross rates from 1994 to 1999 by region and the target GER in 2010 (95%) with goals shown according to stage (2004 and 2010) for each circle. This is a sectoral model in which the different sub-sectors (basic education and secondary education) are determined by the rates of transition from one stage or level of education to another. With this tool, regional decision-makers can measure the effects of their choices in terms of numbers of children to be enrolled, classrooms to be built and teachers to be recruited, together with the corresponding costs (investments and recurrent costs). The aim is to establish a number of parameters or hypotheses that represent the education policy advocated.

How the model takes into account a level of decentralization depends first on availabilities in human and material resources for its operation and, second, on availability of data (population, pupil numbers, personnel, finance, etc). The regions, circles and districts are in different situations as regards the conditions to be met. The circle level may be taken into account for quantitative aspects. The model can cover all the quantitative and financial aspects at regional level. In addition to basic education, the model includes secondary education (general, technical and vocational), the management of this level devolving on the region, and each region possessing at least one secondary education structure. Higher education will be covered only at national level, this being the level at which it is managed.

The model is structured according to the organization of the education system at the level of the region. It covers basic education (lower and upper) with non-formal education and secondary education: general, technical and vocational. For each level, at the end of the cursus, criteria are set for access to the level immediately above it. System interconnections are through flows. Each level is structured in four inter-linked parts: flows of pupils, teachers, classrooms and teaching materials.

The model is formed of Excel spreadsheets. The "data" sheet contains all data relating to the education system in the region. It contains basic data by circle: projected enrollable populations up to 2015 composed of children of both sexes aged between 7 and 12, pupil numbers in both public and private sectors, community schools and medersas (Islamic schools), numbers of teachers, schools and classes, internal inefficiency in basic education, etc. Data are also provided for secondary education and for the teacher training institute (IFM). All the data provided by the directors of the *Centres d'Animation Pédagogiques* (CAPs - Educational Activity Centres) are structured by circle at basic level. The "hypotheses" sheet, structured by level of education, is an essential element which shows all the variables and goals pursued for the period 2000 to 2015. The main parameters are detailed in the description of the reference scenario. The "results" sheet contains a menu for accessing the results of basic education allowing consultation of the results of the simulation by circle. This sheet offers a summary of the main quantitative aspects (GER, GIR, number of teachers, number of classrooms, number of books and teaching guides, etc), and an evaluation of new requirements together with the related recurrent costs. Its structure follows that of the education system in the region (basic, lower and higher, secondary, general, technical and vocational). For each level of education, pupil flows are shown, together with GIR and GER indicators for all ages taken together. These indicators are broken down by gender. They show the number of classrooms and teachers (taking into account the pupil wastage rate and educational organization by multi-grade class, service requirement, etc), and the necessary teaching materials (for primary and secondary levels), including community schools and medersas for every year until 2015. The IFM is treated in such a way as to be able to evaluate annual needs for student teacher recruitment and graduates (recruitment of teachers). The IFM's needs for instructors are also shown. Financial aspects and recurrent expenditure, together with the resulting financial shortfall, are calculated in the "budget" sheet.

Case of the Province of La Pampa, Argentina: Development of the EPSSim to assist in educational planning at provincial level<sup>15</sup>

In order to consolidate the democratic process in Argentina and overcome the crisis in education, which is a consequence of the economic crisis, it is generally agreed that one of the priorities of the country is to improve governance and

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<sup>15</sup> The simulation model was adapted by a UNTREF research team. The presentation was given by Marisa Alvarez, the team coordinator, in the presence of the Vice-Minister of Education of the province of La Pampa.

strengthen management capacity at national, provincial and school level. The education sector suffers particularly from shortcomings in these areas, and this is why priority is given to the development of appropriate tools and the training of technical and professional personnel. Among the techniques of educational management, education policy and strategy simulation models prove particularly useful as an aid to decision-making, under conditions of financial stringency, for the achievement of a number of competing objectives.

