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Acronym List

ANCEFA	African Networking Campaign for Education for All
APE	*Association de parents d'élèves* (parents' association)
CCNGO/EFA	Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All
CEDs	*Centres d'éducation pour le développement* (development education centres)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CS	Civil society
CSO	Civil society organization
EFA	Education for All
ERNWACA	Education Research Network for West and Central Africa (ROCARE in French)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GTZ	German Development Agency
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IIEP	International Institute for Education Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IPN	*Institut Pédagogique National*
NEF	*Nouvelle École Fondamentale*
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISE	*Programme d'investissement sectoriel de l'éducation* (education sector investment program)
PRODEC	*Programme décennal pour le développement de l'éducation* (10-year education development program)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
ROCARE	*Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Éducation* (ERNWACA in English)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SCF/UK	Save the Children Federation UK
SCF/US	Save the Children Federation US
SMC	School management committee

STI	Sexually-transmitted infection
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Summary

Mali is a new (1992) but relatively vibrant and open democracy, with high levels of rural poverty and a primary gross enrollment ratio of 58.4% (World Bank n.d.). There is "virtually no organized political opposition," and the government rules based on consensus and collective decision-making – although this does raise questions about the quality of political debate (OECD 2004: 15). This said, the country has free broadcast and print media (BBC n.d.). A relatively diverse constituency of NGOs act as a well-established voice in politics (Miller-Grandvaux et al 2002a). Many local as well as international NGOs are involved directly in the delivery of rural health and education services to the poor. The literature suggests that Malian politics are still influenced by relationships of patrimonialism (Danté, Gautier et al. 2001), but offers little insight into the interface between these relationships and the growing NGO sector.

In 1999, Mali launched a 10-year sector-wide educational reform program, *Programme décennal pour le développement de l'éducation* (PRODEC). Amongst the main objectives of PRODEC is to increase Mali's gross primary enrollment ratio to 95% in 2010, from 42% in 2000 (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale du Mali 2001). At least 15

However, there have been tensions within the community schools movement from its inception – over the balance between local relevance vs. compatibility with the formal system, and over the development of a parallel system funded by the poorest communities and external organizations (Capacci Carneal 2004; Miller-Grandvaux et. al

operated a USAID-funded training and organizing program for national advocacy teams to make use of research results produced by national ERNWACA/ROCARE offices (Tounkara 2005).

Overall, NGOs in Mali, as well as ERNWACA/ROCARE, appear to have a well-institutionalized place in education policy discussions (Miller-Grandvaux et al 2002a; Tounkara 2005). This does not mean that their role is univocal or uncontested. In addition, we know relatively little about the role of other civil society organizations in education policy processes. Sector programming, aimed at extending Mali's mass public education system, appears to open the door to greater partnership between NGOs and government. But government-led expansion might also threaten the autonomy of the NGO-led community schools movement. The sectoral reform program raises the need for stronger cross-community linkages between civil society organizations and for greater civil society capacity within recently-established local educational authorities. The literature offers little indication of the way in which NGOs and other civil society organizations are managing these competing demands.

girls marry is 15.7 years; rural women have an average fertility rate of 7.3 children; hardly 5% of them use any form of contraception; and 1 in 10 women die in childbirth (CIDA 2000).

Political Situation

Malian political context

Previously called French Sudan, Mali gained its independence from France in 1960. Thereafter, the country experienced the rule of a one-party socialist state under Modibo Keita (1960-1968), followed by two decades of military dictatorship under Moussa Traoré (1968-1991). Traoré paid lip-service to improving democratic processes, but when civilians began increasingly to demand greater participation in national governance, his regime responded with violent repression (Capacci Carneal 2004). In March 1991, close to 100 students were killed by the army and riot police during pro-democracy movements, however, civilians ultimately prevailed, and the Traoré regime was deposed in a coup that same year (Boukary 1999).[4] A committee comprised of civilian and military representatives was then established to oversee the country's political transition, and in 1992, Alpha Konaré became the first Malian president elected in a democratic environment with multiple parties (Boukary 1999).

