



SYNERGY IN DEVELOPMENT:

**AN EVALUATION OF THE SPEED SCHOOLS (SSA/SSP) AND
THE WOMEN'S SAVING FOR CHANGE PROJECT
(CMMF/SFC) IN THREE AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

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Robert Smith and Abd-El - Karim Sanou

Note: The opinions and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily represent the views of the Stromme Foundation, its partners or the governments of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso

List of abbreviations used

ACTS	Action Chretienne Tous pour la Solidarite, Burkina Faso
AEAD	Association Evangelique de'Appui au Developpement, Burkina Faso
AEDM	Agence Evangelique de Developpement du Mali
ANTBA	Association Nationale pour le Traduction de la Bible et l'Alphebitisation
APSM	Association Protestante pour le Sante au Mali
CAEB	Conseils et Appui pour l'Education a la Base
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CIPP	Context, Inputs, Processes, Products
CMMF	Community Managed Micro Finance
DHA	Developpement Holistique Afrique
CFA	Central African franc (1 € = CFA 655)
CRIEF	Centre de Recherche, des Innovations Educatives et de la Formation
EFA/EPT	Education for All/Education pour Tous
FS	Fondation Stromme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GG	Geneva Global
HDI	Human Development Index
IGA	Income generating activities
J & D	Jeunesse et Developpement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOK	Norwegian Krone
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Assistance

NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ODES	Organisme de Developpement pour l'Esperance au Mali
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RAC	Reseau d'Appui et Conseils
RAEDD	Reseau d'Actions Educatives pour un Developpement Durable
SF	Stromme Foundation
SFC	Saving for Change (CMMF)
SFWA	Stromme Foundation West Africa
SHWSG	Self Help Women's Savings Group (CMMF)
SSA/SSP	Strategie de Scolarisation Acceleree (Speed Schools Programme, known colloquially as 'Passerelles' or 'Fast-track')
TONUS	NGO whose name means 'Force' or 'Energy'
VIE	Volontaires pour l'Integration Educative

Executive Summary

This evaluation was conducted using processes and procedures based on the OECD/DAC guidelines as well as those from NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

Methods used included documentary analysis, interviews in the field and focus group sessions with participants in the two projects being evaluated. The evaluators were required to focus on design, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and other technical factors such as the effectiveness of the indicators selected, analysis of the role of various stakeholders, synergies found between the project activities and the lessons to be learned for future development and support.

Overall the twin projects absorbed US\$ 1.36 million over three years and reached 227,000 women engaged in self-help savings activities (CMMF) and 45,578 children enrolled in speed schools (SSA/SSP)

The evaluators found the two projects to be successfully implemented and at reasonable cost. The original design had been sound with a clear focus on poverty alleviation and reduction in the three partner countries Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. It is clear that poverty is one of the major factors keeping children out of school along with negative parental attitudes and distance from school. In the three countries 3.18 million children are out of school for one reason or another.

Design of the projects was assessed as being effective as Stromme Foundation (SF) worked closely with NGO partners who were already well established in the selected communities and collegial relations were firmly established between the management and the implementers. Key factors in this aspect of the two projects were initial sensitization of communities, appointment and training of locally based animators and supervisors. A further strength of the design was the avoidance of 'bridgehead' strategies which create islands of change which are not sustainable. More rooted, indigenous approaches were adopted. Models for the two projects were already available and the principles embraced for SSA/SSP and CMMF conformed well to proven practice.

The impact of the projects was clearly demonstrated; savings groups functioned very well and pupils enrolled in speed schools graduated to regular schools in creditable numbers. More strategically the evaluators were able to see how village economies had been improved by the savings groups and how the appetite for schooling had been increased, including demand for more women's literacy opportunities and more income generating and health-related activities.

Gender equity had also improved. Governments had also embraced the speed school concept, providing centres in many cases and working through a Focal Point person or institution to ensure coherence with the NGO partners. A less positive aspect of the speed school project has been the lack of capacity in regular schools to receive transferred pupils - classes are very large and books

are few.

Effectiveness and efficiency are closely related to financial aspects of the projects. Teasing out specific unit costs is not easy but there is no evidence to suggest that costs are excessive. Administrative and staffing costs represent the big budget items as is expected and capital expenditure on motorcycles etc. has been heavy at the outset of the projects. The evaluators propose that the financial proportions devoted to different budget headings could do with closer attention to ensure that intended beneficiaries get the maximum benefit from the projects. For example, SSA/SSP budgeting shows that 45% of the funding was devoted to students, their centres and their teachers. The remaining 55% went on partners' costs and equipment and the SF Regional Office's expenses. These sorts of costs do result from a search for quality in management and outcomes so should be looked at in this light. In addition, anomalies among and between the three countries should be explored to ensure equitable treatment for all. Finance is not the only aspect of efficiency and effectiveness to be explored. What the projects have certainly achieved is the harnessing of community capacity, especially among women who now have experience of managing their own affairs and making economic decisions. This must be built upon.

Relevance and sustainability are strongly represented in the two projects. They address real poverty -related needs and answer felt needs, the key factor in sustainability. The issue of continuing financial support is only one part of sustainability; social, technical and political sustainability are equally important and where these are in place (as in the three countries) a longer-term commitment by financing partners is essential. Dependency must be avoided but building on the capacity developed by the two projects is also essential.

A further important aspect of the relevance/sustainability dimension is the notion of synergy. The metaphor adopted by the evaluators was that of the cooking pot and the number of legs it needs to stand on. Speed school and savings groups are two of these legs but third and fourth and even fifth legs were recommended by our informants - women's literacy, income generating activities and health-promoting activities were the most prominent issues identified. Any or all of these have synergistic effects on the core educational and micro-financing project activities and should be developed.

Recommendations put forward by the evaluators from the evidence received include:

- Create more synergies by developing the kinds of activities identified by project participants - literacy, health, income generation
- Concentrate such activities on sites where success has already been met, building on sound foundations
- Develop the Active Literacy programme further

- Carry out special studies to generate hard evidence on such key issues as why children drop-out or do not attend, what are culturally relevant teaching and learning materials, what are relevant income-generating activities, how men can be sensitized and so on, creating a knowledge base for further development activities
- Develop more extensive training for partner NGOs to help them address community needs more effectively; address any salary/allowance anomalies
- Examine budget allocations, especially for administrative tasks to rationalise expenditure
- Develop strategies for the sensitization of men in communities to add synergy to the work among women; seek out opportunities to develop local capacity further
- Maintain a stronger gender emphasis in the projects, especially in the search for female teachers
- Try to match speed schools to receiving schools which can cope with an influx of new pupils; close contact with local education authorities should be developed further
- SF should take steps to publicise the effective work of SSA/SSP and CMMF to draw further support from potential partners
- SF should seek new or additional partners for financing expansion of the SSA/SSP and CMMF activities
- SF should consider a ten to fifteen year engagement with the two projects to ensure sustainability and continuity
- As a final recommendation SF and the SF Regional Office are encouraged to keep their interventions as simple and uncomplicated as possible.

SYNERGY IN DEVELOPMENT: AN EVALUATION OF THE SPEED SCHOOLS (SSA/SSP) AND THE WOMEN'S SAVINGS PROJECTS (CMMF) IN THREE AFRICAN COUNTRIES

1. Rationale and Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

1.1. Stromme Foundation (SF) and its approach to development

The Stromme Foundation is an autonomous body conforming to Norwegian law regarding fundraising and charitable work. Originally set up to commemorate Olav Kristian Stromme of Kristiansand Cathedral, the Foundation makes no secret of its Christian values although it is not primarily an evangelistic organisation. As the Five Year Development Plan¹ states, '....deep respect for human dignity and a conviction of the value of equitable partnership,' motivate the Foundation. Its rationale is to help poor people assume responsibility for their own lives and their own communities through activities based on self-help principles. International activities are decentralised with regional offices in Asia, East and West Africa and South America. Within Norway the Stromme Foundation promotes international solidarity as well as information sharing and fund raising for development. The organisation's annual turnover exceeds NoK 100 million and through the main development activities, (education and micro-finance initiatives), several thousand people in the South benefit from the Foundation's work.

The reduction of poverty is the key goal of SF which defines poverty as the minimum necessary for human dignity and the maintenance of a viable society. This definition goes beyond the purely economic and emphasises the social exclusion, political marginalisation, lack of voice and lack of choice which mark the poorest communities.

As a comparatively small organisation there are limits to the impact SF can expect to have on poverty reduction in the South. However, the commitment to working with like-minded partners does much to raise the profile and effectiveness of the organisation. A values-based approach to community development is another defining characteristic of the SF approach, human dignity being a prominent example. Empowerment is an over-worked word but assisting communities to determine their own lives and to embrace self-reliance and self-actualisation provides another key element in the Stromme approach.

It is with this background that SF has engaged with the development needs of the three countries under discussion in this report - Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. In all respects they conform to the poverty indicators identified by Stromme Foundation as the table below shows:

¹ Stromme Foundation Master Plan 2009 -13, p. 4

Table 1: Human Development Indicators (HDI); Some comparative data²

Country	HDI Value	Life expectancy at birth in years	Adult literacy rate	Combined GER, primary and secondary	GDP per capita in US \$
Mali	0.380	53.1	24%	36.7%	1033
Niger	0.374	55.8	28.7%	22.7%	781
Burkina Faso	0.370	51.4	23.6%	29.3%	1213
Developing Countries	0.691	66.1	76.7%	64.1%	5282
SSA*	0.493	49.6	60.3%	50.6%	1998
OECD	0.916	78.3		88.6%	29197

* *Sub-Saharan Africa*

The context for this evaluation has therefore been made clear. The three countries involved all figure at the lower end of the human development scale. Poverty is a prominent fact of life and the introduction of enhanced opportunities for schooling through the 'speed schools' and for economic development through locally managed savings organisations were directly designed to affect the poverty status of communities in the most positive way. The evaluation report which follows assesses the extent to which Stromme Foundation and its partners achieved these goals.

1.2. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) found as an annexure to this report, show in detail what the evaluation was designed to assess. However, the three main purposes were to evaluate the SSA/SSP and the CMMF savings programmes, including key success factors and lessons learnt, to suggest areas for improvement, to determine the impact of the combined effects of the two programmes and to promote transparency and secure accountability to donors and stakeholders

² Figures taken from the World Bank's Human Development Report 2007/2008

and finally to improve management and sustainability through the learning the evaluation facilitates.