In this context, computer tools for the simulation of education policies need to be developed that are adapted to the educational situation in Argentina and their use should be encouraged in national and provincial planning structures. The project developed for this purpose will help, in the medium term, to consolidate the use of supporting tools for decision-making in the different territorial entities. Implementation will be in two stages. The first will focus on the design, testing, validation and use of a simulation model for one or two chosen provinces (La Pampa). The second stage will consist in transferring the results obtained to other provinces and other institutional levels.

The simulation model should enable the ministry of the province to analyze the operation of the education system in the light of certain parameters and to evaluate both general and compensatory policies for the school sub-groups. The model will provide a basis for studying pupil flows and needs in terms of classrooms, learning and teaching materials, qualifications and other resources relating to specific proposed activities, for example research plans, follow-up activities or management control.

The main concerns of education identified in La Pampa include pupil repetition and dropout in lower and upper secondary schools. Repetition and dropout rates are not homogenous: there are schools with very low repetition rates and others with very high rates. In view of this situation, it is useful to classify schools according to a variety of relevant variables, so as to analyze quality and equity in different sub-groups, which may subsequently benefit from compensatory or "targeted" policies. Initially, and as a trial measure, school sub-groups will be defined according to the chosen categories with a view to building hypotheses on the behaviour and results of the system. The actions simulated through the model may be linked to these sub-groups, especially those whose members have special needs calling for more "targeted" attention. The model will thereby make it possible to propose a range of analytical possibilities, including simulation of different policy or programme options for each sub-group.

Table 2: Overview of the characteristics of decentralization strategies in the participating countries

	Legal framework of decentralization	Main characteristics	
Argentina	<p>Reform of 1978: transfer of nearly all primary schools to the provinces.</p> <p>Act 24.049 of 1992: transfer of remaining establishments, including secondary and higher education.</p> <p>Federal Education Act of 1993.</p> <p>Federal Education Covenant of 1994: distribution of responsibilities and functions between national and provincial levels.</p> <p>Higher Education Act of 1995: end of the process of educational reform.</p>	<p>Goals: greater knowledge of local needs; more effective use of resources; closeness to users; greater responsiveness and adjustment to local diversity; positive link between decentralization and autonomy; greater participation by citizens (strengthening of the democratic system); central Government becomes free to deal with other matters.</p>	<p>Difficulties:</p> <p>Economic and political crisis in 2001; lack of international credit; increased poverty; deep-seated regional inequalities; tension in the distribution of functions between the State and the provinces.</p> <p>In general, decentralization without financial autonomy lightens the responsibility of central Government but transfers the problem to the provinces; decentralization determined by the international context</p>
Armenia	<p>Decentralization process from 1998</p> <p>1995 Constitution</p> <p>Education Act in 1999</p> <p>New standards for general education in 2000</p>	<p>Expected results: autonomy, responsibility, efficiency, schools that report their results and representatives of society who participate in their management. Cost reduction and/or better use of resources.</p>	<p>Difficulties:</p> <p>Need for distance to evaluate the successes and setbacks of school empowerment and liberalization of education.</p>
Brasil	<p>1891 Constitution : Federal system and administrative decentralization</p> <p>Continuity with the military dictatorship of 1964</p> <p>1980-1995. Promulgation of the Federal Constitution (1988).</p> <p>1995-2002. Amendment of the Constitution (n° 14/96) and Directives and Bases for Education</p>	<p>The Union has a normative and redistributive function. Technical and financial assistance to States and municipalities. A minimum of 18 per cent of the Union's revenue and 25% of that of the federated entities must be devoted to education. Educational programmes are decentralized.</p> <p>Reduction of regional inequalities</p>	<p>Disparities persist between regions and between social groups. Need for mechanisms and clear criteria for financial cooperation between the federated entities.</p> <p>Many of the municipalities do not have sufficient revenue to assume new responsibilities, and it needs to be supplemented. 50% of children in fourth grade cannot read or carry out basic</p>

