



**Africa Network
Campaign
on Education
For All**

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Challenges to Achieve Education For All in Africa

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Global Week of Action

The Fourth Global Week of Action took place this year from 6-13 April 2003. It enabled the members of the Global Campaign for Education to reaffirm the objectives set at the Dakar World Education Forum held from 26 to 28 April 2000. This year the main theme was girls' education to reaffirm the commitment to ensure gender parity in the primary and secondary education by 2005. The 5 partners of the Oxfam/GB Regional Programme entitled "Promote gender equitable education" organised many media and public activities and participated in the Biggest Lesson.

In Burkina Faso, activities were organised by the National Coalition led by CCEB/BF.

Twelve public and private media (print press, private radio stations and national radio and TV stations) took part in the press conference aimed at launching the Week on 5 April in Ouagadougou. CCEB/BF and the other members of the EFA National Coalition (FAWE/Burkina, teachers' unions and Student Parents Associations, the female Communicators Association) were involved in this press conference. After the introductory declaration which set out the overall background to the campaign, each representative of the coalition raised an issue to provide journalists with guidance and elicit questions.

The major problems raised concern the reduction in the duration of teachers training which will have a negative impact on the quality of teaching, the transfer of schools management to grass roots communities that are already deprived of financial resources and even worse unprepared to carry out such a task, violence to girls in school that prevents their retention or success, the insignificant importance granted to national languages in spite of speeches and finally the failed implementation of the 10 years basic education plan four years after its adoption. The broadcast of this conference by the Burkina National Television Station which covers 80% of the territory and by the National Radio Station, the only station which covers the whole territory allows us to think that a good part of the population was reached and sensitized to the coalition's concerns.

Broadcast of two 45-min spots by the National Television for the whole week. The 1st spot shows the schooling rates and urges NGOs, trades unions and student parents to mobilize to question the government and partners so that they take urgent actions in favor of education. The 2nd spot is a message questioning the importance of girls education and sensitizes populations to their school attendance.

Broadcast of a spot in French and in four national languages (Mooré, Dioula, Fulfuldé and Gourmantchéma) and two spots sensitizing to children's school attendance in particular girls' attendance by the National Radio Station and two private radios of Ouagadougou, the capital city and Bobo Dioulasso, the country's second city.

Publication of four advocacy articles written by members of the coalition in the two major dailies (Observateur Paalga and Le Pays) on the following themes: 1) Teaching and its actors in Burkina Faso, 2) Role of Student Parents Associations in Education and their Contribution, 3) Teachers Training and Quality of Teaching and 4) Gender, Education and Fight against violence done to girls at school.

With a view to gradually extending activities to the whole country, CCEB/BF decided this year to organize public activities in Bobo-Dioulasso, the country's second city to prepare its members operating in this region to carry out their own activities in the future.

Public Mobilization Ceremony at the Sagnon Movie Hall of Bobo-Dioulasso on 8 April. About 500 participants : NGOs, trade unions, provincial authorities, student parents, students and women who

benefited from literary campaigns got together.

During the ceremony the members of the coalition questioned in turn the Minister of Basic Education and Literacy who attended the event with a 32-people delegation on the problems raised at the Conference which took place in Ouagadougou on 5 April. These are:

- * the reduction in the duration of the teachers' training that will have a negative impact on the quality of teaching,
- * the transfer of school management to grass roots community already deprived of financial resources and unprepared to carry out such a task,
- * violence done to girls at school which prevents their retention and their success, the insignificant importance granted to national languages in spite of speeches and finally
- * the failed implementation of the 10 Years Basic Education Development Plan.



The ministry of basic education and literacy arriving at Cine Sagnon for the public ceremony

At the end of the ceremony, the Minister took the floor

for one hour to convey the congratulations of Burkina Faso's President and Prime Minister to the initiators of the campaign in Burkina Faso. He proceeded to reiterate the Government's commitment to Education for All through PDDEB and social mobilization and urged the coalition to follow up the actions initiated by the Government and to question them if they do not abide by what they say. This ceremony was punctuated by traditional music and a sketch to sensitize to girls' and women's education.