Mali's current president, elected in 2002, is former army general, Amadou Toumani Touré, popularly known as "ATT."[5] While he has no party, Touré is backed by "support groups and minor parties" (BBC n.d.). Today, Mali is called a "vibrant" (CIDA n.d.) multiparty democracy, and only prohibits parties from organizing on ethnic, religious, regional, or gender bases (CIA n.d.). Malian media enjoy a high degree of freedom (BBC n.d.). There is no organized political opposition and the government rules based on consensus and collective decision-making (OECD 2004) – although this does

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[4] In 1999, Traoré was sentenced to death on corruption charges, but his sentence was changed to life imprisonment by President Konaré.

raise questions about the quality of political debate (Danté, Gautier, Marouani and
Raffinot 2001). Nevertheless, the present government is commended as "committed to

rate of girls' education in Mali more than doubled from 19% in 1990 to 50% in 2000, some parts of the country still lag far behind the overall average (WID Tech 2002).

In addition to gender inequities, Mali faces other major challenges in basic education, such as achieving universal primary education; regional and urban/rural disparities; improving access to the *second* cycle of basic education (i.e. the last 3 years of the 9-year primary cycle); and recruitment and training of sufficient teachers. 65% of teachers in the first cycle of primary are contractual, and have only an initial 90-day training (Ministère de l'Education Nationale du Mali 2004).

Improving education quality, however, poses the biggest challenge of all. Measures needed to accomplish this include: on-going training of teachers; strengthening the means, frequency and quality of support to schools provided by decentralized education governance structures; integrating life skills into school programs; inclusion of preventive health education on STIs, HIV/AIDS, malaria and unwanted pregnancies; widespread adoption of the new curriculum; supplying adequate textbooks, teaching materials and programs in support of reading; careful monitoring of girls and children in difficulty; and continued reinforcement of the gender approach in the Ministry of National Education (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale du Mali 2004).

PRODEC, Mali's education sector program

A milestone for Malian education reform is PRODEC (*Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation*), the 10-year education sector program, launched in 1999. PRODEC is being implemented through PISE (*Programme d'investissement sectoriel de l'éducation)*, an education sector investment program with three phases, 2001-2004, 2005-2007 and 2008-2010.[8] Referred to as a response to Education for All, PRODEC's objectives include:

-achieving a primary GER of 95% in 2010 and reduced disparities between regions and between urban and rural areas

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[8] This is drawn from the Government of Mali's Ministry of Education website, retrieved February 23, 2006, at http://www.education.gov.ml/cgi-bin/view_article.pl?id=43

-substantially increasing the gross enrollment ratio of girls and reducing gender disparities; raising the GER of girls to 93% in 2010
-improving the quality of basic education
-by 2010, allowing unschooled and out-of-school youth, from 9-18 years old, to have access to at least minimum learning opportunities
-increasing the adult literacy rate to 50% in 2010, and to at least 40% for women (Ministère de l'Education Nationale du Mali 2004).

The Malian PRSP explains PRODEC as follows:

> The reforms targeted by [PRODEC] are centered around the link between school and community. […] The basic objective comprises: a village, a school and/or a [Development Education Centre] or CED [*Centre d'Education pour le Dévéloppement*],[9] and the decision to use maternal languages in the education system, to decentralize the management of the system, to develop a genuine system of school maintenance, and to move as swiftly as possible towards universal formal

The education system is sub-divided into formal and non formal education, as follows:

a) **Formal education** (under the *Direction Nationale de l'enseignement fondamental*, DNEF) includes:
-preschool and special education
-basic education, which consists of 6 years for the <u>first cycle</u> (access at 7-8 years of age), at the end of which is the CFEPCEF (*certificat de fin d'études du premier cycle de l'enseignement fondamental*), and a <u>second cycle</u> of 3 years which gives access to secondary education, via the DEF (*diplome d'études fondamentales*)
-secondary & higher education

b) **Non-formal education** is considered basic education. NFE is under the *Direction nationale de l'alphabétisation et de la linguistique appliquée* (DNAFLA) and includes:
-*centres d'éducation au développement* (development education centres) or CEDs. These centres provide a 4-year cycle without a diploma (access for 9-14 years of age)
-adult literacy and post-literacy centres (6-9 month cycles).