## Overview and recommendations

	Legal framework of decentralization	Main characteristics	
	Act	(access to resources and enrolment). Strengthening of democratic participation in school management and establishment of a fund to upgrade the teaching profession (definition of an average salary).	mathematical operations. Resources have been assigned to basic education, to the detriment of other levels of education.
Cameroon	« Education Forum » (1995). Education Framework Act N°633/PJL/AN, 1998, legal framework of the reform. Preparation of the report « Strategy for the (formal) education sector» (2001). Decree N°2002/ 004 (2002) on organization of the Ministry of Education Elaboration of the EFA national action plan (2002). Time frame: short term from 2003 to 2005; medium term from 2006 to 2010, and long term from 2011 to 2015.	The primary objective of decentralization is the universalization and democratization of basic education: : (i) return the school to the local community ; (ii) involve the community massively in the organization of school life; (iii) facilitate the access of all children. The second objective is improved efficiency of the education system in order to be economically competitive in a globalized world.	Problems encountered: lack of a budget to bear expenditure on activities and motivate participants; role conflicts between the different actors concerned by the reform; lack of involvement by the different ministerial partners in the implementation programme. Economic crisis. Inadequate educational supply, school dropout, precarious teaching conditions, lack of classrooms, teacher absenteeism, disparities between provinces.
Colombia	Municipalization (1980-1991). Departmentalization (1991-2001). Act 715 of 2001. This Act defines a new method for allocating resources, functions and	Factors for the success of decentralization are: political legitimacy based on the election of mayors and governors by the people; administrative decentralization, transfer of resources	Difficulties: overlapping of responsibilities; pursuit of several goals at the same time ; persistence of inequalities due to criteria for resource distribution; over-formalistic measures for active anticipation;

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	Legal framework of decentralization	Main characteristics	
	responsibilities at the different levels of power.	for the discharge of territorial responsibilities, and participation in the planning, direction and evaluation of educational management.	clientelism in territorial management; small coordination between institutions; lack of monitoring and evaluation of results and small impact of programmes to strengthen territorial management capacity.
Cyprus	Centralized education system. Decentralization of some educational services: school building infrastructure and maintenance. Tendency to give greater autonomy to schools (school boards).	The case of Cyprus may be considered a good combination of centralization (of management) and decentralization (some school autonomy).	In view of the small size of the Cypriot population, extensive decentralization of the education system proves inefficient.
Mali	Reform of the education system PRODEC 1998-2007 Act n°93-008 of 11 February 1993 which gives autonomy to the territorial communities. The districts became a reality after the district elections of 1997.	With a view to universal school enrolment and improved educational quality, the reform seeks to give responsibility to the territorial authorities and communities for educational management; bringing the school closer to children ("one village, one school"); teacher training and recruitment; dialogue between all stakeholders; development of a dynamic partnership around the school.	Legal, institutional and material constraints. The 1993 Act provides that any transfer of responsibility to the territorial community must be accompanied by a transfer of the necessary resources. If the State does not have the resources needed for it to undertake a transfer, it should not do so. Pre-existing legislative and regulatory texts concerning the same responsibilities were not abrogated by the texts on decentralization.
Morocco	At the time of the Protectorate, only primary education was deconcentrated. From 1956 to 1962, the Ministry of	Decentralization forms part of the recent reform of the education system involving all components of the system. The goal is to establish mechanisms for	Constraints: process in its early days, even though much has been achieved at the legal level. Effective implementation requires a gradual

