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Education Reform: A Strategy for a School of Success

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Abstract

Since independence in 1956, several attempts have been made to reform educational practices in the Moroccan education system, while going through several stages: Evaluation of the state of the Moroccan education system, determination of failures and the establishment of an effective strategy to improve the quality of education and training in the Moroccan public school. We focus on monitoring the establishment of the pillars of the reform, against the various difficulties that hinder the development of the education sector, from 1999 until today and towards the horizon of 2030. We provide data on the situation of the reform, then we analyze its various stages from a critical point of view, based on the reports of the court of auditors, to arrive at final proposals.

Keywords: Reform, education, system, Morocco, school

Introduction

After independence, his majesty King Mohammed V first attacked educational reforms. Later, his successor, his majesty King Hassan II, declared forcefully in his Speech from the Throne that: «Our main concern is the reform of the education system», and has also brought many changes, including the Arabization of the education system¹⁷, the Koranic school known as "Kottab" or "M'sid".

From the speech of His Majesty King Mohammed VI at the opening of the autumn session of the third legislative year on education «The first problem is education ... Our goal is to create a good citizen capable of acquiring knowledge and skills and bearing the identity that makes him proud to belong, perceptive of his rights, his duties and his national obligations and aware of himself, his family and society... We want our educational institutions to be efficient and responsive to their environment, this requires the generalization and facilitation of schooling for all groups, especially in disadvantaged and isolated areas, which should receive preferential treatment, as well as respectful educational frameworks that require more attention... We can achieve these goals if resource management is streamlined, if the benefits of skills and expertise are improved and all relevant parts of local groups, the private sector, productive institutions, associations, organizations and other economic and social actors contribute to the realization, without neglecting the role and the responsibility of families to participate in monitoring and surveillance. We also draw attention to the need to deal with non-formal education and what is needed to overcome illiteracy with national mobilization to reduce its spread and remove its effects, especially in the villages... Rabat, the 8th october 1999[1].

Extract from the national charter of education and training, 1999 «We have taken care to formulate and renew the basic principles of reform as accurately and clearly as possible, while invoking the need to reconcile what is desirable and possible. Thus, the pillars of change came in the form of concrete proposals, associated with the means of implementation[1]. ».

The reform is not new. His Majesty King Hassan II himself had already declared in his 1996 Throne Speech «The reform we are referring to ... is not limited to reviewing certain provisions of the Constitution. It is a global reform involving the sectors of administration, economy and education». [2].

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For this reason, it seemed very important to question the novelties that the reform brought us, and the objectives that it has drawn, then to analyze the degree of achievement of these objectives.

Problem

Since 1956, year of the independence of Morocco, until today, the Moroccan education system has been the subject of many discussions, the most important is the reform. Since the creation of the Higher Council of Education (HCE), reform projects have been regularly developed in 1975, 1985 and 1995, as well as those resulting from the "National Charter" projects introduced in 1978 and 1981. The assessments made by the Special Commission on Education and Training (SCET) prior to the last reform of 1999 concluded that, despite considerable efforts, the system was not performing satisfactorily[3]. So we had to give a new breath to the reform movement, based on the assessments of the (SCET), to establish the national charter of education and training, following the instructions of H. King Mohammed VI.

We provide data on the situation of the reform. We analyze the stages of the reform from a critical point of view, based on the reports of the court of auditors, to arrive at final proposals.

Theoretical framework

Education is still considered the backbone of any society and a tool for cultural improvement. It contributes significantly to the development of all countries at all levels, including business, law, health, services and agriculture, etc. Most developed countries place a high priority on education when it comes to prioritizing sectors that contribute effectively to the advancement of society and the country[4].

The National Charter has been established as an effective solution to the situation, recognizing that the education sector has experienced difficulties in the past, it describes the new system as a system based on equity, equality of opportunity and quality, which would promote individual and social progress[5].

This research revealed that despite all the Moroccan attempts at reform, which are represented in the form of a national charter, a white book and an emergency program, the objectives are still far from being achieved, and the series of reform continues its path towards achievement through the strategic vision, considered today, by most educational actors as a last stitch of the chain of reform.

Method

We used a descriptive method based on a bibliographic study of the different documents, declarations, notes, news from the Ministry of Education and Training and from scientific research articles, in the last two decades (2000's) and up to the end of the strategic vision in the next decade (2030).

Results & discussion

The results presented below are collected through a bibliographic study of official documents from the Ministry of Education and Training (national charter, white paper, notes, report of the Court of Auditors on the evaluation of the Emergency Program of the Ministry of National Education and Training ...).