Mali's community schools are intended for pupils 6-12 years of age, and the Development Education Centres or CEDs (*Centres d'éducation pour le développement*), for pupils 9-15 years of age. CEDs are intended to provide education to people who had either left school prematurely or been educated outside the formal system, such as at Koranic schools (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale du Mali 2004). The Malian state has committed to ensuring the training, technical supervision and monitoring of community schools and CEDs (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000), through the *Direction nationale de l'education de base* (DNEB), their regional *directions* and their local *inspections*.

As with Mali's overall governance reforms, the transfer of skills, material and human resources to communities is happening progressively within the education sector, under PRODEC (CLIC n.d.). Decentralized structures, all of whom must implement PRODEC/PISE, are as follows (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale du Mali 2004):

-At the regional level, *Académies d'Enseignement* (AE)
-At the cercle level, *Centres d'Animation Pédagogique* (CAP)
-At the commune level, *Direction d'études* (DE)

In a process of deconcentration, these structures had responsibility transferred to them in 2002 for both formal and non formal education (Ministère de l'Éducation

(CLIC n.d.). In 2000, community schools represented 31.7% of the schools in Mali (Tounkara 2001). Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al (2002a) attribute this expansion to several factors: the publicity surrounding the schools; pressure on government to legalize them; large donor grants and the willingness of government to let them expand, since communities financed a substantial part of them.

External donors exerted considerable influence upon the Malian state to officially recognize community schools (Boukary 1999; Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al 2002a). Indeed, the World Bank and USAID played a major role in Malian education policy even prior to the community schools movement (Boukary 1999). Boukary (1999) argues that USAID used its influence as a donor to the Malian government to obtain a legal framework and legal recognition for community schools. This recognition was of great importance because without it, community school pupils were cut off from opportunities to cross over into the formal system. The Malian government began to alter this situation in 1994-1995 through the development of a legal framework recognizing both the existence and the independent management of community schools (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000, Ministère de l'Education Nationale du Mali 2001). Furthermore, with the issuance of a presidential decree, children enrolled in community schools were permitted to attend public schools and to take the primary school leavers' exam (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a). Community schools also became eligible for supervision of instructional quality by public education authorities and for receiving public resources towards teacher training and supplies (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a).

Controversies

Ambiguity of mandate. As the community schools movement has evolved, both local and international NGOs have had to contend with difficult questions surrounding community schools' mandate. For example, the SCF/US schools have sought to be of benefit to pupils in two ways (Capacci Carneal 2004). Firstly, the schools were to

provide an equal level of service is dismissed with vehemence" (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 14).

provide a *passerelle interne*, a bridge to the "internal development of the community," for example, through including a life skills curriculum (Capacci Carneal 2004: 58-59). Secondly, they were to offer a *passerelle externe*, a bridge to other educational opportunities, by promoting literacy and numeracy in French, for the pupils' eventual integration into the public school system (Capacci Carneal 2004).

Contradictions exist, however, between these two *passerelle* goals (Capacci Carneal 2004). For example, government is more likely to support community schools that complement the public school model; however, this might compromise those schools' ability to "address the concerns of the village, especially when its ideas for school improvement do not fall under the umbrella of the national education system" (Capacci Carneal 2004: 51). It remains unclear which of the two *passerelle* concepts will enjoy a greater impact in the longer-term (Capacci Carneal 2004). Thus, community schools are caught in a tug-of-war between "the pull of mass education and the pull of locally relevant and driven forms of [non-formal education]" (Capacci Carneal 2004: 145). A possible casualty of this situation is the potential for community ownership of the schools. Amongst Capacci Carneal's conclusions from researching the SCF/US schools in 1999-2000: one of "the key findings of this study is that the image of community schools as champions and embodiments of village needs and locally relevant instruction in the face of national and international agenda is not supported by evidence" (Capacci Carneal 2004: 151).