## Overview and recommendations

	Legal framework of decentralization	Main characteristics	
	<p>Education transformed the primary school inspectorates into regional inspectorates.</p> <p>From 1962 to 1976, greater deconcentration.</p> <p>From 1976 to 1999, the academies of the Ministry of Education were established. The National Education Charter of 1999 advocates a process of decentralization.</p> <p>Act 07-00 (19 May 2000).</p>	<p>coordination between State and non-State authorities, improve quality, in particular through the training and motivation of personnel, and the involvement of society as a whole within the framework of a responsible and lasting partnership. The principle of participation is at the basis of regionalization.</p>	<p>approach. Establishment of the AREFs should begin with a few academies meeting such "criteria of eligibility" as pupil numbers, infrastructure, availability of resources, etc. The other academies should get ready by preparing their regional plan.</p>
Pakistan	<p>National education policy 1970/1979: Administrative and financial autonomy.</p> <p>NEP 1992: decentralization of decision-making.</p> <p>Local government Plan 2000 implemented through Local government Ordinance 2001.</p> <p>Education System Reform 2001-2005 forming part of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2001-2005.</p>	<p>Among the first positive aspects of decentralization: less cumbersome procedures for approval of agreements of limited scope, improved responsibility of Government officials, improved assistance to teachers at school and public awareness.</p>	<p>Main problems:</p> <p>Lack of clarity in tax transfer and in delegation of financial authority.</p> <p>Increased number of interlocutors at district level, lack of necessary funds, insignificant role of the community in school management, centralization at district level, lack of training of district officials.</p>
Peru	<p>The decentralization process was initiated under Constitutional Reform Act N° 27680 and Organization of the Bases of</p>	<p>National, regional and local, political, economic and administrative decentralization.</p> <p>The reform aims to promote greater</p>	<p>Difficult political and economic situation.</p> <p>Tradition of strong centralization. Risk of reducing "decentralization" to "regionalization". Division of</p>

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	Legal framework of decentralization	Main characteristics	
	Decentralization Act N° 27783. Several chapters of the 1993 Constitution were thus amended. The general agreement on "governance" resulting in other legislative measures was adopted in July 2002.	democratic participation by citizens, to make the State more efficient and transparent, and to reduce social and economic inequalities between regions. More general aims relate to education for all and respect for differences.	responsibilities between regional and local governments for education needs to be spelled out and respected. Several laws to supplement the legal framework of decentralization have not been passed
<i>Source : National reports</i>			

### **3. OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS**

During the discussions between the participants in the seminar a number of noteworthy concerns came to light, that were sometimes shared and sometimes divergent. The discussions focused on a wide and interesting range of factors and characteristics whose salient points are summarized below. We also give an overview of the points emerging from the reports summarized in the previous section. Lastly, special attention will be given to conclusions that grew out of the group discussions between the national representatives. The conclusions concern in particular factors that may facilitate strategies for decentralization and for reform in general.

#### **3.1. Highlights of the debate and summary of the reports**

The national presentations prompted lively discussions both between experts and national officials involved on the ground and between the latter and UNTREF researchers, who were mostly specialists in education policy and administration. From the content of the oral national presentations and the written reports as well as from the exchange of ideas and know-how the following issues and salient points can be singled out:

- Decentralization processes are complex, leading in most cases to a paradigm shift in public management<sup>16</sup>. They are, in addition, fairly recent in the countries considered. Most of the speakers did not seek therefore to avoid critical scrutiny or to stress the ambivalence of certain decentralization measures.
- Decentralization forms part of a more general process of reform of the education system, and even indeed of the reform of State institutions. In Pakistan, it forms part of a poverty reduction strategy plan, while in Armenia it goes hand in hand with the spread of the market economy. In general, it attests to an express desire to achieve quality EFA.
- Decentralization is interpreted very differently from one country to another. For example, Armenia's conception is not the same as that of Argentina or

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<sup>16</sup> Nearly all the presentations speak of the preeminence of a new political paradigm: « Considering the scale of the reform project, there is clearly a desire to introduce a new culture in which the principle of the Welfare State should gradually give way to the principle of the participation of all the potential protagonists of change, at all levels of the education system ». Report of Morocco, p.42.

that of Morocco. Thus, for Argentina there is some "pressure" at the international (political and financial) level to strengthen decentralization, while in Armenia the authorities seem to espouse the new international trends without in principle being pushed to do so.