As part of the search for new developments in education and training, we find:

1- The national charter

Published in 1999 and actually started in 2000, is an official document essential to educational reform. This charter is conceived in two main parts:

The first part includes the basic principles that include the solid foundations of the education and training system and the major objectives envisaged, the rights and duties of all the partners and the national mobilization for the success of the reform.

- The second section contains six areas of renewal across 19 pillars of change:
- Disseminate education and link it to the economic environment;
- Educational organization;
- Improve the quality of education and training;
- Human resources;
- Governance and management;
- Partnership and financing.

2- The white book

One year later, the back to school in 2000-2001 devoted the launch of the project on a larger scale, through the implementation of the first series of measures contained in the Charter[1]. In 2002, the white paper was developed to examine educational programs.

The white book was published by the Ministry of National Education, consisting of eight parts and more than 1930 pages of large pages. The book is the result of the efforts of the review committees of the Moroccan education program, which were organized locally and centrally, to revise and update the curricula taking into account the most daring choices and recommendations of the National Charter of Education and Training.

- Part I: Choices and pedagogical orientations
- Part II: Curriculum in primary education
- Part III: The educational program of preparatory schools
- Part IV: Educational Program for the Authentic College of Education
- Part V: Curriculum for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Part VI: Curriculum for the Arts
- Part VII: Curriculum for Science
- Part VIII: Educational Program for Technology

The White book is particularly vigilant about the audacity and scrutiny of the content of the National Charter for the Development of Moroccan Education Curriculum, which derive from the educational philosophy of the Charter to determine educational choices to review (and build) educational programs. The National Charter for Education and Training has established a set of principles and values. The first part of the white paper presents the abbreviations and general guidelines adopted during the revision of the curricula.

Europe had the same experience at that time, the White book[2] « Teach and Learn - Towards the Cognitive Society » presented at the initiative of Mrs. Edith Cresson and Mr. Pdraig Flynn, members of the European Commission, represents one of the dimensions of the Maastricht Treaty, in which appear for the first time articles on the establishment of a “Europe of education[6]”.

3- Decimal point of the reform from 2000 to 2009

The areas of education reform are the general thrusts of the Charter: areas of basic principles, areas of renewal and support for change, improvement of the quality of education and training, human resources, governance and management, partnership and financing. Institutional achievements include all laws and designs, for example: the obligation of basic education in May 2000, and the founding law of the Basic Education Regulations (2000) and the activation of the law of creation of the regional academies for education and training in May (2000), the publication of the decree on the new status of the private staff of the Ministry of National Education during the month of February (2003), on the other hand, there are the results of the physical and professional evaluation of the events and the organization of the Mohammed VI Foundation, as well as achievements of academic achievement in a field study of physical education and sports related to high school and technical education in 2000, and improvement of the educational level of middle school and the introduction of the new programs for the first year and the introduction of the second foreign language for the third year, during the 2002-2003 school year, not to mention the quantitative achievements in the fields of primary, secondary and secondary education qualifying. In the context of the general report made in this context, especially in the speech of Mr. Habib El-Malki, Minister of National Education, these were the areas of educational reform through the reform forums on the theme "Improving the quality of education". The meetings took place in the context of "the realization of the national reform package of education and training" in its mid-decade, as stipulated in the National Charter. (Ibrahim Bouzid, 2008, reform in the first national decade, between theory and practice).

4- GENIE Program 2006

On September 15, 2005, His Majesty King Mohammed VI took the first step towards the generalization of information and communication technologies within the Moroccan school system. This program called "GENIE" was very expensive, its total budget exceeds 1172 MDH (towards the end of 2013).

Training was offered to the various educational actors (Directors, inspectors and teachers) to ensure a better educational integration of ICT[7].

Multiple pitfalls in its realization are reported before installing the pillars of this program given the fragile infrastructure of the country, the resistance to change of some teachers and the huge number of targeted institutions.

The new strategy was therefore to integrate information and communication technologies in all educational institutions (schools, colleges and high schools), which is why schools and universities were equipped with multimedia rooms (computers, video projectors, printers, digital cases, etc.) and an internet connection.

This program will be rewarded later, on March 7, 2017, in Paris for the UNESCO King Hamad ben Issa Al Khalifa Prize 2017 for the use of information and communication technologies in education[8]. Around 2009, all human and material energies were mobilized for the reform of the education system and all means were used to ensure its success. However, despite all the achievements that have been accomplished, many major imbalances still prevent the development of our education system and achieve its objectives[9].