The main objectives of the evaluation were expressed as

- To assess the effectiveness of the SSA/SSP, measuring its achievements and implementation against its stated objectives and timeframes
- To assess the relevance of the SSA/SSP and CMMF projects as far as the context and situational needs of beneficiaries in West Africa are concerned
- To assess the efficiency of the projects with regard to the financial and social benefits gained as against the resources spent
- To assess the key external factors impacting on the success of the projects
- To assess the sustainability of the SSA/SSP with regard to institutional capacity and the likelihood of continued progress without external funding
- To assess the viability and effectiveness of key partnerships and coordination mechanisms relevant to the delivery of basic education through the SSA/SSP
- To assess the effectiveness of indicators selected for the two projects identifying critical gaps and shortcomings in them
- To assess the roles, responsibilities and participation of key education stakeholders
- To recommend methods for improving the projects' design and implementation with a special focus on the content and delivery of education
- To assess the synergetic effects and impacts achieved by the combined projects
- To demonstrate to current and potential donors the need for continued support and possible joint expansion of the SSA/SSP and CMMF.

In addition, the ToRs provided a comprehensive set of critical questions to be addressed. The evaluators found these to be very useful and were guided by them in their enquiries. As is usual in an exercise of this type many additional questions arose during the course of discussions in the field.

1.3. Methodology

It is essential to undertake an evaluation with a sound theoretical framework in mind. Such frameworks are readily available from such bodies as the Development Aid Committee (DAC) of the OECD, from development agencies like NORAD and from multi-lateral organisations like the

World Bank. In addition there is an extensive literature on the theoretical underpinnings required for authentic evaluation. A pioneer in the field was David Stufflebeam³ and his CIPP schema - Context, Inputs, Processes and Products - forms the basis for more sophisticated approaches to evaluation such as those promoted by the organisations mentioned. Key terms in a legitimate theoretical framework include context of the program or project, its design, its implementation and management, its effectiveness, its efficiency, its impact, its relevance and its sustainability. In most programs or projects today a Logical Framework or Log-frame will include such terms in its description of the project in question, along with measurable indicators, thus giving the evaluator a structure or scaffolding for his or her enquiry. In the case of the projects under discussion here, these framing terms provided the guidelines for the evaluators' work.

Overview of the two projects

- Budget of US\$ 1.36 million over three years
- No. of CMMF Groups - 10, 000 plus
- No. of women members - 227,000
- No. of SSA/SSP centres - 1210
- Pupil enrolment - 48,578
- Transferred to mainstream - 75%

Methods adopted were conventional and involved field visits, documentary analysis and interviews with individuals and focus groups. Lists of documents consulted and people interviewed and met are found in annexures to this report. Access to information was never difficult. The SWFA office is well organised and all the data required from budget allocations to student enrolments, were quickly and easily accessed. Stromme's head office in Norway provided us with much documentation in advance. The evaluators feel that they had very good opportunities to find and analyse data.

1.4. Organisation of the report

The report follows the pattern established by the Terms of Reference, dealing first with contextual issues and then with the key indicators for evaluation. The two main projects - the SSA (speed schools) and the CMMF (women's savings groups) are dealt with in tandem. The connections between these activities are so important that it was felt better not to separate them in the discussion which follows. This approach was also reflected in the conduct of the field work in that we frequently met and interviewed together those who were engaged in the savings scheme and those responsible for managing the speed schools. As synergy was a unifying concept in the whole

³ See Stufflebeam D.L. et al (2000) *'Evaluation Models: Viewpoints on Educational and Human Services Evaluation'*, Boston, Kluwer

approach to development adopted by SF dealing with the two projects in tandem was also deemed appropriate.

The indicators for evaluation are laid out in the Terms of Reference but in essence the consultants looked first at the context of the projects to assess their relevance then their design, implementation and their impact. Finally the evaluation examined the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects, their relevance and sustainability and, most importantly, the lessons to be learned from the experience of addressing poverty through these innovations. In short, the evaluators tried to answer several key questions - what was intended and what was actually done, how were the achievements carried out, what were the outcomes, what did we learn from the experience and where do we go from here?

2. Background to the evaluation

2.1. Overview of the context

That the three countries chosen for the projects under review are among the poorest in Africa, lacking many of the social and educational advantages of more developed countries, is self-evident. Information drawn from World Bank and UN sources provides the following picture. In all three countries poverty, negative parental attitudes and distance from school provide the main barriers to children enrolling and remaining in school. The situation is exacerbated by other social and economic factors. In all three countries children are required for domestic chores which are not necessarily oppressive or abusive. They are part of the culture and of the expectations of most families. However, more sinister aspects of child exploitation are to be found in the form of trafficking of children. Poverty indicators for Mali show that per capita annual incomes are low at the US\$ 230 to 250 mark, infant mortality rates are high and that educational and literacy figures are low. In Mali about 56% of children receive basic education (46% of girls). Comparable figures for Burkina Faso show that 43.4% attend school and around 34% do so in Niger. In these countries schooling may notionally be free and even compulsory (Burkina Faso) but other financial charges make it impossible for parents to send their children to school. Repetition rates are also high (19% in Mali) and progression through the grades to completion of the basic cycle is relatively low. Literacy rates are similarly poor at 46.4% in Mali and 22% in Niger.

Thus it is highly appropriate that SF and their partner funding organisation Geneva Global (GG) chose to work on poverty alleviation in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. But equally important was the focus on poverty alleviation at the level of the community, and, in particular, women and un-schooled children⁴ in these communities. The needs of the communities formed the motivating

⁴ Un-schooled refers to children pushed out of school through poverty as well as those who have never attended

force for Stromme’s engagement and their recruitment of competent and experienced NGOs to implement the interventions. This selection of NGOs or CBOs represented another critical dimension of Stromme’s strategies - to work with organisations who could conduct authentic analysis of the context, provide resources for sensitizing rural communities and who could demonstrate a real understanding of the environment in which change was to take place. Early in the analysis it became clear that women as key actors in community development should provide the focus for the interventions. Women provided with basic facilities and resources could be seen as catalysts for change. Simple approaches to improving the economic status of this group of rural people were seen as strategic in maintaining the poverty focus of Stromme’s work. In brief, ideal partners were found for the implementation of the rationale which gives Stromme Foundation its reason for being - to eradicate poverty by empowering people through two main activities: basic education and micro-finance.

2.2. Assessing the educational and social needs of the participants

This crucial step in preparing for an authentic and effective intervention was managed by SFWA and its selected partners in the three countries. Given a background of very high rates of non-participation in schools in all three countries it was seen as crucial to develop approaches to alleviate this profound problem. A key challenge in achieving education for all is that a number of children fail to enrol in school when they reach primary school age or they drop out prematurely, largely as a result of cultural practices and poverty that result in education occupying a less prominent role in the daily struggle for survival. In SF’s three countries of operation in West Africa a total of 3.18 million children have dropped out or never attended school. Table 2 below illustrates enrolment and out-of school rates in all three countries:

Table 2: Rates of Enrolment and Non-attendance in Mali, Burkina and Niger⁵

Country	Primary rate of enrolment (%)			Children Out-of-school (%)			Secondary rate of enrolment (%)			Children Out-of-school (%)		
	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F
Mali	79.4	86.8	72.3	20.6	13.2	27.3	77.6	68.0	87.5	23.4	12.5	32
Burkina	78.0	80.3	75.5	22.0	19.9	24.5	72.4	71.1	67.7	27.6	28.9	32.3

⁵ All figures drawn from official government publications

Niger	84.1	71.4	15.9	28.6	71.7	53.5	28.3	46.5
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Speed schools are attempting to address this challenge, providing out-of-school children aged 8 to 12 with a nine-month accelerated learning programme. The CMMF or self help savings groups for women were seen to be the scaffolding to support the strategies for improved enrolment and school retention. Rooting these innovations in communities in an authentic and sustainable way was seen as a challenge which existing community-based organisations could address best. A ‘bridgehead’ strategy employing outside groups to come in, establish ‘their’ project and uplift the community was rejected. Instead, a more indigenous approach was employed, working through those who already had an authentic relationship with the project participants. As discussed later, this approach to needs assessment and the design of an intervention represents one of the most valuable lessons to be learned from the SSA/CMMF approach.

3. The Evaluation and its findings

3.1. The projects and their design

The two projects under evaluation are straightforward enough in their design. The CMMF or savings project is based on the Savings for Change model developed by a number of agencies which are active in West Africa⁶. In essence, small groups of women (up to 25) form a savings group the members of which undertake to save an agreed sum of money each week. Elected officers of the savings group look after the money and members may apply for a modest loan, giving 28 days notice. The purpose of the loan does not need to be divulged. The loan and its interest must normally be repaid within 28 days although exceptions do occur. What the CMMF project provides is a safe, ‘one-stop’ locus for borrowing money which may be used for income generation, for health or educational expenses or to fund seeds and fertiliser for the men folk of the community who are largely responsible for food production. At the end of the year any surplus in the savings account is shared equally among the participants. The evaluators learned of sums of CFA 500,000⁷ or CFA 400,000 being shared out among the 25 or so savings group members at the end of 2009.

The SSA or Passerelle is again a simple enough design using a well tested model. A local school is

⁶ Notable partners are Oxfam America, Freedom from Hunger and Plan Mali

⁷ The exchange rate in October 2010 was CFA 655 to the Euro

set up, employing a suitable person as a teacher⁸. A special curriculum is developed which provides a nine-month 'catch-up' programme for the pupils. Typically the children have previously dropped out of school because of distance to school, parental poverty or other reasons. Teaching is intensive with a reported 34 hour week, much longer than in government schools (24 hours) and compared to regional averages for contact time between teacher and pupil at the primary/basic education level. The overall aim of the intensive SSA programme is to facilitate transfer back into the mainstream of the government school system. Transfer to a specific grade is governed by the students' end-of-year examination marks.

Observations from the Field

Bamabougou Village - 25 women met the evaluators under the trees. Around 40 pupils were also present. The few men sat on chairs, the women on stools they brought to the meeting. The savings scheme has a turnover of CFA 450,000 per year. Loans have covered the purchase of shoes for children to attend school, medicines for malaria and to help the families function better. Of the 190 children in the village about 30 attend a school 7 kms away and another 46 attend the Passerelle. The joint activities have transformed village economies.

Although simple in design the projects are governed by easily understood principles of participation in management by local people, training in the key functions necessary for each project, supervision and support from competent NGO personnel, overall monitoring by government as well as the partners engaged in the work and a low-cost approach to financing and implementation. Of particular significance is the signed approval of government in all three countries for these approaches to rural poverty and its consequences for basic schooling. Compliance with government priorities and regulations is assured and a Focal Point person or government institution for a sound interface with government is a further significant aspect of project design.