- In this sense, and in the light of the different experiences, it may be contended that it is not possible to define an exemplary model, but more or less positive measures according to context and the goals set, and institutional capacity to implement them. The case of Cyprus also shows that decentralization is not always the most effective solution.
- Problems specific to each country often prevail over decentralization strategies, for example, the concern of Brazil to raise the quality of education calls for measures of varying scope, often designed and partly implemented at central level.
- Resource allocation is clearly the most vexing aspect of decentralization, and is often a source of tension and inequalities between regions and/or between the different levels of responsibility. In general it is noted that there is a lack of clarity in the transfer and delegation of fiscal and financial authority, an increase in the number of interlocutors, a shortage of necessary funds, and a lack of training for the representatives and officials concerned.
- Basic definitions (centralized power, deconcentration, decentralization, privatization) along with theoretical and methodological aspects of decentralization in education were addressed. Conceptual problems remained however. For example, the term "community" is very often used without its meaning always being clear: does it designate enterprises, associations, or parents? It varies significantly according to whether one is speaking of Pakistan or Armenia, for example.
- For most of the participating countries, it is too early to judge the results of decentralization which, for the time being, seem mixed. In some countries problems of the continuation of decentralization strategies are already arising. This is true, for instance, in Argentina and Cameroon, where reform has been financed in part by external resources. The economic crisis, the high debt level and the downturn of educational indicators may adversely affect the results of reforms.
- The lack of relevant information and analyses to facilitate the evaluation and monitoring of decentralization policies is to be noted. Such information and analyses, when they are unavailable, are not always easy to consult and compare from the international point of view because of the diversity of contexts, goals and processes followed in this field.

Notwithstanding the limits noted earlier, it seems wise, by way of conclusion, to highlight some elements that may contribute to analysis of decentralization

processes. Together with the information contained in Table 1, these elements may make it easier in future to evaluate and monitor national experiences (see Table 3). With the exception of Brazil, the percentage of primary school enrolments in the private sector increased throughout the period of political and economic restructuring (since the 1980s) whether or not accompanied by decentralization. It is to be noted that the highest percentages are in two of the countries with the greatest difficulties in achieving the EFA goals, particularly in respect of socio-economic disparities, namely, Cameroon and Pakistan. A similar principle seems to be at work in secondary education. As for regional disparities, these are generally more marked in Mali, Cameroon, Colombia, Morocco and Pakistan, especially when the region with the highest school enrolment indicators is compared with the region with the lowest. Will decentralization in education help to provide a solution?

Table 3. *Evolution of private education and disparity between regions in the participating countries*

Country	% private primary 1985	% private primary 2000	% private secondary 1985	% private secondary LYA <sup>1</sup>	Disparity between regions	
					Min. - Max. (primary, as %)	Regions concerned
Argentina	19	20	30	...	(1991 NER) 88/98	Chaco/ Tierra del Fuego
Armenia	0	1	0	...	...	...
Brasil	12	8	28		(1997 NER) 89/96	North/South
Cameroon	33	36	49	39 (1990)	(1998 GER) 52/120	Far North/Centre
Colombia	14	19	42	39 (1993)	(2001 GER) 50/92	Guaviare/ Bogota
Cyprus	4	4	13	11 (1995)	...	...
Mali	4	**7	9	7 (1990)	(1995 Attendance rates) 17/71	Mopti/ Bamako
Morocco	3	5	6	3 (1996)	(1998 NER) 50/94	
Pakistan	...	**35	...	...	(1997 TNER) 42/89	Balochistan/ Islamabad
Peru	*12	13	15	16 (1995)	...	...

<sup>1</sup> Last year available.

\* Data refer to 1986.

\*\* Data refer to 1999.

Source: UNESCO data base; (UIS-UNESCO, 2003), Mali DHS 1995/1996.