The ministry of basic education and literacy and the members of the steering committee after the public ceremony Cine Sagnon

About 2,000 women who benefited from literacy campaigns in Bobo-Dioulasso organized a march on 9 April brandishing banners promoting girls' and women's education in national languages and in French and handed on to the High Commissioner of Bobo Dioulasso a message urging the authorities to develop initiatives aimed at speeding up girls' and women's education in the presence of the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy. These women were accompanied by one thousand students and representatives of students

parents, NGOs and trade unions.



Before the women's march

Open doors at the FAWE/Burkina Resource Center on 9 April. This center offers alternatives for the education of girls in difficulties through various trainings. In her message, the Coordinator of FAWE/Burkina urged the Government to take actions to prevent the violence done to girls at school and to develop initiatives to allow an increased attendance of school by girls. The Minister and his colleagues visited the center and congratulated FAWE/Burkina for this initiative which genuinely contributes to promoting girls' education.



The women's delegate delivering a speech at the open doors ceremony

In Burkina Faso a public demonstration ceremony of the Biggest Lesson was organised at the Bobo-Dioulasso Town Hall. 428 people represented the pupils on this occasion among them

the Minister of Basic Education and Literacy, development partners, trade unions, NGOs, students parents associations. This demonstration ceremony was aimed at enabling the media to do a report on the Biggest Lesson. 14 public and private media covered this demonstration which took place from 08:00 to 08:30 GMT at the Bobo-Dioulasso Town Hall. The lesson was taught by a Primary Education Inspector. It was taught at the same time in several regions of the country. Overall 73,494 people participated in the Biggest Lesson in Burkina Faso.



The primary education inspector giving the lesson at Bobo-Dioulasso town hall



People attending the biggest lesson's demonstration

In Ghana, since the World Conference on Education held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, the Ghana National

Education Campaign Coalition have taken a very keen interest in the implementation process of the Education For All goals in Ghana.

This resulted in a number of activities by the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition to ensure the participation of Civil Society in the implementation of the Education For All Goals in Ghana.

2003 Global Week of Action on Education 3 years of implementing the EFA Goals after the Dakar World Conference in 2000, the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition joined forces with over 150 countries all over the world to organize the 2003 edition of the Global Week of Action on Education in Ghana.

The Global Week of Action on Education has been a key event in Ghana that provides a platform for specific advocacy on the EFA goals. This time, the emphasis was on eliminating gender disparity by the year 2005.

- Summit on Girls' Education and a presentation of a communiqué to parliament to be received on behalf parliament by the speaker;
- Round Table Discussion on Girls' Education;
- Debate;
- Radio Discussion.

In the Volta Region, a summit on girl's education

was organized in a form of a mock parliament.

The Children participating in the summit raised a number of issues covering girls' education in Ghana.

The issues raised focused on:

- Cultural values that poses as limitations to the education of girls;
- Government policies and practices, etc.

It was opened by the Volta Regional Minister of Education.

After the summit, the children came up with a communiqué to be presented to parliament through the speaker when parliament resumes sitting.

One key issue raised in the communiqué is the elimination of gender disparity by the year 2005.

In the Eastern Region, a float and a durbar of school children was organized in Somanya. It was addressed by the Head of Girls Education Unit of GES.

Similar activities took place in Kade and Asamankese all in the Easter Region.

In the Central Region, a round table discussion was organized. The panel raised a wide range of issues concerning policy and implementation of education goals in Ghana.

The panel touched on the education of girls and the need to reduce adult literacy among women.

The Biggest Lesson was the key event for the 2003 Global Week of Action celebration in Ghana. It was

organized in Kumasi by the Ashanti Regional Chapter of GNECC.

The Big Lesson which took a classroom scene was attended by over 500 in and out of school children, children, women and a cross section of the public in Kumasi.

The Lesson was conducted by a school girl along side the Minister of State in charge of girl child, basic and secondary education, Honourable Christine Churcher on the 9th of April at 8:00hrs GMT



The Minister of State in charge of Girl Child and Basic Education conducting the lesson along side a child.