In planning the interventions a Logical Framework was developed which provides indicators for progress with the project activities as well as realistic assessments of risks and benefits. An underlying principle of the Log Frame is the understanding that all communities have capacity and that preparation and sensitization will help release this capacity for successful implementation. Explicit in project design is the understanding that the 'Three Ps' - poverty,

⁸ In some areas communities were able to employ fully qualified teachers as there were few posts available in government schools

parental attitude and proximity to school - largely govern the probability that children will enrol and continue to attend school. Addressing these issues goes a long way to improving children's life-chances.

The acceptance of women as key actors in community development is another key principle of project design. The synergies between the development of women's capacity to save and to manage money and the demand for the funding of schooling give an opportunity to tap into the capacity of women to influence change in their own villages. Training in the skills necessary and the support mechanisms mentioned earlier buttress these innovations.

3.2. Implementation of the projects

As noted above the projects are implemented using local NGO partners. SFWA operates as an umbrella organisation, working closely with carefully selected partners whose selection depended on their management capacity and their familiarity with communities and the proposed approaches to change in those communities. Further training in management was provided but a fundamental implementation process involved the NGO partners in analyzing the realities of the target communities, liaising with the education authorities and maintaining good relations with traditional leaders. In communities visited by the evaluators, headmen were enthusiastic about the

NGO Partners and Implementation (1)

SFWA partners were asked about their engagement with the two projects. In response one partner noted that they had engaged four people full time to implement the SSA project. These people were paid directly from the project. In addition, the Director and the Accountant of the NGO spent two days a week on SSA activities. The organisation also emphasized the importance of running the SSA and CMMF activities in the same communities to ensure synergies. Communities had been selected on the basis of previous good experience and had been managed with the benefit of the recipients in mind. The only difficulties encountered had been insufficient finance for the needs of the communities. Outcomes had included increased interest in education from villagers. Unit costs per pupil of between 90 and 120 Euros had been achieved.

work the partner NGOs and SF were doing among their people. In preparing for implementation the procedures and management expectations of SFWA were clearly spelt out to the NGO partners, particularly in terms of financial control and administrative costs. The evaluation team noted the warm relations between NGO partners and the SFWA staff, a situation hard to legislate for but a great facilitator of progress. As will be discussed below, there was a plea from partners in Burkina for greater harmonization of finances and salaries across the three countries and for consideration of a management fee to be paid to the NGOs whose senior officers maintained a supervisory role but were not recompensed for it.

As a final point on implementation it must be mentioned that sound monitoring and evaluation systems were in place and seemed to be managed well. Data was available to the evaluators and access was not problematic.

3.3. The impact of the projects

When considering projects like SSA and CMMF impact must be measured in direct and indirect terms and also in terms of positive outcomes as well as negative ones. Turning first to CMMF, the savings group project, the positive effects may be classified in two categories. At the social level it was evident that this had registered a hugely positive direct impact on the lives of the women involved. Apart from the convenience of a 'one-stop' source for modest loans (usually of around CFA 1500) a largely unplanned impact was the development of a great sense of solidarity and conflict resolution among the women's groups, a heightened sense of self-worth and self-respect and a much greater sense of their own capacity to manage the challenges of raising their families. These are extremely significant findings and deserve wide publicity for the project. Further, the groups of women contacted noted that they were better informed and more able to benefit from information on health, agriculture and income generating activities. Most of the communities visited were still very poor with few facilities so rural transformation was not highly evident but the building blocks of self-confidence and recognition of their own capacity to mobilize resources, to participate in their children's education and the family's economy were certainly in place. The projects are getting women more and more empowered and they are more involved in decision-making within the family and at the village level.

At the economic level village communities and their economies have been directly influenced by the savings scheme. Women are engaging more fully in marketing their own produce and in purchasing and re-selling products like bananas within the district. The savings scheme has increased the range of choices open to women - choice of income-generating activities, of sending children to school and of joining in community activities. Health and food quality have been improved through the impact of the savings scheme. In the CMMF areas it is notable that children have returned to school and stayed there with the promise of continuation beyond the Passerelle as fees are no longer out of reach of their parents and success at the speed school has encouraged the parents to believe more fully in schooling. Gender equity in schools has been improved and the speed school committee has empowered women; in some cases women on these committees have been delegated to encourage the enrolment and retention of girls in the school.

NGO Partners and Implementation (2)

A Malian NGO stated that they had become involved with the projects because of the values they shared with SFWA and the way in which they were included in project design. Mutual respect and confidence had been built up. Financial and material help had been received from SF for implementation, including a vehicle and some motorcycles. Once again the synergies between the two projects were emphasised by the NGO as well as the advantages to be gained from combining resources for them. Communities also benefited. They had been sensitized prior to implementation, both collectively and with a focus on community leaders.. When asked about difficulties in implementation this organisation stated, 'Nous n'avons pas encore eu de difficultés majeures'. Major impacts were listed as conscientization of women, development of female leadership and capacity to manage money, increased involvement of women in village development and the growth of local economies.

A direct impact of the speed school scheme and its supporting structure through the savings groups has been the embracing by women of education as the number one priority for their communities. Feedback from community groups revealed that the lack of an accompanying literacy programme for women was seen as a shortcoming of the CMMF project. A programme of 'Active Literacy' has been introduced in Mali but the design of the programme has not been finalised and its implementation has not been extended.

Examining the impact of the SSA/SSP speed schools revealed that all the education authorities met by the consultants in the three countries recognized the actual contribution of the intervention towards national objectives for education. All three governments are fighting to reach the EPT/EFA goals by 2015 and also to achieve the Millennium Development Goals declared for education. Increased enrolment rates have been an outcome from the SSA/SSP and the education authorities see speed schools as contributing both to enrolment and retention rates as the figures for transfer indicate. The NGOs, the communities and the parents involved in the speed schools movement are very grateful for the SSA/SSP as it provides a second chance for an otherwise excluded group of children.

However, the impact of the speed schools has provided some slightly negative consequences. Pupils transferring to the mainstream may find themselves in large classes, moving from a group of 20 to 25 in the Passerelle to as many as 100 in the government school. Furniture may be lacking and books few. The quality of schooling may therefore be less attractive. None of these problems is the fault of the speed school but may be unavoidable for the child transferring. Evidence received by the evaluators suggested that despite these problems transferred children did very well and most graduated readily to the next grades.

The speed school (or accelerated learning program) is a well-known innovation and has proved

successful in a number of countries. An annexure to this report summarises experience from some selected examples. But developing a school-based innovation as a stand-alone solution was not judged to be sufficient. A strategy had to be found which would provide the financial support needed for speed schools but which would also motivate communities and provide incentives for self-development and self-reliance. The self-help savings groups for women were seen to be the scaffolding to support the improved school access and retention strategy.

A further unlooked for impact of the Passerelle programme has been a tendency in some places for urban parents to send their children to local rural schools to take advantage of free and successful schooling. No hard data was gathered on this but it would be worth further investigation.

3.4. Effectiveness and efficiency: the financial picture

3.4.1. Effectiveness and efficiency are key concerns in any evaluation and lie at the heart of an assessment of the value that an innovation or intervention may represent. The central questions will relate to impact and the extent to which the desired effects were achieved efficiently. In considering the effectiveness of the CMMF savings activities the scheme led to the capacity to purchase school materials, in some instances to payment of teachers' salaries and to provision of school furniture as well as to increased income generating activities. As noted above, women were empowered and were able to improve the health status and lifestyle of their families. A further measure of effectiveness was the obvious synergy between the two major activities, the savings groups and the speed schools⁹. Schools benefited in numerous ways from the payment of the teachers' salaries to the provision of furniture. The 'discovery' of local capacity and its utilisation are further indicators of the effectiveness of the savings programme. It is almost too obvious to state but the setting up of systematic and reliable systems for the saving of modest sums of money, sufficient to change the daily reality of members, was the direct outcome of the CMMF intervention - the most persuasive and direct measure of effectiveness. Nearly 230,000 women have been reached by this programme.

In the same way the effectiveness of the speed schools can be measured in terms of the extent to which a second chance was provided for so many children - over 48,000 in the three countries¹⁰. Parents reported consistently on this as a huge benefit from SSA and that the transfer system worked well, another indicator of effectiveness. When asked about pupil performance parents and teachers responded very positively; in one case a transferred pupil had come 37th in a year group of 135 (Year 7) and another was 25th of 75 pupils in Year 4. Overall the project had proved very

⁹ In some communities only CMMF activities were conducted; not all those visited included SSA.

¹⁰ Compare with Ghana's 85,000 after 12 years of the SfL programme (see annexure)

effective in preparing pupils for success in the following grades. A further indicator of the effectiveness of the project was demonstrated by the capacity of local people to manage school committees and to develop the requisite new skills. SSA/SSP had provided an avenue for competence to be demonstrated. Efficiency is the partner of effectiveness. A programme or project can be effective but its delivery may not be efficient. The savings scheme has proved very efficient. It absorbs very little in administrative costs¹¹ but appears almost to run itself. The evaluators were repeatedly told that there were no problems with the scheme and no cases of failure to repay. The sums of money shared out at year's end were substantial and the uses to which loans were put were varied and creative. Efficiency was also demonstrated in the self-regulatory nature of the activity. No close supervision was required by external agencies; NGO partners fulfilled this role. Target numbers for inclusion in groups were usually exceeded and there was competition to join savings groups in most communities, another sign of efficiency. The SSA project also demonstrated high rates of efficiency. Enrolment, retention and rates of transfer were all very positive. Up to 86% of SSA pupils transferred successfully to mainstream schools and 72% graduated to the next grade. The costing of the project receives further attention in 3.4.2. below and comparisons are drawn with similar programmes in other countries but as a measure of efficiency it seems that unit costs in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger are reasonable.

3.4.2. Turning to the financial picture in more detail it is useful to begin with an overview of achievements and then to analyse the financial inputs made and their effectiveness and efficiency. It is worth noting in passing that the NGO referred to in Box (2) above disbursed over 980 million CFA (€1.49 m) between 2005 and 2010. This section is best handled by separating the two projects, the CMMF savings scheme and the SSA speed schools initiative and subjecting them to some analysis.