### **3.2. Conclusions**

As previously noted, the aim of public policy is not only to solve isolated problems but also are to propose a social practice, a renewal of citizen participation. Accordingly, decentralization, while expected to bring certain financial advantages, may have consequences for national cohesion and solidarity.

The findings of the national representatives emphasize the important place taken by decentralization in the world today and resulting changes in ways of designing and managing education systems and regulating family participation. Alongside a number of advantages, the ambiguities of the decentralization process were also noted. It should also be pointed out that some of the strategies recommended are not necessarily linked to decentralization policies.

The national representatives recognized how useful it would be for them to participate regularly in similar seminars in order to discuss and broaden their approach to the issues involved in educational decentralization. Moreover, in view of the long-term character of the policies presented, it would be helpful to be able to know about the results achieved by decentralization strategies in education through follow-up. Lastly, the participants wished it to be clear that their comments were tentative and need to go on being discussed. In any case, the principles and observations put forward should not be seen as hard-and-fast conclusions.

The most common features of the country reports & ensuing debates can be summarised as follows:

1. Unavoidable responsibility of the State. Decentralization strategies and policies should not offer national States a justification for them to be released from their unquestionable responsibilities. They should guarantee democratic equality, citizens' rights and the right to education, in order to achieve national integration and unity.
2. Decentralization is not a goal in itself. It is a strategy, a means of enhancing the quality and relevance of education and improving its administration. Decentralization may also contribute to more rapid decision-making and more effective use of funds.
3. Decentralization should be adapted to the country's needs within a framework of continuity. Care should be taken not to interrupt the process in the event of a change of government. In this sense, decentralization of the education

system usually forms a part of *more general structural reforms of public administration*. Often, the education sector reflects the model of government in the country.

4. The decentralization process calls for consensus building among all the stakeholders in civil society. Decentralization should accordingly always be supported by the dissemination of information, consultation and explanatory action among the population. It is also important to maintain commitments to the process of direct participatory management and the development of a critical citizenry.
5. In this sense, *decentralization policies should be tools of social participation* which foster individual development and the development of society rather than the exclusive claims and interests of the market model.
6. Decentralization policies also require national capacity building. Decision-makers at all levels should be trained for their new roles, functions and responsibilities. Decentralization should therefore include strategies directed towards *intensive, continuing training*, including financial training, for all managers, in particular school principals, in accordance with a collective management philosophy.
7. Decentralization may make for an increased number of imprecise operations and bad practices at local level. The implementation of *good monitoring structures and procedures* and increased responsibility may reduce these effects. Decentralization practices should give rise to behaviour marked by greater transparency and more ethical conduct.
8. Decentralization should not begin without there being *good planning and preparation in advance*: legislative framework, new and clear distribution of roles and responsibilities, balance between centralized and decentralized functions (decentralization usually leads to an increase in the central function of supervision and to greater responsibilities at school level), and the allocation of additional financial resources to set the process in motion.
9. Public education policies that put decentralization procedures into effect should be aimed principally at ensuring the *continued improvement of educational quality* and the strengthening of the school as the decision-making centre of the education system. Decentralization should enhance responsibility, transparency, effectiveness and sustainability.
10. Parallel to the establishment of decentralization policies and action to encourage school autonomy, efforts should also be made to *build institutional networks* between schools and civil society.
11. Need for information. It is important not to overlook the bodies and mechanisms for monitoring and constructing indicators, which contribute to and validate decentralization processes. The strategic value of the information produced in the school should accordingly be recognized so that the school becomes a knowledge-producing unit.

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# ANNEX: GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL REPORTS

To facilitate reading and discussion, during the outlining of national reports on the decentralization of education, the participants are invited to develop, as much as possible, the questions listed below<sup>17</sup>. Particular attention should be given to questions 8-10 on evaluation and problems encountered.