Sustainability. Poverty presents one of the most serious challenges for community ownership of these schools (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000, Capacci Carneal 2004). Supporting a school presents more challenges than a community can properly contend with on its own, and communities express feeli

Welmond et al. 2002a: 42), despite clear requests by communities for support from the state or from an external partner (Cissé

3. Civil Society in Mali -- Background

Overview of Malian civil society and its collaboration with the state

There is some diversity of opinion about the vitality of Malian civil society, although these opinions do not seem to be neatly associated with particular categories of actors. CIDA, for example, calls Mali a "lively democracy with a strong civil society" (CIDA n.d.). Conversely, a 2002 USAID report comments that Malian civil society is "nascent in many respects;" although guarding against "anti-democratic and abusive tendencies of the state, [Malian civil society] is far too dispersed, diverse and lacking in resources to balance the power of the central state" (USAID 2002: 9). Similarly, the Malian PRSP offers some criticism of its own political context for civil society:

> […] the Malian democratic process is still fragile because of the absence of a democratic culture and citizenship, the absence of civic spirit and the pursuit of special favors. The fragmentation of civil society and its weak ability to mount a credible challenge to the established authority are also a manifestation of the democratic malaise (Government of Mali 2002: 23)

Other researchers, by contrast, have made more sanguine remarks. Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. (2002a: 4) comment that "Mali has a vibrant civil society with promising experiments in democratization. NGOs are numerous, dynamic, well organized, and represent a well-established voice in politics and society." Capacci Carneal (2004: 89) calls Malian civil society "diverse and dense."

Whatever the diversity of opinions about Malian civil society, there seems to be a stronger consensus around the idea that Mali itself is a favourable context for NGO[14] activity. Particularly since 1991 and the democratic revolution of that period, NGOs have flourished. Since then, 1412 NGOs have formed and the government has provided a legislative and regulatory framework for their activity (Tounkara 2001). Compared to other West African countries such as Niger and Senegal, Malian NGOs have a much easier official process to follow for registration (Tounkara 2001); the government must

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[14] The use of the term *NGO*, and not *civil society*, is deliberate here and is not intended to conflate the two. Since NGOs are the main subject of much of the literature on Malian civil society, it is difficult to

complete an NGO's registration within three months of application or it becomes automatic (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a).

It is difficult to say, however, whether a context that is favourable to NGO activity translates into sustained state and civil society collaboration across the social sectors. The Malian PRSP, for example, comments that:

> Civil society organizations are actively involved in the definition and implementation of development policy at various levels and in various ways according to their respective capabilities and their level of participation […] However, this involvement is often limited due to a number of constraints, such as: a lack of the means and funds of the majority of civil society organizations, and the low level of involvement in the design, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of **government** projects and programs (Government of Mali 2002: 23 emphasis mine)

The PRSP seems to suggest that civil society actors and government officials generally operate within their own spheres of activity, with limited collaboration. On this point, again, we find a divergence of opinions, one salient example being the different perspectives on the level and quality of civil society participation in the PRSP design process. Some comments are adulatory: for example, USAID states that the Malian "government's participatory development of its PRSP has been exemplary" (USAID 2002: 4). Similarly, the International Labour Organization (ILO) called the Malian PRSP process "an example to be emulated in the West African subregion, in terms of content, stress on employment and the degree of participation and political pluralism involved in its preparation" (ILO 2002: 6).

Danté, Gautier et al (2001:viii) offer a different perspective: civil society was "involved in the PRSP process, but its participation in shaping the document [was] not effective." Dissatisfied with the speed of the PRSP formulation process, Malian NGOs opted to set up their own parallel consultative process, supported by USAID (Danté, Gautier et al. 2001). When they did participate in government-organized PRSP working groups, their presence did not equate with *influence*, and they took second place to government and donor representatives (Danté, Gautier et al. 2001):

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generalize about the nature of the Malian context for *all* civil society actors. Further research is needed into whether NGOs enjoy greater freedoms than other civil society actors.

There is a consensus among stakeholders (even donors who strongly support them) that NGO technical capacities are an obstacle [to a deeper involvement in PRSP processes…] Indeed, the small committees within each [working] group are always composed by the persons supposed to be the most competent of the group, and these are most of the time Government or donor representatives. These people have a kind of technical legitimacy that gives them more influence on the process (Dante, Gautier et al. 2001: 17-18).

These contrasting opinions may be attributable to the fact that different civil society actors enjoyed varying degrees of influence and participation. The PRSP itself offers very little 'thick' description of civil society, however, to explain which actors enjoyed what kinds of participation or degree of influence.