Other speakers who addressed the gathering after the lesson included Mr. Sam Danse of Oxfam, Mr. Camara of UNESCO and Mr. Alex Tetteh Enyo, Chairman of the National EFA Committee.



The Minister interacting with the children after the lesson

In Liberia activities were coordinated this year by the Forum for African Women

Educationalists (FAWE/Liberia, Oxfam GB major partner in the Girls' Education Project) in collaboration with AIDSCORPS, the Liberia Ministry of Education, the National AIDS Control Program (NACP – the Government of Liberia's agency responsible for the control of HIV/AIDS and other STIs in Liberia), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an international organization involved in education, specifically for persons displaced as a result of conflicts and the Oxfam/GB Liberia Program.

The Global Week of Action celebrated was kicked off by an official proclamation by the Honorable Minister of Education, Dr. D. Evelyn S. Kandakai. The proclamation highlighted the significance of the GWA and the efforts made by the government, a signatory of the EFA Protocol, to increase access to education for Liberian children. The proclamation was carried on radio and in the major newspapers in the county. Later during the day representatives of FAWE, MOE, IRC, AIDSCORPS, OGB had radio and television talk shows. The discussion centered on the significance of the GWA and the 2003 theme "Gender Parity in Primary and Secondary education (in Liberia) by 2005". The discussion highlighted the organizations efforts towards the attainment of the goal.

Also discussed were the general challenges that girls face in their pursuit for education. Discussants also acknowledged that 2005 might be too early for Liberia, specifically taking into consideration the Liberia civil war. Notwithstanding the GOL through the MOE indicated that ongoing program like the Accelerated Learning Program, Free and Compulsory Primary education, the Adult Literacy Program, the passage of the Education law for example have been maintained and reaffirmed its commitment to increase funding for education. As indicated earlier, the events were carried with the support of the print and electronic media. Additional sensitization and awareness were made through appropriate messages on T-shirts, posters, fliers and banners.

1) The second day of the GWA was dedicated to the visit of selected schools in Monrovia by FAWE and AIDSCORPS. The visit was mainly aimed at eliciting maximum awareness of girls' education amongst students, teachers, and parents and sensitizing them to its importance. Presentations were made by officials of FAWE and AIDSCORPS and there were also questions from students. Videos on HIV/AIDS were screened at the schools.

Prominent females that are associated with the cause of FAWE were also present to encourage girls as role models in the schools visited.

2) The events of the National Day of Action were meant to be the climax of the GWA in Liberia. The audience again comprised a cross section of students from a variety of schools in Monrovia, Government officials, non-governmental organizations working in the education sector. The Ministry of Education and FAWE availed themselves of the opportunity to present a comprehensive statistical study of the Gender Divide in primary and secondary education in Liberia, to provide information on the gaps between the number of male and female teachers, as well as the number of primary and secondary schools in the country. According to the 2002 statistics, there were a total of 263,170 pre-school pupils of which 143,980 were boys and 119,190 girls. The report also indicated that there were 3,495 teachers employed in 3135 pre-school facilities in the country; 2,872 of the teachers were male and 623 female. Also during the same period there were 248,167 primary school pupils in the country enrolled in 3135 schools, of which 314,717 were boys and 216,450 girls. A total of 11,307 male teachers and 2,408 female teachers taught in primary schools during the same period. In the

secondary sector a total 105,794 girls and 73,522 boys were said to be enrolled in 655 schools. A total of 1,003 female teachers and 5,387 male teachers taught these secondary students. An analysis of the education statistics showed that at the primary and primary levels, specifically as the students enter last three years of their secondary education.

The National AIDS Control Program and AIDSCORPS also presented statistics of the status of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the country. Overall the statistics pointed to a rapid increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country. The report also revealed that the education sector was at risk, given that students and teachers were in the top five sector groupings infected by the virus. The discussions also provided information and gave rise to awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Moreover the presentation demonstrated the magnitude of the gender disparity in the Liberia education sector.

Challenges such as limited access, which was shown by the number of schools (preschool, primary and secondary), the wide gap between female and male teachers, especially in rural communities and the eventual threats that HIV/AIDS poses to the education sector in Liberia were emphasized.