Table 3: CMMF: Achievements between 2007 and 2009

Country	Years	No. of Groups	No. of members
Mali	2007	3360	72215
	2008	4959	110545
	2009*	1861	41352
Burkina	2009	145	3281
Grand Total		10325	227393

¹¹ See Table 6 below and the discussion in section 3.4.2. which follows

* Note: Major budget cuts occurred during 2009

Table 4: SSA/SSP: Achievements between 2007 and 2009

Country	Year	No of centres	Enrolments
Mali	2007	230	6391
	2008	282	8081
	2009	386	10926
Total for Mali		898	25398
Burkina Faso	2007	20	585
	2008	72	2040
	2009	120	3364
Total for Burkina		212	5989
Niger	2007	40	1183
	2008	60	16008
Total for Niger		100	17191
GRAND TOTALS		1210	48578

Linking the achievements with expenditure reveals the following information. Over the period of the projects some US\$ 1.36 million was utilised. Broken down by project the CMMF programme absorbed US\$ 484, 990 and the SSA US\$ 874,619. However, figures presented by one NGO¹² show that average per pupil costs for SSA/SSP were US\$ 99 in 2008 when 603 pupils were enrolled. In the following year costs dropped to US\$ 80 per pupil and in 2010 the unit costs were US\$ 89 per pupil. Comparisons with government figures are not possible as unit costs are not calculated in the

¹² Figures supplied by APSM, Mali

same way but children in the SSA project are being enrolled and transferred into the mainstream again at a cost of between US\$ 11 and US\$ 9 per month. Although comparatively low these figures are quite high when compared with Ghana's accelerated learning programme (see annexure¹³). The table below gives a better overview of costs (in CFA) of the Passerelles and where they have been focused:

Table 5: Costs and budget utilisation for SSA/SSP

Student and Centre Costs	Costs in CFA	Budget Utilisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Furniture ○ Teaching materials ○ Technical follow-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 386700 ○ 63750 ○ 76250 	19.7%
Teachers		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Salaries ○ Training ○ Pedagogical meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 468000 ○ 193700 ○ 20000 	25.5%
Partners		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project staff salaries ○ Motor bikes ○ Fuel/insurance ○ Admin fees to NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 265500 ○ 300000 ○ 144000 ○ 250625 	35.9%
Regional Office expenses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshops for capacity building, quality assurance etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 500000 	18.7%

¹³ The Ghana figures do not include teacher salary costs which would result in much higher unit costs

In analysing these figures further the following points must be emphasised:

- Items such as motorcycles are 'one-off' capital expenditure items. They will need replacing over time and steps should be taken to ensure that a budget for replacement equipment is identified. But the difference between capital items and recurrent ones such as salaries needs to be recognised when efficiency is being measured
- Furniture and, to some extent, teaching and learning materials need to be assessed in the same way. Replacements are likely to be piecemeal over a period of time.

Analysing costs in this way presents a slightly different picture of the efficiency of the SSA/SSP project. Items identified as largely capital expenditure amount to around CFA 900,000 and recurrent items to CFA 1.7 million, roughly one third to two thirds. The administrative aspects of SSA/SSP are also worthy of some further examination. The FSWA regional office takes CFA 500,000 for its costs, including overall management, monitoring and evaluation. This is around 23% of the total budget and is therefore quite high, especially when it is seen that administrative costs of the partners come to CFA 516,000, another 25% of the overall budget. The Regional Office does spend the money on training and capacity building so tracking costs in a direct way is not always easy, despite the transparency with which documentation was made available. However, it should also be noted that quality is a direct outcome from this investment in administration.

Looking again at the recurrent costs, teachers' salaries represent CFA 468,000, around 17.5% of the overall budget. If we try to isolate the expenditure directed specifically towards the pupil in the classroom then the salary figure must be added to the figures for pedagogical materials, furniture, teacher training and pedagogical meetings, a total of CFA 1, 132, 150 or CFA 23,586 per pupil. However, items like furniture, materials and teacher training do not recur to the same extent each year. Hence the difficulties of a realistic per capita or unit cost calculation. Taking a broad overview it can be seen from Table 4 above that students and their centres take 45.2% of the budget, partners absorb 35.98% and the Regional Office a further 18.7%. Hidden within these figures are the costs of monitoring, evaluating, supporting and reporting, all the activities which make for quality in education. For good results project managers have to pay people to ensure quality and provide them with the means to do so. This is where government efforts in so many countries fail. Research in countries like Zambia show that support and supervision make all the difference in teacher and pupil performance. The very high rates of transfer to the mainstream and success in retention and continuation show that value for money is achieved in the SSA/SSP project.

Turning to the CMMF budget and its use, the following figures are revealed.

Table 6: CMMF costs 2007 -2010

Partners	CMMF Groups	% of Budget	Unit cost
Staff salaries and social charge	603612	23%	
Motor bikes and accessories	866052	33%	
Fuel and insurance	341172	13%	
Field office expenses	52488	2%	
NGO follow-up	26244	1%	
Admin fees for NGOs	131220	5%	
RO costs (capacity building etc)	603612*	23%	
TOTALS	2624400	100%	194976 (NoK 1296)

** This figure, identical with that for staff and salaries, was described as 'coincidental' by the Regional Office*

These figures show that the costs of paying staff to get out into communities and to sensitize, supervise, monitor and support take up 69% of the costs of the project and that administrative costs are low at 8%. It must be assumed that the costs to the SFWA Regional Office are largely buried in other costs such as capacity building and monitoring - a 23% item in the overall costings. A unit cost per participant in CMMF of something like US\$ 65 per year is extremely cost-efficient. What is of even greater interest is the largely unquantifiable outcomes from this level of investment. As the evaluators have noted elsewhere this relatively modest input has galvanized communities and economic and social change can be seen to occur, simply as a result of the success of CMMF.

3.5. Relevance and sustainability

All partners and government spokespersons consulted agreed without hesitation that the projects are highly relevant to the needs of the communities in which they take place. The synergy between CMMF and SSA creates a set of solutions relevant to the needs of poor communities and the

savings scheme in particular has proved very relevant to the health, dietary and educational needs of individual families. CMMF has opened the door to income generating activities for many women and the purchase of bicycles from savings and loans has helped women get their produce to market and their children to school. Direct relevance to immediate economic needs is clearly demonstrated but more strategic is the relevance of the processes used to sensitize and train community members to manage their own development, be it through savings or through the SSA movement. The skills developed can be used to address further problems such as malaria prevention, the health care of neonates and their mothers and a host of other challenges. Relevance has also been demonstrated through the impact of the projects on cooperation and empowerment in village communities. There is no lack of capacity among unschooled and non-literate people. The introduction of facilitating projects has released that capacity. Looking more at the macro level the SSA project has made a highly relevant if small scale contribution to government EFA plans. More importantly, the model has been tested and can be extended - its relevance is unquestioned; the government of Burkina Faso has agreed in principle to fund further centres thus underlining the relevance of the approach to national needs.

Sustainability needs to be examined as more than a financial issue. The usual question is, 'How will this be funded once the partners exit and who will take it on?' but sustainability has more than a financial implication. Social and community sustainability need to be considered too. To what extent does the community really support an innovation? When funding declines or runs out, have they prepared strategies which may bridge the gap? It is part of the responsibility of sponsors and donors to help their partners and communities work out solutions of this type. In addition donors need to take the long term view; three year or five year agreements are insufficient. A ten to fifteen year commitment needs to be negotiated but in such a way that partners are not ambushed by a sudden exit but neither is dependency encouraged. Political sustainability is a further dimension of the concept, clearly demonstrated in the case of SSA by government policy commitment and funding of centres in the three countries. Finally, technical sustainability needs to be considered. Both these projects demonstrate this quality clearly. They are not dependent on hi-tech solutions and equipment. Human resources are the key ingredient. Given adequate and appropriate training, supervision and monitoring CMMF and SSA will be technically sustainable for the foreseeable future, partly because of the synergies built in to the projects and partly because of the quality of the initial design and its reliance on local competence and experience.

Relevance and sustainability depend on the breaking of a vicious circle - no development without education but no education because of slow rates of development. Creating a population capable of benefiting from education is an investment which all governments seek to attain. Support for projects, however small and limited which break into this circle of deprivation, is a crucial approach to ensuring relevance and sustainability. The projects have them both to a marked degree and all the signs are there that the three governments agree and are providing formal political support as well as practical inputs such as the funding of SSA Centres. The Sub-Regional

Secretariat for SSA/SSP is being set up with the agreement of the three countries and should prove a strong support for SSA/SSP sustainability. Stromme Foundation should seek ways to help fund its creation and continuation.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Key findings from the evaluation

a) Success of the interventions.

The first and most significant finding from the evaluation is that both the SSA and CMMF interventions are undoubtedly successful. Their success was measured in terms of their design, impact, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability. By all these measures they can be judged to have succeeded. In terms of the Stufflebeam model mentioned at the outset of this report the context, the inputs, the processes and the products of the two linked interventions have resulted in targets being met and often exceeded. More strategically models for encouraging children to enrol and stay in school and for their mothers to engage in group savings activities have been tested and proven in the field. This is perhaps one of the most important outcomes of the projects and deserves wider dissemination and publicity. Although still relatively small in scale in relation to the huge needs for schooling in the three countries and the very low state of economic activity in rural areas, the models have worked well and much can be learned from them.

b) Women as key actors

That women were recognised as key players in community development is another important finding and the evaluators were reminded once again that there is capacity in rural communities which only has to be facilitated to establish and extend itself. Uncovering these 'hidden' sources of leadership enabled the sponsors, SF and GG, to maintain their poverty alleviation focus. Everywhere the importance of the '3 Ps' was recognised: poverty, parental attitudes and proximity to a school combine to dictate whether a child will be educated or not and SSA, buttressed by CMMF, helped establish solutions to this triple threat. The capacity of the women who have been so successful in their savings group now needs to be harnessed and developed further, particularly through the introduction of literacy activities and income generation.

c) Design and modalities used

A critical success factor for the projects has been the sound design that ensured initial sensitization of communities by competent partners. This led to relatively problem-free implementation. Known partners working in communities with which they were familiar represented an important management and implementation principle. In particular the CMMF project was reported to the

evaluators as unproblematic at the community level. The large numbers of women met and spoken to through the focus group activities were unanimous in their appreciation of the savings project and how easy it was to manage. This view was supported by the chiefs the evaluators met.

d) Relations with government

At the more strategic level, compliance and complementarity with government policies ensured acceptance of the innovations in all three countries. The setting up of a Focal Point in each Ministry helped greatly in this respect and is another important strategic element in the project design.