At any rate, the practice of government and civil society operating separately has some historical precedent in Mali. In previous decades, foreign donors tended to work through NGOs as an alternative to the state. This mode of operation was visible in the handling of foreign assistance provided to Mali for drought relief in the early 1970's. Due to a crisis of confidence because of state corruption and incapacity, donors chose to work through NGOs for both emergency relief and development programming (Tounkara 2001)paaP i.h8ww1k 8tri0 ges This m

Business or economic associations: Peasants' organisations are increasingly structuring (Dante, Gautier et al. 2001), and have some influence upon government. For example, 1991 saw groups including farmers, herders, fishermen, and woodcutters demand decentralization (Boukary 1999). They successfully pressured the government to give a genuine delegation of authority to rural communities and to create a new relationship between the government and the rural sector, to deal with issues of land tenure and natural resource management (Boukary 1999).

Unions. Trade unions, particularly the more autonomous ones, are "well-organized and powerful" (Dante, Gautier et al. 2001: 17). As a reflection of this, the ILO has commended the Malian government's "demonstrated political will to involve employers' and workers' organizations effectively as the leaders of civil society" (ILO 2002: 7). Malian teachers' unions have been vocal opponents of the state, at strategic moments. For example, they were among the key players who defeated the government's proposed *Nouvelle Ecole Fondamentale* (NEF) in the 1990's (Boukary 1999).

Media. Media actors carry out a watchdog role in monitoring public service provision to the poorer levels of the population and in pressuring public authorities; they are rapid in denouncing abuses or problems (Raffinot, Muguet et al. 2003). There is also a local branch of Transparency International, which, although "modest, has made itself heard since 1995 by means of seminars and press releases. It is backed by a network of Malian anti-corruption journalists" (Raffinot, Muguet et al. 2003: 26).

Community-based organizations. Since 1989, civil society actors have set up "a series of dynamic organisations based on village communities, centred around maternity clinics and community health centres for the health sector," around elementary and community schools in education, and around "producers' cooperatives and trade unions in the economic sector, with the professional organisations" (Raffinot, Muguet et al. 2003: 18). The community health centres are a success, and are being increasingly used by local people, since their costs are fairly low (Raffinot, Muguet et al. 2003).

Traditional organizations. A Management Systems International (MSI) 2004 report on decentralization in Mali states that in the communes, "true power relations are

based more on historical and traditional social status than on modern legal and elected structures," which means that newly-elected mayors have to dialogue with the "traditionally legitimate authorities" (MSI 2004: 2). Similarly, Danté, Gautier et al (2001) confirm that traditional and customary chiefs, as well as representatives from different religious confessions, have a significant influence over state officials.

Section 4. Civil Society and Education in Mali

Policy, legislative frameworks and structures for civil society in education

As already discussed, the GoM has officially recognized community schools within PRODEC (the 10-year education sector plan). This means that civil society actors working with community schools may now receive technical supervision from public education authorities and public resources towards teacher training and supplies (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000). The state has also established a unit for monitoring community schools and developing a partnership between the Ministry of Basic Education and NGOs active in education (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000). The *Centre National de l'Education*[19] (CNE) is responsible for teacher training including for public schools, community schools, medersas and CEDs (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000). Thus, the foundation seems to have been laid both legally and structurally, for civil society actors in education to collaborate with the Malian state.

Does this conducive context for civil society mean that ordinary citizens have a strong degree of influence on the educational opportunities available to them and to their children? This question is easier to answer for community schools than for public

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[19] The CNE was formerly known as the *Institut Pédagogique National* (IPN) (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000; Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale du Mali 2004). IPN staff were noted to be specialists in *pédagogie*

from 1993, the group brought together 70 NGOs, both local and international (Boukary 1999). At first, the group focused on dialogue between NGOs and INGOs on education-related themes, but then it received financing from SCF and USAID to take on advocacy for community schools (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a). Once these efforts succeeded, however, the group declined in effectiveness (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a). The *Groupe*'s leadership changed and made a fatal mistake: "upon donor urging, it began to act as a clearinghouse for donors who wanted to contract NGOs for their programs" (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 34). Unprepared for handling these types of contracts, the group faced accusations of "mishandling funds," lost credibility, and "continues to exist but with very little importance for the education NGO landscape" (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 34).

Concerning other networks linking civil soci

NGOs, and are not informed of their policy endeavours (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a). "Lack of relations has certainly made these unions an enemy," although this has not yet been a constraint for the NGOs in policy endeavours (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 32). This said, NGOs will need to reconcile with teachers' unions and parents' associations (*APEs*), if they wish to play a serious role in education quality – e.g. in recruiting teaching staff and training them (Tounkara 2001).