5- Emergency program (E.P) from 2009 to 2012

Since the creation of the National Commission for Education and Training (NCET) in 1999 and the elaboration of the National Charter for Education and Training, the sector has been the subject of several reports which have focus on its progress and its insufficiencies by concluding that the achievement of the objectives advocated by the NCET is far from being achieved.

The decade of the 2000-2008 reform ended when a special committee on education and training conducted a study on the degree of implementation of the reform and found that the results were poor compared to remained. Despite the efforts made and the impact of this situation, his majesty, King Mohammed VI called for the 2008 legislative session to explain an urgent agenda « to breathe new life into reform, ensure education for inclusion and accelerate the new reform for the next four years », as the Najah School “Success for All”, which includes four spaces:

- Make the obligation of schooling effective until the age of 15 years.
- Stimulate initiative and excellence in high school and university.
- Cross-cutting issues of the system.
- Give the means to succeed[10].

These 4 workspaces were divided into 23 projects developed on the basis of concrete and measurable objectives[11]. The Higher Council of Education was replaced by the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research in 2014, where it was considered as a forum for exchange of views and democratic debate on issues education and training.

6- Integration Pedagogy - Competency-Based Approach

Integration pedagogy IP is not a pedagogy strictly speaking: it is a curricular methodology (reference to the curriculum), that is, it proposes a method of organization of learning and evaluation, within an education system or training system. It is at the point of articulation between the political level on the one hand and the level of practices on the other. It is efficient, fair, contextualized, realistic and pragmatic.

The Education and Training Engineering Office (ETO) concluded in 2009 with the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education, Training of Managers and Scientific Research a collaboration agreement in an important project that aims to eventually generalize an effective skills-based approach « which combines the ideas of interdependence of elements, their coordination and their polarization, for a specific purpose » based on the pedagogy of integration in Moroccan primary and secondary schools[12]. It is part of the emergency program of the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education, Management Training and Scientific Research, under the rubric « completion of the implementation of the competency-based approach ». The pedagogy of integration appears as the practical methodological framework that allows the effective implementation of the Competence-based Approach (CbA) in all Moroccan classes. The term competence means something that the learner (student) must master[12].

For the pedagogy of integration, competence is defined in terms that are both complex and concrete (or assessable): it must be able to evaluate itself through the resolution of complex situations. More specifically, the competence relates to « the possibility for an individual to internally and reflectively mobilize an integrated set of resources to deal with a given situation[12]».

Indeed, despite the fact that the Competence-based Approach was officially adopted in Morocco in 1999, there are still few traces and few credible tools to help teachers to change practices on a daily basis, and to evaluate acquired students[12]. If competence is evaluable know-how, is a general quality easily assessable? Can it be applied to a particular content or should it manifest itself in a complex situation?

The pedagogy of integration has been chosen by Moroccan education officials not only for its potential to answer these questions related to the pedagogical effectiveness of an education system, but also for the values of equity that it vehicles. In curriculums, integration pedagogy defines the skills to be acquired by the student within each discipline, by year. The project targets the main components of the curriculum: the organization of learning, assessment of student achievement, continuing education, initial teacher training, teaching materials[12].

Proponents of integration pedagogy believe that, for an innovation to have a lasting chance in an education or training system, itself placed in a given context, the pace of introduction of this innovation takes into account the ability of the system to digest this innovation. This is why the pedagogy of integration can be introduced in educational systems in a progressive way.

A preliminary experimentation phase is aimed at designing the system best suited to the reality of Moroccan classes, identifying the best conditions for applying the pedagogy of integration, and developing a system of generalization. This experimental phase will affect nearly 15% of the primary classes as of the 2009 - 2010 school year[12].

How to reform according to the principles and tools of pedagogy of integration? Where to start? For the same approach that is the pedagogy of integration, several reform entries are possible:

- An entry through a revision of school curricula.
- An entry by the evaluation.
- An entry through class practices.
- An entry through didactic tools and textbooks.
- An entry through initial teacher training[13], [14].