e) Management and implementation

The evaluators also felt that the system of action plans and budgeting worked well, ensuring that NGO partners maintained a business-like and efficient style of management of the work at the grass-roots level. Training was well focused and supportive and the system of local animateurs, supervisors and coordinators worked well. Management from SWFA worked well and it was obvious that collegial relationships had been developed among the partners and the SWFA staff. However, some issues still need to be addressed. The evaluators were informed that there were some discrepancies between the countries regarding salaries paid to staff. A further problem appears to be that Passerelle supervisors require a Bac + 2 qualification but are paid less than CMMF animators who have a lower academic standard. Salaries for SSA/SSP teachers and animators are lower than those of formal school teachers and they are paid for only 10 months of the year. This leads to job insecurity and a loss of possible benefits from the social security systems of the three countries. The allocations for motor cycle fuel and maintenance are comparatively low, thus risking efficiency in supervision and monitoring. There does not appear to be a budget head for the costs of sensitizing communities before centres are set up. Among the recommendations which follow is a proposal for a special study of these areas of possible discrepancy.

f) Effectiveness and efficiency

These can be measured through two dimensions: did the interventions change people's reality for the better and were these changes brought about efficiently and cost-effectively? The impact of these relatively modest interventions costing around US\$600,000 per year has been remarkable with nearly 250,000 women involved in self help savings groups and nearly 50,000 children reintroduced to schooling with high rates of retention and continuation. The figures discussed in 3.4.2. above show how cost-effective the projects have been. Less quantifiable but equally important has been the impact of the projects on the quality of life in the communities affected. The evaluators were met with requests for 'further legs for the cooking pot', in other words, more activities which could support what CMMF and SSA had achieved. Proposals included more income generating activities, health care and adult literacy to create even more synergies.

g) Sustainability and relevance

The foregoing comments indicate the level of sustainability of the projects and certainly underline their relevance. Models have been tested and put in place, governments have signed up to supporting the SSA initiative in particular and communities are more than satisfied with the outcomes from the SF/GG cooperation.

4.2. Lessons and legacies

Examining the overall impact of the projects the lessons for future engagements of this kind are clear. The first is to work on the assumption that capacity exists in local communities. These communities have survived for generations despite their difficult environments. Where development is planned this should never be an externally driven exercise. Of course some kind of initial kick-start is required but the huge literature on how rural development is best managed (see Chambers¹⁴, 1997) shows clearly that the starting point is not the 'bridgehead' strategy where pioneers go in to establish an island of development from which growth flourishes. The preferred alternative is a more indigenous approach where the strengths, the skills and the capacities of communities are harnessed and promoted. What CMMF and SSA have demonstrated once again is the legitimacy and effectiveness of using local competence and expertise to achieve sustainable goals. A further lesson from the two projects is the importance of maintaining simple approaches. No great technology was used, no flooding of communities with experts, vehicles and buildings. The local expertise was sufficient, supported by training and supervision.

4.3. Key recommendations

4.3.1. Recommendations for SFWA

Recommendation No. 1: Develop further linked activities to create greater synergies

The first of these concerns the issues of sustainability and synergy. In communities where CMMF and SSA have become firmly established there is a need to extend the number of 'legs' on which community development is to stand. Mention has been made already of suggestions including income generating activities, health related activities (particularly to do with malaria prevention and neo-natal child care), and most significantly of all, women's literacy activities. Active Literacy has already been piloted and should be extended. It appears obvious that development of income generating activities through the CMMF savings groups will benefit the drive to schooling.

¹⁴ Chambers R, (1997) *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*, London, ITP

Literacy has a very important role to perform, increasing women's capacity to manage savings and other activities. The kind of literacy developed should be of a practical and active kind which may require a good deal of initial analysis to ensure that real needs are being met. In addition, some communities proposed that activities to encourage men's involvement in development should also be considered. Stromme should work together with its NGO partners to determine the nature of the 'additional legs' recommended by the evaluators, always bearing in mind the expressed needs of the communities.

Recommendation No.2: Concentration of efforts

The evaluation team agrees that efforts should be concentrated rather than dispersed and that future expansion be based on this principle. Where expansion takes place (as with AMMR, AFDR and VIE) budgets should be made available for the work to be done thoroughly. Prioritisation of needs among Mali, Burkina and Niger should be attempted if good planning and implementation are to follow.

Recommendation No. 3: Conduct or contract for research and special studies

Support the analysis of the projects with further studies and research projects designed to draw out key lessons and to ensure that lessons are clearly identified. For example, little is known about the 'ripple' effect of women's borrowing through the CMMF initiative. To what extent are their families helped and in what ways? Are there tensions developing in rural communities where women are learning leadership and managerial skills and their husbands are, possibly, being left behind? How are culturally relevant materials to be developed? What kind of income generating activities should be introduced and which partners invited to contribute? The aim should be the creation of a sound knowledge base for internal and external use.

Recommendation No. 4: Fund additional and further training for partners in all three countries

The evaluation team heard frequent calls for further and better training for local partners and CMMF/SSA groups in all three countries. The needs should be analysed and funding made available to meet them. In particular, preparation for concentration of activities should form an important training activity in all three countries.

Recommendation No. 5: Rationalise budget allocations between CMMF, SSA and other activities

Analysis of budget allocations reveals some imbalances among the major expenditure items. These should be examined carefully to ensure that the bulk of expenditure goes towards the prime beneficiaries of the two projects and that a minimum is spent on administration and management costs. At the same time an analysis should be made of the comparability of salaries and other benefits paid to project staff within the three partner countries, bearing in mind any contextual

differences which may influence policies in this area.

Recommendation No. 6: Develop a programme for the sensitization of men in the communities where SSA and CMMF operate

Existing NGO partners may have the capacity and experience to conduct this important work on a case-by-case basis. Where communities are already well led by chiefs or headmen there may be limited need for such work but in other places it may be essential; Advice should be sought from implementers familiar with local circumstances.

Recommendation No. 7: Maintain a strong gender emphasis

Although CMMF is a 'women only' activity, a stronger emphasis should be placed on gender issues in the SSA/SSP project, especially where the identification of women teachers and supervisors is concerned

Recommendation No. 8: Matching Speed Schools to appropriate Government schools

In planning the location of speed schools cognisance must be taken of the opportunities for transferring graduates to schools with the capacity to absorb them, avoiding large classes, poor furniture etc.

4.3.2. Recommendations for SF

Recommendation No. 9 : Take steps to publicise the success stories of SF/GG and their local partners

This strategy is linked to Recommendation No. 2 in that it provides a way to publicise successful models and to draw further support for the initiatives from a variety of sponsors and funding agencies

Recommendation No. 10 : Seek new/additional local partners for controlled expansion of MME/SSA plus further supporting activities

One of the great strengths of the SSA/CMMF interventions has been the partnership with NGOs holding similar values to SF. In seeking further 'legs for the cooking pot' SFR should look for partners that have the capacity to deliver a wider range of services as well as a compatible set of values.

Recommendation No. 11: Consider a ten to fifteen year engagement with these very poor countries, building on partnerships with like-minded organisations and preparing joint strategies

The SWFA document which drafts proposals for 2011 and beyond picks up this theme, listing negotiations with UNICEF, CARE and Swiss Cooperation to fund further SSA centres. Wider knowledge of SF's success in Mali, Burkina and Niger should attract more partners with the capacity to contribute funding, skills and experience complementary to SF's own profile.

Recommendation No. 12: Keep it simple

Relatively simple and uncomplicated innovations have been brought in by SF and its partners. This is not to say that they do not require a great deal of hard work. However, our recommendation is that principles of directness and simplicity should be maintained

5. Annexures

5.1. Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

External Evaluation of Speed Schools and the added effects of implementing Speed Schools and Saving for Change jointly

Introduction

Strømme Foundation (SF) has been working among the poor and marginalised since 1976. SF works through partners in 12 different countries concentrated in four regions: South America, West Africa, East Africa and Asia. SF's vision is to eradicate poverty by empowering people through two main focus areas: development education and microfinance. In West Africa, the Speed Schools Programme (SSP) and Community Managed Microfinance (CMMF) that employs the Saving for Change (SfC) model are SF's premier programmes supporting basic education and savings-led microfinance (MF). A key challenge in achieving universal primary education is that a number of children fail to enrol in school when they reach primary school age and/or drop out prematurely, largely as a result of cultural practices and poverty that places education second-stage to the daily struggle to survive. In SF's three countries of operation in West Africa; Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso - among the poorest countries in the world - a total of 3.18 million children aged 8 to 12 have never attended school or have dropped out of school. According to the Human Development Index (HDI 2007/2008), less than half of all primary-school-age Malian children, 45% of all school-aged Burkinabe children, and 40% of all Nigerien children are enrolled in school.

Speed Schools provide out-of-school children aged 8 to 12 with nine-month accelerated learning courses aimed at equipping them with the skills needed to re-enter the formal education system. Data gathered to date suggest the SSP is working. 1354 Speed School centres were opened in 2009 alone in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Since the start of the SSP, a total of 38341 children have enrolled in Speed Schools, with 28 233 (73,6 %) of these learners transferring to formal schools after the SPP. SFWA aims to admit an additional 79.100 children into speed schools by the end of 2013.

In June 2010, an agreement was signed in Norway between SF and the Governments of Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali, to establish a Speed School Secretariat. Among other things, the Secretariat recognises Speed Schools as part of the national curriculum. These governments have also agreed to fund more Speed Schools. In light of the increasing scope and impact of the programme, it is necessary that a thorough, external evaluation be conducted in order to determine the programme's achievements and shortcomings so far.

Through SF's second programme in the region, the CMMF intervention that is in line with the SfC model¹⁵, more than 250 000 women have since 2005 started to meet weekly to save and lend from the loan fund they are building. The loans give women a chance to meet fluctuations in the economy and eliminate vulnerability. From the stabilised income and extra savings, the women buy food and clothes for their family, and save up for the future education of their children. All participants receive training connected to malaria prevention and the use of nets. Furthermore, the CMMF groups provide an arena for women to meet, discuss and learn about relevant issues such as financial management, health, and the importance of education.

As CMMF groups and Speed Schools operate in the same geographical areas, synergistic effects can occur. The change of values and finances accumulated through CMMF provides a welcome entry-point for out-of school children and drop-outs of the formal education system to enrol in Speed School centres. There is increased recognition in SF that in order to promote holistic social development, efforts to increase children's access to quality education must be coupled with efforts to empower the wider community. Through its concentration strategy, SFWA aims to create synergy between its two focus areas, education and microfinance, by establishing Speed Schools where there already are CMMF groups present.