## 1. Preliminary Points

1.1 Brief presentation of the national education system, structure and institutional organization of education.

This part should allow the reader to have an idea of the functioning and the main institutional responsibilities pertaining to education. This introduction can be composed of an outline of the *structure of the education system* (levels of education, main programmes, compulsory education, etc.) and an *institutional organization chart*: ministries and departments responsible for education, especially for educational planning and statistical and qualitative data, as well as regional and/or federal entities in charge of education, etc. A brief overview of private education and its principal characteristics (availability of subsidies, its percentage and level, religious or not, type of curriculum, etc.) can be included here.

1.2 Political, economic, and social context in which decentralization had occurred

The presentation of the main features of the political, economic and social context of the country in question will give an initial idea of the general economic and political constraints. It could be two or three paragraphs presenting economic data such as GDP per capita, its evolution, debt, balance of payments, and the plans which have been drawn up regarding this matter. Selected demographic data, a brief overview of social disparities and some brief information on the political system of the country can also be introduced in this part of the presentation. A brief description of the current system of government and the politico-administrative organization of the territory would be useful. In this sense, it is important to also mention the characteristics of the regions: how many are they? Do they constitute political, linguistic and/or historical entities or

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive. The participants are not restricted to follow it point by point nor in the order in which the questions are presented.

are they just administrative entities? Are there considerable differences between the regions, in terms of capacity of and experience in planning and managing public and social services in general?

1.3 Previous context to the implementation of the decentralization of education strategy, definition of "decentralization of education" in the national context. This aspect can be linked to the institutional presentation of point 1.

What were the laws or plans for education in force before the implementation of decentralization strategy? Under what circumstances was the current strategy introduced? Was the formulation of new laws necessary? What is the definition of decentralization<sup>18</sup>? Decentralization is not perceived or defined in the same manner in all contexts and periods<sup>2</sup>? In some countries and periods, only the management of infrastructures is decentralized. In others, the policy concerning the teachers is completely managed at the regional level (recruitment, salaries, numbers). One can proceed likewise for other sections of the budget as well as the policy concerning the curriculum with the possibility of introducing the language, the history and the regional culture in the education programme. It would therefore be necessary to specify the main characteristics of the context specific to the country in question: how is the budget decided? Who is in charge and who is responsible for evaluation? Is it a Federal State? Does decentralization imply privatisation?

1.4 Justification and motivation of reform and/or policies leading to decentralization: democratization, rationalization of management, the search for efficiency, etc.

How was the reform justified at central State level? Normally, an education decentralization strategy is preceded by the definition and presentation of a political and institutional justification. With regard to political arguments supporting decentralization, the following is worth noting: the promotion of regional equity, the strengthening of local democracy, the satisfaction of claims for local autonomy, the encouragement of population to assume more responsibility. As to socio-economic arguments, the objective of decentralization may be: to meet the needs of the population more directly, to optimize the use of resources, to allow the regional elected body to check and evaluate the action of decentralized administration. Another argument in favour of decentralization is the need to rationalize management, and the search for efficiency. Regional

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<sup>18</sup> In certain cases, other expressions such as "transfer of education services" or "deconcentration" are used.

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management, for example, would be less heavy, there would be less intermediate levels weakening the efficiency of administrative services. These arguments can include quantitative analyses. On the other hand, decentralization could imply the “transfer” of certain problems to the regional level without providing any solution. Budget relocation can also introduce inequalities between regions and widen those already existing. "Indirect" objectives of decentralization can also be identified, such as: to decrease education expenditures, to weaken the power of teachers' unions, etc.

## **2. Objectives (formalized or not) and priorities of decentralization**

This aspect can be treated separately or integrated with the preceding point. It is important, at this point, to recapitulate the concrete objectives of the reform assigned to decentralization. What are the objectives decided in terms of: (i) access; (ii) equity; (iii) pedagogical, administrative, financial management (what are the budgetary prerogatives in terms of running costs and investment and what is the role of decentralized entities in the administrative and pedagogical management of personnel)? Have these objectives been clearly expressed in the planning? Has a quantification and/or evaluation of results been foreseen at this stage? Is there a political and technical feasibility and viability study with regard to institutional, organizational, and mobilized human and material means<sup>19</sup>?