The Honorable Minister of Education of the Republic of Liberia who is credited with bringing FAWE to Liberia

moderated a Panel discussion with discussants from the NACP, AIDSCORPS, OGB/Liberia and a boy and girl representing pupils. The panel discussion focused on the GWA theme i.e. Gender Parity in Secondary and Primary education by 2005. A national outlook of the theme was given by reviewing the prospects for Gender Parity in primary and secondary education in Liberia. Discussants highlighted hurdles affecting the attainment of gender parity in Liberia. Some of the problems highlighted are parental preference for boys' education, traditional and cultural practices that are biased against girls and policies and laws that do not prioritize education, specifically for girls. The government, communities, parents and even students themselves were identified as responsible actors in the attainment of gender parity. Discussants acknowledged that the attainment of Gender Parity in primary and secondary education was a collective responsibility of parents, communities, the government and non-governmental organizations. However, it was agreed that reaching the goal set at 2005 was not possible in view of the persistent insecurity around the country, as well as the economic strangulation the government is faced with. To conclude, the discussants agreed that the attainment of Gender parity in Liberia depended on appropriate changes in

policies and practices by parents, communities, governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

3) A total of 329 persons were approached during schools visit. This number includes students and teachers of three schools. Audiovisual aids, discussions followed by questions and answers were used for the awareness session. This session started with the screening of the documentary "Silent Epidemic". Following each screening, participants were asked a number of questions: Participants were very receptive and willing to participate in the awareness sessions. The responses of participants showed that the level of awareness of HIV/AIDS among students in these schools is encouraging. At the end of each session, principals of these schools requested the constant visit of AIDSCORPS to help schools address the issues of HIV/AIDS and other related matters.

4) Closing the gender gap for primary and secondary education by 2005 while addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS and STIs seems unfeasible. HIV/AIDS has the potential to erode the funds needed and facilitators must achieve Gender Parity for primary and secondary education and Education for All by 2015.

Accordingly a one-day HIV/AIDS awareness workshop was held with students and teachers from ten (10) selected schools in Monrovia to celebrate the Global Week of Action. The overall objective of this workshop was to raise awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS and STIs on Education and populations. Facilitators came from the National AIDS Control Program, the MOE School Health Division and AIDSCORPS.

There were about 50 participants: 20 teachers and 30 students from 10 selected schools. Also attending this workshop were representatives of LWF/WS and FAWE as observers.

The workshop started at about 9 am with the pre-test. This was aimed at assessing the knowledge participants had on the above topics. The average score for teachers was 65% and 45% for students. This indicated that there was need for more awareness. The session devoted to the analysis of HIV/AIDS raised awareness on the trend of the HIV/AIDS pandemic locally and globally while the session on HIV/AIDS and Education was meant to raise awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS on education and the impact of education on HIV/AIDS.

The session on HIV/AIDS and education was followed by the Session on Facts and Feelings about HIV/AIDS. During this session, students and teachers were separated.

The NACP facilitated the session for the teachers while AIDSCORPS facilitated the session for students. The objective was to increase the knowledge of participants on what HIV/AIDS is, how it can spread, how it can't spread and how to prevent it. During the session, participants fully participated, their doubts were cleared about some myths and misbeliefs about HIV/AIDS, especially the transmission of the virus by mosquito and saliva.

The STIs session was jointly held with students and teachers. The NACP facilitated this session. The objective was to enable participants to identify common STIs in Liberia and discuss their effects. In order to visualize these common STIs, the video documentary "Silent Epidemic" was shown. This video clip sensitized participants to the reality and effects of the more common STIs.

The School Health Division, Ministry of Education facilitated this session for students. This session was held for students only. The objective was to enable participants to identify and name parts and functions of the male and female reproductive system. During this session girls and boys expressed themselves freely, especially on issues relating to puberty.

The NACP facilitated the session on HIV/AIDS facts with the teachers. The objective was to enable

participants to plan and execute HIV/AIDS awareness sessions in their own schools. The session was fully participatory. At the end of this session, participants were enthusiastic to carry out awareness sessions in their own schools and communities using guidelines discussed during the session.

