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Capacity

Developing Sustainable Assessment Systems in Africa: Benin

Report prepared by:

Jack Thunde (AFLEARN)

Linda Zuze (AFLEARN)

Pierre Chanou (Institut National pour la Formation et la Recherche en Education)

Alexis Le Nestour (Consultant)

INFRE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIONAL EVALUATIONS



ASSESSMENT TEAM

- The National Institute for Teacher Training and Educational Research (INFRE), under the authority the Ministry of Education, is responsible for national learning assessments, teacher training, pedagogical research, curriculum development, and the implementation of educational policies.
- **INFRE's core assessment team is led by a planning economist trained by International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in evaluation.**
The team includes:
 - Two **pedagogical experts** responsible for test development (one position currently vacant)
 - One **statistician** who oversees data collection and analysis; he is also part of the national PASEC team



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

- There is **no dedicated technical committee**. However, a **Scientific Council** composed of Ministry department heads and two local academics **advises on and validates methodological aspects of evaluations**.



STEERING COMMITTEE

- **INFRE does not have a steering committee**. Instead, a **Board of Directors**, chaired by the Minister and the Secretary-General, **provides oversight** of its work.



COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT COVERAGE FOR NATIONAL LEVELS

INFRE has conducted several EGRA/EGMA in the last few years

NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS	REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS	INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS
• National evaluations: Conducted every 2 years (but last two in 2017 and 2023 due to lack of funding.); assesses Reading and Mathematics in Grades 1 and 5. • EGRA (<i>Early Grade Reading Assessment</i>): Conducted on an ad hoc basis depending on donor funding (2022, 2023, 2025); assesses Reading readiness in Early Grades. • EGMA (<i>Early Grade Maths Assessment</i>): Conducted on an ad hoc basis depending on donor funding (2022, 2023, 2025); assesses Mathematics readiness in Early Grades.	• PASEC (<i>Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN</i>): Conducted every 5 years; assesses Reading and Mathematics in Grades 2 and 6.	• <i>Currently not involved in any international assessments.</i>

The Ministry does not provide enough for funding for INFRE. National evaluations happen thanks to donor money.

MAIN CONSTRAINTS: INSUFFICIENT FUNDING AND LIMITED HUMAN RESOURCES

The assessment team of INFRE is small and often incomplete. They need to be supported by other departments to carry out assessment and write the report, which creates delays and logistical issues.



CHALLENGES

- INFRE's assessment **team is small and often understaffed**, leading to delays and logistical challenges.
- **Limited national funding**: evaluations rely heavily on donor support.
- Human resource constraints: **high turnover**, unfilled positions, and reliance on untrained staff from other departments.
- **Gaps in data analysis capacity**.
- Some **schools refuse participation** or are difficult to access.
- Limited capacity to write reports internally.
- **Evaluation reports have limited policy impact**.



POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- **Use tablets for data collection** to improve efficiency.
- Engage local and international consultants for technical support.
- **Collaborate with local academics** to strengthen methodology and quality assurance.
- **Implement decentralized dissemination of results** in districts, with simplified summaries.

Source	Description	Frequency	Duration	Participation
IIEP-Online	Using learning assessment data to monitor SDG 4 progress	Once-off	10 weeks (~10 hours/week)	Lead of the assessment team
PASEC	Various training workshops covering sampling, item validation, survey administration, data analysis, etc.	Regular workshops during PASEC cycle	One week	1 statistician

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We went further [than just reports] and created school-level dashboards. We identified schools with low exam pass rates and included information on the school environment that might explain the results. This helped principals understand their school's performance and take action to improve it the following year.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING ASSESSMENT IMPACT

Recommendations for International Organizations:

Start Doing	Stop Doing
Advocate for national assessments towards MoE senior officials.	Needs to be aligned with government needs. Partners should not force MoE to carry out assessments.
Provide a pool of high-level international consultants who can provide targeted support.	Don't provide 100% funding for evaluations. Make sure the MoE is involved and provide funding.

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The most important is to have a strong assessment team who is motivated and skilled. They need to have the basic supply to work, such as computers, software etc. It is important to make sure they are continuously trained.