In 2007, Geneva Global (GG), an American fundraising agency for development, signed a partnership agreement with Strømme Foundation West Africa (SFWA) for the funding of Speed Schools and CMMF. This evaluation is funded by GG, but will take into account the entire programs and interventions. Through consulting the stakeholders who have been impacted by the SSP and CMMF, the evaluation should suggest areas of improvement of the SSP as well as the continued sustainability and augmented change and success of Speed Schools and CMMF when implemented in the same areas.

Location

Selected sites in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, West Africa.

Purpose

The evaluation has two parts and purposes:

1. Evaluate the Speed School Program by itself including key success factors, lessons learnt, and areas for improvement.
2. Determine the impact of the combined efforts of the Speed School and CMMF programmes

¹⁵ Saving for Change is a model developed by Oxfam America, Freedom From Hunger and Strømme Foundation. The model is implemented in West Africa in close co-operation with the above-mentioned partners as well as Plan Mali in Mali.

and present key success factors, lessons learnt and suggest areas for improvement.

The purpose of the evaluation is ultimately to promote transparency and secure accountability to donors and stakeholders, and to improve programme management and sustainability through the learning that an evaluation facilitates.

Objectives

1. Evaluation of the Speed School Program

Strømme Foundation, in collaboration with the Governments of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, is committed to securing access to quality education for children in West Africa. In recognition of the increasing scope and impact of the Speed School programme, Strømme Foundation is seeking an independent review of the progress of the programme by:

- Assessing the effectiveness of the SSP- measuring its achievements and implementation against its stated objectives and timeframes
- Assessing the relevance of the SSP against the context and situational needs of beneficiaries in West Africa
- Assessing the efficiency of the SSP with regard to the financial and social benefits gained against resources spent
- Assessing the key external factors impacting on the success of the SSP
- Assessing the sustainability of the SSP with regard to institutional capacity and the likelihood of continued progress with less external funding
- Assessing the viability and effectiveness of key partnerships and coordination mechanisms relevant to the delivery of basic education through the SSP
- Assessing the effectiveness of indicators selected for the SSP identifying critical gaps and shortcomings in the programme
- Assessing the roles, responsibilities and participation of key education stakeholders
- Recommending methods for improving the Program's design and implementation, with a special focus on the content and delivery of quality education
- Demonstrating to current and potential donors the need for continued support and possible expansion of the SSP

2. Determine the impact of the combined efforts of the Speed School and CMMF programmes

Strømme Foundation is committed to the vision of a world free from poverty. SFWA strongly believes that the two main programmes, SSP and CMMF, enforce one another, and that their implementation in the same communities create greater results and changes for the participants. To be able to evaluate the added value of both programmes co-existing, it is necessary to separate and monitor the effects of the programmes stand-alone. However, with regard to CMMF the evaluation will solely focus on results and not implementation of the programme. This objective will therefore include questions on the effects of CMMF and the synergy. (The SSP is taken account of in purpose 1.)

a) CMMF

- Assessing the effectiveness of the CMMF, measuring its achievements and implementation against its stated objectives and timeframes
- Assessing the key external factors impacting on the success of the CMMF
- Assessing the effectiveness of indicators selected for the CMMF
- Identifying critical gaps and shortcomings in the programme

b) The combined impact and synergy

- Assessing the synergy effects achieved by the SSP and CMMF
- Demonstrating to current and potential donors the need for continued support and possible joint expansion of the SSP and CMMF.

Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation should cover, but is not limited to, the areas listed below.

Background Information (Inputs)

- What is the level of financial resources committed to the various projects and programmes?
- What type and degree of human resources are committed to the various projects and programmes, with reference to aspects such as knowledge, experience, capacity and competence? The overview should include human resources in Strømme Foundation, Geneva Global and the local partners.

Implementation

- How have the different components of the projects and programmes been implemented, and how closely has the implementation on the ground conformed to the plan?
- Was the design and organisation of the programme participatory, involving beneficiaries, or top-down?
- Which stakeholders are involved in decision-making during the implementation phase?
- To what extent are gender and local authority structures taken into account when designing and implementing programmes?
- To what extent are Strømme Foundation's and the local partners' efforts aligned and coordinated with local needs, goals and working methods?
- How do partner organisations assess the implementation strategies of Strømme Foundation?

Effectiveness (Outputs/Outcomes)

- To what extent have the objectives and planned outcomes of the SSP, CMMF and the joint expected results been reached?
- What products and services have resulted directly from project and programme activities (including both service-based, capacity building and rights-based/advocacy interventions, also related to CMMF groups)?
- How have the different cooperating partners through their interactions/support contributed to securing these outcomes?
- Are the programme's activities adequate to attain the objectives and the set outcomes?
- With regard to institutional aspects such as governance and management capacity, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the partner organisations that operate Speed Schools?
- Are adaptations in the program's design or implementation required to achieve set objectives and outcomes? If so, how?
- Which activities, if any, require replication or removal in order to increase effectiveness?
- How does SFWA define the outreach of the SPP and CMMF?
- How is outcome defined and measured for SSP and CMMF?

- Based on the above, how should the outreach and outcome of the SSP and CMMF be defined and measured?

Impact

- What has been the impact of the SSP and CMMF on the primary and secondary target groups?
- What has been the impact of the SSP and CMMF on the population's attitudes, choices, educational outlook and perceptions with regard to quality of life, rights, gender, and peace?
- What has been the impact of the SSP on the overall education system?
- What factors, if any, have hindered the effective implementation of the SSP and CMMF?
- To what extent have CMMF groups been beneficial to the SSP?
- To what extent can the SSP be an added value to CMMF groups?

Efficiency

- What are the social and financial gains of the program compared with the resources spent to implement the activities?
- What are the unit costs associated with key components of the SSP and CMMF?
- What is the unit cost per newly enrolled child and how does this cost compare with that of similar initiatives in West Africa and in other African nations?
- Are there feasible options for cost reduction and cost saving while realising the same level of quality and results?

Relevance and Sustainability

- Are the objectives of the SSP and CMMF addressing locally defined needs and priorities?
- Which aspects of the socio-political context (including gender structures) and the institutional context have had the most decisive influence on the effectiveness of the projects and programmes?
- How and to what extent has the context presented opportunities and limitations with

regard to the success of the interventions and by extension the outcomes of the cooperation?

- To what extent have the projects and programmes been adjusted to this context?
- Should the direction of the SSP and CMMF be altered to better reflect the contextual and situational needs of the population? If so, how?
- To what extent has the SSP and CMMF established processes and systems that are likely to support the continued implementation of the programs?
- What systems and human resource capacities have been built through the SSP and CMMF and how have these gains been achieved?

Project Design Improvement

- In what ways can the SSP be improved to better meet the set objectives?
- In what ways can the SSP better address local barriers to education?
- To what extent is the SSP enhancing institutional capacity?
- To what extent has the SSP enabled system wide coordination between all levels of the education/microfinance structures, partners, and donors?
- How effective have the M&E components of the project been at ensuring results of the SSP and CMMF can be assessed?
- How can the overall design of the SSP be improved to provide quality education and greater access?
- How can the overall design of the implementation of SSP and CMMF be improved to provide quality services with better outcomes?

Methodology

The evaluation should focus on both the process and outcomes of the combined efforts of Strømme Foundation Head Office, SFWA and their partner NGOs in the country; it should thus contribute to the building of knowledge in partnership. Above all, the evaluation is meant to be a learning process for Strømme Foundation West Africa; this requires the involvement of staff from SFWA throughout the evaluation. **TORs, methodology approach for evaluation and planning for field visits should be discussed and agreed upon by our West Africa Regional Office in Bamako, Mali, prior to commencement of the evaluation.**

The evaluation should be as participatory as possible, involving all groups of stakeholders in the programme. This includes children who currently attend or have graduated from Speed Schools, their parents, local authorities and education system authorities (teachers, supervisors, coordinators, inspectors, pedagogic advisors, etc.) of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. In addition, CMMF members and animators, community members and other CBOs or NGOs doing similar work in the same area should be involved in order to facilitate the comparison of effects, impacts and synergy of the programmes. The evaluation will be headed by an external consultant with knowledge and experience of development education and microfinance projects, and with particular experience within monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation should include the following steps (subject to approval of consultant and further discussion between consultant and SFWA):

1) Desk / literature review

A literature review should be conducted, assessing existing literature and documentation on the evaluation of similar accelerated learning programs around the globe, taking into consideration best practice case studies and lessons learned from similar contexts. Guidelines and goals of the basic education strategies of the Governments of Mali, West Africa and Niger should also be consulted. Furthermore, internal technical documents, donor reports, grant strategies and media articles on SF's SSP in West Africa should be explored to gain an understanding of the impact of the Programme.

2) Development of Evaluation Framework and Methodology

A statistical sample size should be proposed and explained taking into account the scale of the evaluation, and evaluation tools to be utilised should be justified for the context.

3) Data collection

Collection of primary data in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso in co-ordination with the SF West Africa office. During this phase, interviews, surveys and other relevant methods will be employed to collect data from all stakeholders concerned and facilitate impact assessment.

4) Data analysis

5) Submission of draft report and presentation of the report to Strømme Foundation, SF West Africa office, Geneva Global and education partners

Major findings of the evaluation should be presented in a clear manner to all stakeholders, with recommendations for policy development based on the data gathered. Through a presentation meeting, all stakeholders will be allowed to provide feedback, which will strengthen ownership of the report findings and recommendations. The presentation of findings is planned during the SF Program Annual Meeting in Mali in week 44 (1st-6th November 2010). Comments to follow by SF West Africa, SF Programme Department, SMF AS Geneva Global and other stakeholders prior to the write-up of the final report.

6) Submission of the final report.

The final evaluation report should produce evidence-based results for the sector. It should be conceived in a variety of formats (full report version and simplified, accessible versions) to meet the needs of various constituencies.

Expected Deliverables

- Evaluation framework and methodology
- Data analysis
- First draft of the evaluation report
- Presentation of the evaluation report to Strømme Foundation, SF West Africa, Geneva Global and education partners in West Africa during the SF Program / Microfinance Annual Meeting in Mali in week 44 (1-4 November)
- Executive Summary of 1-2 pages
- Final evaluation report

Timeframe and Budget

Tentative deadlines for submission of the following:

- Feedback on the TORs, desired profile of local consultant, and signing of the contract: September 1st, 2010
- Development of Evaluation Framework and Methodology: September 15th, 2010
- Submission of draft report: October 25th, 2010
- Submission of final report: November 25th, 2010

The evaluator shall prepare and submit to Strømme Foundation progress reports at times mutually agreed upon. The evaluator will report directly to SFWA Regional Director Zakariya Abdou, who in turn reports to Programme Director Titus Tenga.