The session on peer pressure was held jointly with both students and teachers. The objective was to enable participants to adopt basic life skills in coping and resisting negative peer, societal and family or parental pressure. Role-play was carried out to demonstrate passiveness, aggressiveness and assertiveness as regards attitudes. The facilitators simply demonstrated the various actions and later male and female students were called to role-play in being passive, aggressive and assertive.

Participants were asked to discuss the role-play. Participants said, being assertive when saying 'NO' would help them escape danger and save their friend from the same danger.

The average score of the Pre-test for both teachers and students indicated that the level of awareness of teachers and students in the Monrovia area is extremely low, despite their access to radio and television programs on HIV/AIDS awareness in and around Monrovia.

It was also observed that most of the students have a strong misconception on the transmission of HIV/AIDS. After the workshop, the following recommendations were made:

- such workshop should be extended to two or three days to allow more time for discussion;
- AIDSCORPS should extend this type of program to schools in Monrovia;
- teaching posters on HIV/AIDS should be given to schools by AIDSCORPS;
- AIDSCORPS should extend this program to the different communities, especially the video screening on STIs (Silent Epidemic).

The third day of the GWA was dedicated to the "Biggest Lesson". This day enabled people to participate in the Open Class where the Biggest Lesson was taught. The Deputy Minister of Education in charge of Primary Education taught the Biggest Lesson at the auditorium of the University of Liberia on Capitol Hill. A host of schools, government officials, students of the University of Liberia, stakeholders in the education sector, including parents and school administrators attended the lesson. Over 700 individuals participated in the Open class, a world record-breaking event.

In Mali the Week's activities were carried out by the National Action Committee in conjunction with other partners in Bamako and Gao namely ADESAH, GARI, TASSAGHT and RFC, all Oxfam GB partners.

Bamako

1) Talks-debates were simultaneously organized on 19 private radio stations on 9 April on the significance of girls' education and above all for the young Malian democratic State which embarked on a decentralization process.

2) TV Debate on 10 April through the micro-program of the « Office des Radios et Télévision du Mali » (ORTM) entitled « Parlons-en » aimed at a collective brainstorming and sharing with the public the different successful experiences relating to girls schooling. In the light of successful experiences the following was emphasized : parents' sensitization, above all mothers to the importance of girls' schooling, the follow-up of girls' schooling by a member of women's associations, the grouping of women thanks to income-generating activities by protecting girls from some domestic chores and parents' sensitization to the dangers of early marriage.

3) Conferences-debates on 11-12 April aimed at taking stock of the education policy in particular the girls'

education component and advocating the improvement of girls' schooling rate. The following themes were discussed : 1) The role of the Female Teacher in the girls' schooling process, 2) The budget allocated to Education by the State : Analysis et Constraints and 3) The quality of Education: School programs and Promoting the Female Teacher/Gender Analysis. These conferences served as strategies to mobilize all the nation's actors regardless of their positions with a view to looking for plausible alternatives for the basic issues which hinder the effective and efficient furthering of the education system in Mali.

Gao

1) Synchronized debates on the three FM radio stations in Gao during which listeners were informed about the EFA concept, the commitments made at the Dakar Forum, the constraints hampering girls' education in the Gao Region, the evolution of the total number of pupils by circle.

2) Broadcast on "Legislation and reality" on early marriage and its effects on girl's reproductive health in Songhoi, Tamasheq and Arabic languages. This program elicited much interest in the theme which is a topical one. It was largely broadcast for 3 days in Gao and the areas of partner NGOs (Bourem, Intillilt and

Menaka). It is estimated that about 51,265 people in Gao, 9,884 in Intillilt, 21,850 in Bourem and 27,741 in Menaka were sensitized.