Women's organizations. An organization that appears in the literature on Malian education is SAGE (Strategies in Advancing Girls' Education). In Mali, SAGE has worked with education authorities, community school grantees, Malian NGOs, and donors to introduce girl-friendly practices, life skills, and interactive teaching methods in the classroom, and also to train parents' associations (Capacci Carneal 2004).

Research Networks. ERNWACA (Education Research Network for West and Central Africa, or ROCARE in French) is active in Mali. Created in 1989 by researchers, in collaboration with IDRC, ERNWACA's mission is the promotion of African expertise in positively influencing education practice and policy. Its membership includes several hundred researchers in 12 member countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambie, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Its regional headquarters are in Bamako, Mali's capital.[21] Information on their involvement in Malian education is discussed in a subsequent section.

Community-based organizations. Some of the main school-based structures for partnership in education include SMCs (school management committees) and APEs – *Associations des parents d'élèves* (parents' associations).[22]

Parents' associations (APEs) have played a major role in education since the start of the Malian education system in 1962 (CLIC n.d.). In 1970 a law was passed whereby the MoE assumed responsibility for orienting and coordinating activities of APEs, and

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[21] This is drawn from ERNWACA/ROCARE's website, consulted January 14, 2006, at: http://www.rocare.org/historique.htm

[22] It is important to note that sometimes the term APE is used interchangeably with SMCs, while elsewhere in the literature SMC seems to refer to a structure that was established or re-structured to replace the existing APE.

Major areas of CSO activity

Policy negotiations and reform

Within the education sector in the 1990's, there were certain strategic personalities amongst government officials who favoured civil society involvement in the design of PRODEC (Tounkara 2001). The Minister of Basic Education at that time was a former researcher, very open to innovation and considered to be an innovator himself (Tounkara 2005). This was conducive to NGO involvement; for example, in 1995, the Minister invited *Groupe Pivot Education de Base* to participate in PRODEC design. In addition, the regional coordinator of ERNWACA was asked to lead PRODEC's design team (Tounkara 2005). This meant her involvement, and the greater involvement of ERNWACA, in all national and regional meetings on pedagogical innovations introduced by ten-year education sector programs in other African countries (Tounkara 2005).

The role of NGOs in advocating for the inclusion of community schools within PRODEC may be considered an example of their involvement in policy reform. [23] Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. (2002a: 29) state that "NGO involvement in policy discussions has been institutionalized through the PRODEC process," and that PRODEC has INGO and NGO representatives on the committees that monitor its progress.

Also according to Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. (2002a), Malian NGOs engage state officials on a regular basis about a wide scope of policy issues; they have regular meetings, where NGOs offer informed arguments. In their 2002 study, the Malian government, of the four governments studied (Mali, Guinea, Malawi and Ethiopia), was found to be the most receptive to the idea that NGOs "can and should play a role in policy" (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 29). This said, detailed information on the *current* influence of NGOs in education policy is rather scarce.

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[23] W002-9.0.00(lm9 Tw9.0.o01 Twyn)is (001 Twy725 TD0Tc.0004 01 Twy:4 Tw1 Twyte a001 Twy001 Twy7Tct)2002D-0.00e7T

Education research and promotion of a research culture

ERNWACA also enjoyed extensive participation in policy processes leading up to, and resulting in, the design of PRODEC. In 1995, a regional education conference, *Perspectives de Ségou*, was held by the Malian Minister of Basic Education. ERNWACA was asked by the Malian government to conduct the preparatory research and to prepare the content for this conference. Subsequently, ERNWACA carried out analyses of the educational challenges of its eleven regional network member countries. Their research was presented at the conference and allowed for drafting a regional program for the renewal of education systems in West Africa (Tounkara 2005). In addition to these achievements, ERNWACA was involved in studies leading up to PRODEC design, and in a study relating to participatory processes and partnership for implementing PRODEC (Tounkara 2005).