5.2. List of persons consulted

5.2.1. Meetings in Mali

Village of Bamabougou (24/10/10)

EPC/Speed Schools Group

N°	SURNAMES	NAMES
1	Konégué	TRAORE
2	Oiory	TRAORE
3	Niagiti	Fomba
4	Bewir	TRAORE
5	N4TIFIN	Coulibaly
6	Sêcoura	TRAORE
7	Komba	DIARRA
8	Gouanzira	COULIBALY
9	Woy	TRAORE
10	Tenin	TRAORE
11	Donky	DIARRA
12	Sorofin	DIARRA
13	Kontiè	COULIBALY
14	Konfoulô	DIARRA
15	Flassira	DIARRA
16	Minata	DIARRA
17	Kowory	DIARRA

18	Siba	DIARRA
19	Konssoun	TRAORE
20	Dounamba	TRAORE
21	Konsson	DIARRA
22	Konwory	TRAORE
23	Sêdjê	DIARRA
24	Niacoro	COULIBALY
25	Dadji	TRAORE
26	Nêting	COULIBALY
27	Soumba	COULABALY
28	Gnélé	DIARRA
29	Mamou	DIARRA
30	Mariam	TRAORE
31	Fatoumata	COULIBALY
32	Gnidjougou	DIARRA

Parents

SURNAMES	NAMES
Flamoussa	TRAORE
Chô	TRAORE
Bemba	TRAORE
Famousa	DIABATE

Fandio	DIABATE
Soundjô	DIABATE
Sëba	TRAORE
Minkoro	TRAORE
<u>Siendjo</u>	TRAORE
Fassoun	Coulibaly

Pupils transferred to Formal Schools

N°	SURNAMES	NAMES
1	Oumou	TRAORE
2	Sëba	TRAORE
3	Djénéba	TRAORE
4	Trinincoura	TRAORE
5	Kadiatou	TRAORE
6	Makoro	TRAORE
7	Nana T	TRAORE
8	Mamou	DIABATE
9	Nialen	TRAORE
10	Kaba	DIABATE
11	Worokia	DIABATE
12	NANA F	TRAORE
13	Badjara	TRAORE

14	Issa	TRAORE
15	Dienfa	TRAORE
16	Soungalo	TRAORE
17	Dankoro	DIANA
18	Mamounou	TRAORE
19	Mamadou	TRAORE
20	Bandjagou	TRAORE
21	Simala	TRAORE
22	Daouda	DIARRA
23	Ladji	TRAORE
24	Madou	DIARRA
25	Amadou	TRAORE
26	Dossé	TRAORE
27	Drissa	TRAORE
28	Tiéma	TRAORE
29	Yacouba	DIABATE

Project team members:

N°	SURNAMES	NAMES	FONCTION
1	Mamoutou	COULIBALY	Coord-Education
2	Hervé	DEMBELE	Coord-EPC
3	Moussa	COULIBABY	Superviseur /SSA-P

4	Sékou	KEITA	Animateur/EPC
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Meeting at Kambila Village (24/10/2010)

N°	NAMES AND SURNAME	GROUPS NAMES
01	DIARRA Bintou	Bolodignogonma
02	KONARE Awa	Ankadignonyé
03	KONARE Minata	Bolodignogonma
04	COULIBALY Sékoura	Gnongoukanfo
05	COULIBALY Sounkoutou	Djiguissèmè
06	COULIBALY Kotété	Bolodignogonma
07	COULIBALY Sounkoura	Yèrèyiriwa
08	COULIBALY Wori	Djiguissèmè
09	DIARRA Débilé	Yèrèyiriwa
10	COULIBALY Fanta	Yèrèyiriwa
11	COULIBALY Fanta	Djiguissèmè
12	NIARE Mafing	Bolodignogonma
13	COULIBALY Awa	Bolodignogonma
14	KONARE Minata	Djiguissèmè
15	COULIBALY Fintèbolo	Ankadignonyé
16	KANE Maramou	Djiguissèmè
17	COULIBALY Maguiné	Bolodignogonma
18	KONARE Sama	Djiguissèmè

19	KONE Sali	Bolodignogonma
20	KEITA Ramata	Djiguissèmè
21	CAMARA Adama	Djiguissèmè
22	COULIBALY Sali	Ankadignonyé
23	KANE Maramou	Gnésigui
24	COULIBALY Mélé	Gnésigui
25	KANE Mélé	Gnésigui
26	KANE Souzé	Gnésigui
27	COULIBALY Sali	Ankadignongoma
28	COULIBAL Y Sali	Ankadignongoma
29	KANE Sékou	Chef du village
30	KANE Amara	Conseillé

Meeting at Sirakoro Village (5/10/2010)

EPC/Speed Schools Group N° 1 : Anmakote Ankokumana

N°	Nom	Prénom (s)
01	DEMBELE	Yama
02	DIARRA	Minata
03	DEMBELE	Mariam
04	DEMBELE	Fatoumata
05	CISSE	Sétou

06	TOGOLA	Karia
07	MAKIRO	Mah
08	KONE	Seba
09	DEMBELE	Malado
10	KANE	Mariam
11	DEMBELE	Korotoumou
12	DEMBELE	Alima
13	TOGOLA	Many
14	BAYALA	Daou
15	DEMBELE	Dounakoura
16	DEMBELE	Mah
17	DEMBELE	Babou
18	KANE	Sanata
19	DEMBELE	Mamouna
20	MARIKO	Baye
21	KANE	Yoh
22	KONATE	Bazele
23	DEMBELE	Mobaly

24	DEMBELE	Djaba
25	DAOU	Nia
26	COULBALY	Korotoumou

EPC Group N°2 :

N°	Names	surnames
01	DEMBELE	Wassa
02	DEMBELE	Tenin
03	DEMBELE	Tary
04	RARIKO	Soundie
05	DIARRA	Sata
06	CISSE	Madoussou
07	KONATE	Fatouma
08	MARIKO	Minata
09	KANE	Djara
10	DEMBELE	Djenebo
11	MARIKO	Gouandjo
12	KONATE	Mama
13	CISSE	Sata

14	CISSE	Mariam
15	KONATE	Salimata

EPC Group N° 3 : Nyeta

N°	Names	Surnames
01	DEMBELE	Saliata
02	DEMBELE	Manassoum
03	MARIKO	Sali
04	KONATE	Mamouna
05	DEMBELE	Fatoumata
06	KONATE	Fatouma
07	DIARRA	Awa
08	KONATE	Mamouna
09	MARIKO	Niefing
10	TRAORE	Rahamatou
11	BALLO	Rahama
12	CISSE	Mariam
13	BALLO	Mah
14	SANOGO	Mamou

15	DEMBELE	Yanfle
16	FOMBA	Sali
17	BALLO	Messata
18	DEMBELE	Magne

5.2.2. Meetings in Burkina Faso

Meeting with SSA/SSP Partners at Ouagadougou 27/10/2010)

N°	Names and surnames	Fonction	Organizations	Contacts / E-mail
01	TIENDREBEOGO Jean Firmin	Coordonnateur	ANTBA	firmin.actsbf@gmail.com 78 30 81 67
02	OUEDRAOGO Alfred	Charger du projet	A.E.A.D	 70 30 82 40
03	OUEDRAOGO Lucien	Charger du projet	A.E.A.D	lucienwed@yahoo.fr 70 22 25 66
04	YANOGO.S. Florent	Superviseur	ANTBA	florent.actsbf@gmail.com
05	Mme OUEDRAOGO	Animatrice	ACTS	evasavadogo@yahoo.fr

	Eva			78 62 83 62
06	Mme KABORE Christelle	Animatrice	ACTS	Christellia17tapsoba@yahoo.fr 70 24 62 04
07	KABRE Salomon	Superviseur	ANTBA	Salomon.actsbf@gmail.com 78 82 40 13
08	ILBOUDO W. Samuel	Coordonnateur EPC	ACTS	Samuel.actsbf@gmail.com
09	ILBOUDO Souka Samuel	Animateur EPC	ACTS	kabsangrace@yahoo.fr
10	OUEDRAOGO Pouindé Michel	Coordonnateur SSA/D	AEAD	pauidemichel@yahoo.fr 70 72 22 36
11	YAMEOGO G. Patrice	Animateur	ACTS	
12	OUEDRAOGO Mahamady	Comptable	AEAD	70 02 41 28
13	Pasteur OUEDRAOGO	Directeur exécutif	AEAD	70 25 08 15

	Philippe			
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Meeting at CRIEF (Centre for Research, Innovation and Training), Ouagadougou

Mme SANOU Bernadette DAO : Director General of the Centre for Research, Innovations and Training (CRIEF)

NANA Pascal : Registrar

YANOOGO Marcel : Komsilga formal school director

TASSAMBEODO : Inspector DPEBA

Meeting of 'Nongtaaba' Group at Komki Ipala Village

N°	NAMES	SURNAMES
01	ILBOUDO	Eveline
02	NIKIEMA	Marceline
03	NANA	Salamata
04	TASSEMBEDO	Jeanne Marie
05	KABRE	Zénabo
06	SIMPORE	Odette
07	KABRE	Mariam
08	KABORE	---
09	KABORE	Awa

10	KABRE	Madeleine
11	ILBOUDO	Pauline
12	KABORE	Bibata
13	KABRE	Mariam
14	KABRE	Justine
15	ILBOUDO	Mariam
16	KABORE	Marceline
17	OUEDRAOGO	Joséphine

Meeting with Songtaaba/Kombi Group

N°	NOM	PRENOM (S)
01	KABRE	Alizèta
02	NIKIEMA	Pauline
03	KABRE	Yamdaaré
04	BONOGO	Germaine
05	NIKIEMA	Noëlie
06	NIKIEMA	Céline
07	KABRE	Clémentine
08	KABRE	Juliette
09	KABRE	Zalissa
10	SAM	Christine
11	KABORE	Mamounata

12	KABORE	Julienne
13	TAPSOBA	Catherine
14	KOALA	Marie
15	ILBOUDO	Catherine
16	NIKIEMA	Hélène
17	NIKIEMA	Sanata
18	KABORE	Awa
19	KINTIETA	Zalissa
20	DOLEMWEOGO	Delphine
21	YANOAGO	Colette
22	KIEMTORE	Awa
23	NIKIEMA	Christine
24	KABRE	Adissa
25	NIKIEMA	Madeleine
26	WANGRAWA	Adama