## **3. System and method of planning, reform process: consultation and participation of different stakeholders (associations, unions)**

Briefly introduce how planning took place and the main methods applied. In the planning process, the social factors and effects of new policies should, in principle, be taken into account, even integrated into the planning process itself. A preliminary evaluation and consultation, in this sense, is required. Do these phases exist in the case of the represented country? Furthermore, all the evaluations and consultations are not of the same scope or consequences. If it means consulting the social "actors", how are they defined? How were they chosen? What value should they be accorded in the dialogue? At what stage of the project do they participate? Has the Parliament or other authorities of

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<sup>19</sup> Institutional means relate to the legal framework laid down in one or several laws on decentralization, decrees specifying how a law should be enforced, ministerial decrees, technical notes and circulars. Organizational means refer to the politico-administrative structure of the territory, the organization of external entities (organic services and operating authorities), methods and procedures of decision-making and administrative and financial management. The human means essentially concern the personnel and the qualification of the personnel assigned to the decentralized services. Buildings and equipments and the financial resources allocated to the operation of the external entities constitute the material means.

political, and civic, representation been included in the process? Are these authorities treated as "actors" or as representatives of political debates? This point should take into account the "type" of space allocated to public debate in the face of political decision: type and level of negotiation, value of political representation, etc.

**4. Contribution of international technical and financial co-operation agencies to the policy process and the practice of reform (definition, discussion, implementation, loans, technical co-operation, etc.)**

What is the role of international agencies in the decentralization process? Are matters concerning strategy definition, discussion or implementation (technical co-operation or other) referred to them? Are there specific loans? With what conditionality clauses? It is useful here to give details of these co-operations, their precise contribution, the links among the different agencies, etc. Is an evaluation of this co-operation foreseen?

**5. Strategies, schedules and main phases of the decentralization.**

Is there a precise schedule for reform? How did the execution of the strategy of reform take place? Were precise phases defined? Do they correspond to concrete strategies and precise budgets? Has the schedule been followed? At this point, a recapitulative table of the schedule, phases and strategies, can be presented to facilitate the comprehension of the process.

**6. Obstacles and problems encountered in the planning and execution: policy, technical, budgetary matters, etc.**

This point takes into account the problems encountered during the different stages and diverse aspects of the reform described in the preceding points: justification, definition, co-operation, consultation, schedule, execution, phases, concrete strategies, budget, results, etc. This point represents a crucial part of the report. It should be clear and well-argued and include, if possible, concrete examples: is there a technical support to planning? Have there been conflicts with the teachers in the process of decentralization? Over which aspects?

**7. Results, impact and evaluation (qualitative and quantitative) of decentralization**

Is there an evaluation of the reform? Is the assessment and/or the measurement by indicators of results and consequences of decentralization available or is it foreseen? For example, has the decentralization contributed to a

greater democratization (if this is one of the objectives)? In what terms? Is regional management more efficient? One can also evaluate some concomitant consequences: has decentralization brought about privatization? Has decentralization deepened or reduced the inequalities concerning the distribution of resources between regions, and eventually created significant differences in terms of quality of education? Tables with relevant data and indicators can be presented here.

## **8. First conclusions concerned with the critical elements of the reform**

What should be introduced as strong points of the process and/or the experience of decentralization? What are the less positive aspects to be taken into account or to be avoided in the future in other national experiences?

## **9. (Optional) Analysis and/or comments on the public space in the country: functioning of representative institutions, public opinion, press, etc.**

It is highly likely that a decentralization process leads to important changes in management styles, even in designing education. It brings into play the political and social capacities to set up a real dialogue and exchange of ideas. What can be said about the country in question, on the public arena allocated to political dialogue? On the role of public opinion, of the press?