ERNWACA has also sought to bridge the gap between researchers and decision-makers/practitioners (Tounkara 2005). At the CIES (Comparative International Education Society) meeting in Cape Town in 1998, ERNWACA organized a dialogue forum between continent-wide education researchers and decision-makers. They also established a training and organizing program for national advocacy teams to make use of research results produced by national ERNWACA offices (Tounkara 2005).[24]

Finally, ERNWACA has been involved in research on community schools, evaluating their effectiveness as compared to that of public schools (e.g. Tounkara, Oumar Fomba, et al. 2000, Tounkara, Oumar Fomba, et al. 2001).

Collaboration with education officials

The INGO SCF/USA collaborated with the Malian government's IPN (now called CNE)[25] to develop their community schools' curriculum; SCF surveyed pilot villages

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[24] USAID provided funding for this work through SARA, a program supporting research (Tounkara 2005).

[25] The CNE was formerly known as the *Institut Pédagogique National* (IPN) (Cissé, Diarra et al. 2000; Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale du Mali 2004). IPN staff were noted to be specialists in *pédagogie*

and its local NGO counterparts are seeking to build the organizational and representative capacity of parents' associations, so that these associations can seek increased accountability both from schools and from officials at higher levels of the system (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al 2002a). Still, further research is needed. To what degree is the influence of local education CSOs -- such as parents' associations and SMCs -- "spiraling upwards" (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 54)? And *towards whom* should this influence be spiraling upwards, in this newly-decentralizing governance environment? How is decentralization changing the way that effective advocacy must be carried out?

"Invited" or "created" spaces for participation

Government shrinkage and illegitimacy in the 1970s and 1980s opened up the space for NGO involvement in relief and development programs, and later in education (Tounkara 2001). In this sense, NGOs have been able to create space for themselves to participate in educational governance, especially via the community schools movement – but not without strong backing from foreign donors like USAID and partner INGOs (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a). These power relationships also have disadvantages for local NGOs, in that they can be viewed with suspicion by the Malian state or by other civil society actors such as teachers' unions (Tounkara 2001).

This said, an overall impression gained from the literature is that Malian civil society actors have, over time,

collaborated with SCF, other government divisions were unwilling to do so (Boukary 1999). Subsequently, however, government and NGO relationships improved, especially when evaluations showed that community schools provided a comparable level of quality to that of public schools (Tounkara 2001).

Government and civil society actors still have some points of tension. For example, donors have been perceived by the Malian government as making state-NGO partnership a conditionality for foreign aid (Tounkara 2001; Danté, Gautier et al. 2001). In addition, "local officials regularly complain that their preferences are overruled by the actions of NGOs" in placement or recruitment of teachers (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 30). The Malian state has also tended to disagree with NGO involvement in the technical supervision of education programming (Tounkara 2001). While the Malian government "talks of its partnerships with NGOs, engages in joint educational planning with NGOs, and seldom exercises any limiting power over NGO programs," it still wants to define the terms of the partnership (Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond et al. 2002a: 7). What will be the longer-term impact of the community schools movement upon state and civil society partnerships? Will it result in greater influence for civil society upon the wider education system? Will it lead to a greater influence of the wider education system upon the community schools and the civil society actors who own them (Cappaci Carneal 2004)?

Structures and supports to aid civil society participation in education

In her 1999-2000 study, Cappaci Carneal (2004: 145) found that the concerns of stakeholders in community schools at local, national and international levels were not communicated to each other, that these actors were not "bridging each level's aspirations in order to create a greater dynamic impact." ERNWACA has also asserted the need for more strategic alliances in education between research networks, NGOs, donors, and associations seeking to verify their own work through using research results (Tounkara 2005).

As a positive development towards this goal, the Malian PRSP includes a plan for civil society reinforcement and capacity-building. This plan proposes to strengthen the managerial and technical capacities of civil society actors, their level of organization and representation and their ability to share information, so that they can more effectively play their role within a state and civil society partnership (GoM 2002: 56). It is also encouraging that all "major donors in Mali include some form of decentralization support in their assistance portfolio" (MSI 2004: 5). A major need in this regard is the alignment of programs that build capacity in civil society actors with those that build capacity in government structures undergoing decentralization (Land and Hauck 2003). This same need applies to the education sector. Malian civil society actors must play a strong role in shaping education governance structures *at the present time*, while those structures are undergoing change, rather than seeking to alter them once they have become mocapaci384: 5). A   civ1 T

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