The third group of this village (Namanagdzanga group) with 27 members did not attend the meeting because of a lack of information

Meeting at Kaya Town

OUEDRAOGO Francis : Supervisor SSA

Mme MASSE : Coordonnator SSA

DABILGOU Boniface : Principal teatcher

MINOUNGOU R. Théophile : Provincial Director of Basis Education and literacy

5.2.3. Meetings in Niger

Meeting with Partners at Niamey (30/10/2010)

N°	NAMES AND SURNAMES	FONCTION	ORGANIZATIONS
01	Mamadou Amadou	Coordonnateur	SIA /O.N.G
02	Moctar Abdoulaye	Coordonnateur	EPC /VIE
03	Inna Ibra	Superviseur	R.A.E.O.P
04	Saïdou Gado	Animateur	EPC /R.A.E.O.P
05	Hassane Djingareye Halidou	Superviseur	SSA/P /VIE
06	Aïssatou Soumana	Animatrice	EPC /R.A.E.O.P
07	Mariamama Hima	Animatrice	EPC /VIE
08	Batouré Illiasso	Animateur	EPC/ R.A.E.D.D
09	Illiassou Dodo	Superviseur	SSA/P /VIE
10	Hassimou Boubacar	Animateur	EPC /R.A.E.D.D
11	Tachiou Daddy Abdoulaye	Coordonnateur	EPC /R.A.E.DD

12	Odamou Goudé Gaoh	Coordonnateur	SSA/P /R.A.E.D.D
13	Massamadou Saïdou	Coordonnateur national	R.A.E.D.D
14	Ali Abdoulaye	Coordonnateur	VIE
15	Magé Maïkaba	Superviseur	SSA- R.A.E.DD
16	Mme Tabit Aïssa Soumaila	Animatrice	EPC -ONG-VIE

Meeting with Project Staff, Niger

Ousmane Ali : SSA Animator /teacher 2nd year

KIMBA Hamani : SSA Animator /teather 1rst year

JULIE Rosen : Education Expert from Belgium, SSA support

Meeting with Project Staff and participants at the Village of Kodo Koira

MOUNKEILA Boureima : Formal school directeur

ABDOULAYE Boureima : SSA Animator /teatcher

Groupe EPC YADA : 21 members

Groupe EPC SAABA : 16 members

Groupe EPC SOUDJI : 16 members

Meeting with Prominent Officials

TIDJANI Harouma Dembo : Minister of Professional Training and Literacy

DIALLO Mariam : DAID /RP

Mr KUMUNTCHO : SSA Focal Point at Minister of Professional Training and Literacy

5.3. List of documents consulted

1. SFWA Annual Reports 2007, 2008 and 2009
2. West Africa Children's Education Initiative , Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger (West Africa Large Cap ID: 073386 document
3. Economic Empowerment Large Cap Initiative with Stromme Foundation, West Africa Granting Strategy
4. Strømme Foundation and Geneva Global funded Speed Schools Programme 2007 -2009 (Final Evaluation: areas needing preparation)
5. Result report from January to 13th Month 2009
6. Account statement for 6584 Transferts aux projets Period January to 13th Month 2009 Campaign 103912, 109911, 109912
7. Account statement for 6584 Transferts aux projets Period January to 13th Month 2009 Campaignn107419, 109902, 109903, 109905
8. UNICEF-sourced reports on Accelerated Learning Programs in Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ghana and Sierra Leone

5.4. Accelerated Learning: some evidence from other countries

Numerous examples exist of accelerated learning programmes (ALPs) and UNICEF were kind enough to send details of five countries through their West Africa regional office - Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Liberia. Two of these have been selected for comparative purposes - 'School for Life' in Ghana and the NRC's Emergency Education Programme in Liberia. Information from Cote d'Ivoire provided details of a joint programme funded by NRC, Save the Children and UNICEF which fits well with Government plans for EFA/EPT. The programme includes teacher education, infrastructure development and a focus on the problem of girls' enrolment and retention. However, insufficient detail was included to make a useful comparison with Mali, Burkina and Niger.

Ghana's School for Life (SfL) programme has been described as a 'Leap to Life' activity, reaching 85,000 children over a twelve year period. Evaluation of SfL has shown that the effects have been very positive with improved access and retention of pupils in 12 districts of Northern Ghana. In addition the programme has improved the performance of pupils transferring into the formal system. Gender inequalities have also been addressed as parents have been encouraged to rethink the place of girls' education.

Evaluation of SfL has revealed that most of the families involved already sent some of their children to school but needed to retain others at home for domestic duties. Over 90% of children aged between 8 and 14 years who enrolled in the SfL graduated from their class. Transfer was successful for 65% of these children. The SfL programme increased gross enrolment rates in Northern Ghana by 2% to 3%. A major impact of the SfL programme was that at least 50% of the children enrolling were girls of whom a large proportion were entering and remaining in the formal system until senior secondary school in many cases. In contrast to non-SfL pupils, strong retention and completion rates were achieved by children within the programme.

An important feature of Ghana's SfL was the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction, leading into better performance in English on transfer to the formal system. A further important feature was the value system embedded in the SfL curriculum which improved pupil discipline and commitment to education.

Key to programme success seem to be the adoption of a flexible approach to schooling which allowed the most vulnerable children to achieve literacy, often influencing their parents to send them to more formal schools. Mother tongue literacy and more child-friendly methods of teaching helped children become literate within a relatively short period of time (nine months). Encouragement, patience and commitment exhibited by the SfL facilitators supported the new approaches to methods of teaching. Children became aware of the value of mother-tongue instruction and responded well to it, transferring the skills to learning in English. In addition to the attitudes and practices of the facilitators and their more child-friendly methods, the provision of free books, absence of a school uniform requirement and the ability to take books home for study made a big difference to pupil motivation and performance. A further important aspect of the SfL experience was the relevance of the curriculum to the local culture which helped pupils gain confidence in their schooling.

The SfL programme will continue to focus on the out-of-school child and evidence of its effectiveness will be presented to government to encourage greater investment in the programme. Advocacy is required and the principles employed for sensitizing communities and establishing the schools should be publicised more widely. Links with CBOs and NGOs should be encouraged. In particular, the evaluators of SfL, writing in 2007 recommended linking with micro-credit organisations to ensure synergies in local communities.

The parallels with SSA/SSP are obvious as evaluation reports from SfL are analysed. Similar target groups are identified and similar pedagogic approaches are taken. Synergies with related development activities are recommended and follow-up with literacy work for parents and the opening up of secondary level SfL classes are also recommended. Reaching out to potential partners to replicate the SfL model is a further recommendation as is the proposal to link education more closely with potential self-employment and other work opportunities for older pupils. What is particularly significant in the Ghana programme is the very low unit costs per pupil. Whereas a year in a Ghana government school costs US\$ 70 per head, the SfL pupil has US\$ 16.57 spent on him or her for the nine-month programme. The latter figure does not include staffing and management costs whereas the government figures certainly do, thus the unit cost calculation is not very helpful for comparison purposes.

NRC's Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) in Liberia faced a different context when it was introduced. NRC identify three phases of recovery for post-conflict countries - the emergency phase, the early recovery phase and the post-conflict phase. The ALP focused largely on the emergency phase but is more a set of linked activities than a project. ALP is the starting point but an adult literacy component, community mobilisation and school construction are additional dimensions of the programme.

In evaluating the NRC programme consultants indicated that it had proved adaptable to the changing needs and contexts of its targeted beneficiaries and had included appropriate interventions. As well as helping fulfil EFA and MDG targets the programme had protected the rights of over-age children, a significant contributor to social cohesion. The return and reintegration processes so important to Liberia's recovery have been assisted by ALP¹⁶, creating a 'pull factor' in remote and under-served communities where many schools had been completely destroyed. ALP was also significant in its support for the Liberian Government's *Primary Education Recovery Programme* assisting with infrastructural and human resource development.

Although access has been a priority concern the quality of schooling has not been neglected in ALP. Reasonably high rates of performance and retention have been experienced. The examinations council has observed that transferred pupils do as well or even better than pupils from 'regular' schools, a finding which is echoed in SSA/SSP. Positive impacts on the behaviour, commitment and attitudes of students have also resulted. ALP's success has been built on a curriculum that facilitates the acquisition of basic educational skills and balances literacy and

¹⁶ It should be noted in passing that NRC was a prime mover in the international decision to make education a priority factor in post-conflict assistance, along with security, clean water, health etc.

numeracy with life skills (dealing with issues of peace, civic education and HIV/AIDS). Teacher support and supervision mechanisms have ensured the regular attendance of teachers as well as learner-centred methods of teaching. The timetable has become more flexible in response to learners' needs and the provision of school kits and other materials has motivated learners. The development of a safe and secure learning environment plus the increased engagement of the parents and communities in the schools have also contributed much to the programme's success. Good management structures have facilitated all these positive aspects of the ALP programme.

Less positive aspects have included a 22% drop-out rate and the absence of any mechanism for follow-up. Many older pupils have the responsibilities of adults and need to earn a living rather than attend school. Vocational skills are not yet part of the ALP curriculum nor does it recognise the diversity of backgrounds and educational experience from which the pupils come. The peculiar circumstances of Liberia where most forms of social service and provision have broken down make it difficult to find and recruit qualified people, especially women, to staff schools. Government procurement systems are often unwieldy and ALP has suffered from late delivery of books and materials. NRC's salary scales for teachers have not been harmonised with Government rates nor has its teacher training programme been sufficiently aligned with that of the Government. Finally, it has to be admitted that although the programme works with 125 communities its educational achievements have been quite modest. However, Young Mothers' and Adult Literacy classes associated with ALP have been a success story, albeit with modest numbers of beneficiaries.

Some conclusions

In reviewing both these programmes, certain common themes emerge which have direct relevance to SSA/SSP. A focus on vulnerable and poor communities, the recruiting of local personnel as animators/teachers and the direct engagement of the local communities have all been significant common principles. The effectiveness of a more concentrated 'catch-up' class has been amply demonstrated with pupils taking full advantage of the second chance provided. An adapted curriculum and revised books and materials, freedom from fees and uniform charges and the involvement of parents in the management of the schools, especially the women, have all had positive impacts. Key principles of initial sensitization, professional supervision and support for teachers and the development of complementary activities to produce synergies are all found in the successful projects, a phenomenon reflected in the SSA/SSP project. Literacy work among the women of the communities appears to be a highly significant factor in addressing poverty concerns in rural communities – again a key recommendation for the further development of CMMF as well as SSA/SSP.