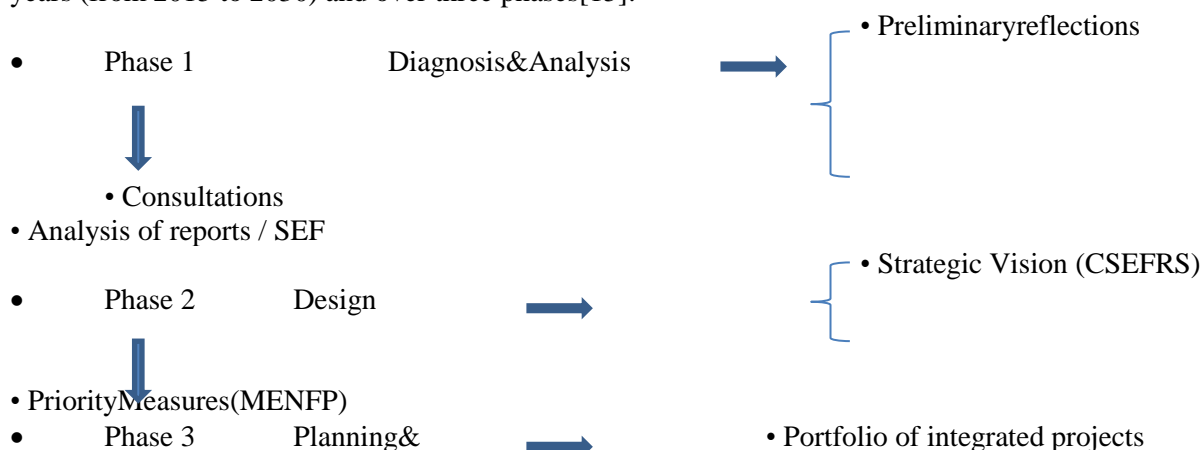
The project is the subject of monthly steering committee meetings chaired by the State Secretary for School Education. It is managed within the National Center for Pedagogical Innovations and Experimentation (NCPIE)[12].

BIEF support in Morocco is planned for a period of 3 years. During this period, the BIEF undertakes to form a national expertise in integration pedagogy (about thirty experts) allowing the country, at the end of the project, to be able to continue the process autonomously [12].

7- Implementation of the Strategic Vision 2015-2030

The first thing to note is that the strategic vision of the Moroccan school reform was an inevitable result of the following contexts: in response to the royal directives contained in two royal speeches (August 20, 2012 and August 20, 2013), still in application of the contents of the royal appeal addressed to the Higher Council for Education and Scientific Research and Training at the opening of the autumn parliamentary session (October 2014), which instructed the Council to draw up a map strategy for the reform of the Moroccan school.

The strategic vision is a strategic plan or map for the reform of the Moroccan school, spread over 15 years (from 2015 to 2030) and over three phases[15]:



Implementation

The document includes: 4 chapters, 23 pillars and 134 paragraphs and about 1000 required. These four chapters are divided into pillars that address issues of equity, quality, individual integration, and community progress.

8- Priority measures

In 2015, a series of measures taken by the Ministry of Education and Training to reform imbalances in education in the short and long term through 16 reforms is the first step towards reducing strategic vision. These measures are divided into 9 main axes divided into 23 measures, in order to diagnose the state of the educational system, propose solutions for a real development and translate the possible change inputs into a short-term action program, and a long-term educational project, these measures from the school year 2015/2016[16].

- **Axis 1: Ability to learn the basics**
 - 1) New learning pathways for the first four years of primary education
 - 2) The thresholds of the transition between the cycles
- **Axis 2: Foreign Language Proficiency**
 - 3) Strengthen foreign languages in secondary school and change the learning model
 - 4) International routes of the Moroccan baccalaureate
- **Axis 3: Integrating Public Education, Vocational Training and Vocational Training**
 - 5) Career discovery trail
 - 6) The vocational pathway at the secondary school level
 - 7) Professional Bachelor
 - 8) Orientation towards vocational training
- **Axis 4: transversal skills and self-openness**
 - 9) Opening institutions (cultural, artistic, sports and linguistic activities)
 - 10) Entrepreneurial Spirit and the Entrepreneur's Sense
- **Axis 5: Improve the school supply**
 - 11) Rehabilitation of educational institutions
 - 12) Expanding school supply
 - 13) Partner Schools
 - 14) Primary education
- **Axis 6: Pedagogical supervision**
 - 15) Accompaniment and training by practice
 - 16) Revise basic teacher training
- **Axe 7: Gouvernance**
 - 17) Management of educational institutions
 - 18) Decentralization
 - 19) Status of National Education Officers
- **Axis 8: School synthesis**
 - 20) School Integrity and Values
- **Axis 9: Vocational training: valuing human capital and competitive entrepreneurship**
 - 21) Professional Training Strategy
 - 22) Valuing the career path
 - 23) Continuing Education in the Vocational Training Sector

Among other attempts that have been made by the Ministry of Education to reform the Moroccan education system, is the assurance of effective management of teaching materials. Following the results of the preliminary investigation carried out by the Court of Auditors, the First President of this Court sent to the Minister of National Education and Vocational Training, August 08, 2016, an urgent note to the subject of the management of educational materials and chemicals, with the aim of communicating to it within a maximum of 60 days, the appropriate approach for the implementation of the recommendations made in this note by the Court of Auditors[13].