3) Conference-debate on the same theme as the TV program, with, in addition, its links with girls' schooling, presided over by the High Commissioner of Gao (first authority). During this conference, the UNESCO clubs presented a sketch on early marriage, a contribution of a representative of the "Association malienne pour l'Union et le Progrès de l'Islam (AMUPI). The sketch highlighted the position of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad which is in favor of schooling: "any Muslim must endeavor to benefit from schooling even though it is necessary to go to China" and early marriage in which the girl's consent is required prior to its celebration. This ended with an advocacy/ a song in Sonrhai by a local artist : "Ignorance fosters any evil. Father, allow my sister to benefit from schooling, Marabout, allow my sister to benefit from schooling because schooling helps in her blossoming and the development of the nation and even the whole world". Further to the advocacy actions on early marriage and its drawbacks on schooling and reproductive health three parents cancelled the marriage of their 3 girls in Menaka. In Gao the gynaecologist which gave the

conference said that more girls and women are coming to seek guidance and agree to be consulted since then.

1) Prize Distribution to the most deserving girls in Gao with a view to encouraging them to keep it up but also to boost the least brilliant.

In the Gao region 8,149 people participated in the Biggest Lesson among them local authorities (religious, administrative and political). 2,545 people participated in 20 schools in Bamako itself and Touréla i.e. a total of 10,694 participants in Mali.

In Niger, activities were carried out by Réseau des ONG du Secteur Educatif au Niger (ROSEN).

A ceremony called the 15 Big Steps of the President of the Republic took place on Friday 11 April at General Seyni Kountché Stadium in Niamey. The ceremony was scheduled to start at 5 pm. A huge crowd sat patiently at the stadium to wait for the President. By 3:30 pm, the stadium was already animated by musical groups such as Mali Yaro, the Rap Group of Kay Gaskiya and Hamsou Garba, all of them national celebrities.



15 Big Steps of the President of the Republic

The stadium vibrated with music which mostly conveyed messages on girls' education, the theme of the year's GWA. At 4:30 pm, the Prime Minister, the Vice-President of the National Assembly, the Minister of Education, ambassadors, representatives of national and international organisations, members of Parliament and other distinguished guests arrived amid the music. Then, at 5 pm, the President of the Republic arrived and the entire stadium stood in unison. Immediately, a group of 15 pupils – girls and boys – sang the national Anthem "La Nigérienne". This was accompanied by a huge chorus of 15,000 voices coming from the stadium – men, women and children who had come to honour this memorable event and to give support to ROSEN's advocacy work on EFA and in particular girls' education in Niger. The end of the national Anthem was marked by a great applause which indicated the official start of the Ceremony "15 Big Steps of the President of the Republic". Two official speeches were read, first by

the EFA Coordinator from the Ministry of Education and then by the President of ROSEN. In his speech, the EFA Coordinator reminded the public of the Dakar Forum and explained the concept of EFA. He also warned about the challenges facing a developing nation such as Niger in the attainment of the Dakar objectives. The President of ROSEN expressed the joy and pride that the people of Niger felt by having their leaders so close to them on a day such as this one, to celebrate together Dakar + 3 and the achievements that the Government of Niger has made since then in promoting EFA. He then proceeded to explain the meaning of the '15 Big Steps' which he said symbolise in part the period between the Dakar Forum to the Millennium date of 2015 and in part the synergy between actions undertaken in-country through the President's Special Programme (a recent initiative by the President himself) and the Dakar objectives. He concluded his speech by thanking sincerely the President of the Republic for strengthening his country's commitment made in Dakar in 2000. Then came the most expected moment. The President of the Republic came down from the official platform accompanied by the President of ROSEN to inspect the banner which contained the key steps from 2000 to 2015.

The President then took the 15 steps, each step corresponding to a year and a major achievement. By taking the 15 steps the President had publicly reaffirmed the commitment made by his country in 2000 in Dakar. Impressed by this initiative, he asked the President of ROSEN to present his team, then congratulated them individually.

This was the most important moment in the history of Education in Niger, a moment that will remain engraved in the hearts of many for years to come.

2) The popular cross-country race for girls and boys to make the world aware of the fact that the gender parity also guarantees the success of universal schooling.

3) The cultural evening to end in some cases the EFA Week-related events.