In this context, and in full awareness of the importance of the recommendations and observations mentioned in this note, as well as those mentioned in the reports of the two general inspections of the Ministry, which are mainly aimed at setting the conditions for good governance in the region. management of the didactic material file concerning the stages of its acquisition and its use, and

following the general observations indicated by the magistrates of the Court of Accounts concerning this subject[17].

Evaluation of the Emergency Program of the Ministry of National Education

As to the scope of the mission, it should be noted that all the investigations carried out were limited to the central services of the Ministry of National Education. The information relating to Regional Academy of Education and Training Trades RAETTs, are those communicated and produced by the ministry of education et training MET[18].

The work of the Court of Auditors has led to the following main conclusions:

1- With regard to the financial resources mobilized for the emergency program

The volume of credits, reflecting the government's budgetary effort in favor of the education sector during the period of the E.P, showed a 230% increase over the credits opened in the previous four years. This is due to insufficient financial and accounting management capabilities[14].

2- Progress made in the generalization of schooling and improvement of its conditions

In terms of quantity, a significant increase has been noticed in the Moroccan education system. The number of pupils increased from 5,666,429 in 2009 to 6,039,641 in 2017, while the number of schools increased from 9,397 to 10,756[14].

According to the report, the Moroccan education system still suffers from several dysfunctions related, in particular, to:

Table 1- Dysfunctions of Moroccan education system according to the report of the Court of Auditors on the evaluation of the Emergency Program of the Ministry of National Education

Planned	Realized	Completion rate
1164 educational institutions	286 properties	24,6%
7052 newclassrooms	4062newclassrooms	57,6%
The coverage of all rural communes by colleges with boarding schools	52,8% in 2008/2009	66,5% in 2016/2017
The diffusion of pre-school education fixed at 80% in 2012 and the generalization in 2015	Only 7,667 under the 2016/2017 school year primary schools	24%

3- Improvement of the quality of the education system and the conditions to achieve it

The aggravation of the congestion situation, rates of 21.2% (primary), 42% (collegial) and 22.3% (qualifying) for the 2016/2017 school year against 7.3% (primary), 16.5% (college) and 26.1% (qualifying) in 2008.¹⁶

The use of contractual teachers, the education system recruited 54,927 teachers by contract, during the period 2016 - 2018. The assignment of the latter directly to the teaching classes, without any pedagogical training, « questions the quality of the lessons learned » [14].

4- Access to compulsory education and retention of pupils at school

The implementation of social support measures and the drop-out rate for students from disadvantaged backgrounds led to an improvement in the 2016/17 school year.¹⁶ Social support measures have thus been affected:

- 1,085,110beneficiaries of canteens;
- 113,632 beneficiaries of accommodation and catering in boarding schools;
- 138,995 beneficiaries of school transportation;
- 859,975 beneficiaries of Tayssir program;
- 3,835,833beneficiaries of school supplies.

5- The measures undertaken did not produce the desired impact on the improvement of the conditions of schooling and the retention of pupils

The inadequacies of these measures are related to the failure of planning, accommodation and catering conditions in boarding schools and canteens[14].

6- School dropout

The drop-out rate has clearly decreased between 2008 and 2012, but it has again increased in 2017 to exceed 279,000 students[14].

The Court of Auditors considered that the E.P did not achieve all its objectives. It did not have, either, the desired impacts on the Moroccan education system, since the ministry concerned did not

sufficiently take into account certain fundamental rules of the cycle of any public policy during planning, programming, execution and governance[14].

Conclusion & recommendations

Following the speech of H.M King Mohammed VI, the creation of the National Commission for Education and Training (NCET) in 1999 and the elaboration of the National Charter of Education and Training, the educational sector has been the subject of a reform movement, spread over 30 years, going through several stages, assessment of the state of the Moroccan education system, determination of failures and the establishment of an effective strategy.

This reform is due to the need for a change, a strategy and a planning to improve the quality of education and training in the Moroccan public school, against the various difficulties that hinder the development of the education sector.

18 years passed, the report of the Court of Auditors on the evaluation of the Emergency Program of the Ministry of National Education was very clear, the latter did not achieve all its objectives, however it is time to act, in order to succeed.

After having implemented the priority measures in 2015, we still have a map, the strategic vision that will give a breath of fresh air to the reform movement, as well as diagnose and review progress in the next 12 years.

We hope the strategic vision will achieve the goals, although we are sure it will not be easy. However, we must be optimistic and we will not lose hope as long as the intention and desire for reform exist.

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