The Word Biggest Lesson took place in an atmosphere dominated by the music produced on the occasion of the celebration of the EFA Week by the Niger Rap Group Kay Dan Gaskiya on Wednesday 9 April in the Niamey Seyni Kountché General Stadium.

As early as 8 am, groups of pupils headed for the stadium as well as twenty 100-seat coaches going to and fro carrying pupils under the admiring eyes of the organizers frustrated by the postponing of the ceremony

initially scheduled at the Niamey Conference Hall for technical reasons beyond their will.

At 09:00 officials were sitting and attendance by the President of the High Council of Communication, the Coordinator of the Oxfam/GB Sub regional Education Programme, the Niger Coordinator for EFA, the Director of the UNESCO National Committee, representatives of many Niger and international NGOs and Directors of Ministries in charge of Education who came for this occasion to attend the lesson in front of the world in Niger could be noted. Journalists from national newspapers also attended this historic event to immortalise it. At 0925 pupils and participants started to sing the national anthem “La Nigérienne” to show their strong desire to elicit a particular interest in girls’ schooling, this year’s theme.

At 09:30 the President of the Children’s Parliament took the floor with a slight delay in front of about 2,500 people to teach the World’s Biggest Lesson, in a mocked class, in front of a group of pupils active and receptive answering whole-heartedly the questions put by the person facilitating the lesson. The Big Lesson has certainly been modest but enabled to convey to participants a hope and above all a vision and a new dimension of education. This lesson will have to be translated into an unflinching will of the Government of

Niger through a firm commitment to any action relating to quality education for all in particular girls’ schooling. Isn’t this a memorable lesson? Overall 72,492 people took part in the Biggest Lesson in Niger.

Senegal

In Senegal, ANCEFA facilitated the setting up of Senegal’s “Coalition Nationale EPT (CNEPT). CNEPT was allocated a financial support by Oxfam/GB to carry out activities for the week of action.

Public conferences – Symposium – Panels – Round Table conference were mainly organized by the National Coalition on 8 and 12 April 2003 respectively at the Doua Seck Culture House on the themes “Civil society role in literacy and girls’ education” by NGOs, “Background lessons” by retired teachers and groups of affiliated trade unions on the theme “Pedagogic approaches for girls’ success at school”. Attendance by retired teachers, the Collective of NGOs operating in the field of education, parents and representatives of the education community as a whole was noted.

On 6 April a press conference was organized to provide journalists with information on the campaign’s objectives and the obstacles hindering girls’

education. The Director of BRENDA, the Director of Planning and Reform of the Ministry of Education, the UNICEF Resident Representative, representatives of FAWE, GMC and GCE took the floor. They provided in turn an explanation of the background as well as the objectives and the obstacles as regards EFA. There was also a significant focus on the theme of the Week.

They answered afterwards the questions of the 15 journalists representing the various local newspapers.

A comprehensive documentation was given to them by ANCEFA about the Global Education Campaign. After the press conference a significant number of articles faithfully conveying the objectives and explaining the process was published.

Radio and TV Spot and reports on girls education. The optimum use of interfaces such as radio and TV stations has always been a concern for the committee. Therefore a large campaign through the broadcasting of spots, interviews on girls’ schooling and reports on role model women, on good practices and a first appraisal of the enrolment campaign have been carried out. This media campaign was made on 3 FM radio stations with a large audience (RTS, Sud FM and Walf FM) during the whole week including the interior of the country with a daily focus on girls’ education (for 11 days). A

45-second TV spot was produced and broadcast by the National Television to support the advocacy activities for the Global Education Campaign.

A communication strategy based on picture likely to strengthen communication centered on the problems of girls' access to and retention in schools. To that end, a 45-second TV spot focusing on the theme "Nation, Education, Development" was produced and broadcast in six national languages during the whole week by the National Television.

Children's Press Conference at the Economic and Social Council (Dakar). By giving the floor to the main actors concerned by the Week of Action, the children wanted to remind them of the difficulties they come up against to have access to and to stay in schools. The children could make their voice heard through the testimony of four girls. Amy Thiam, Bobo Fall, Khady Seydi and Fatoumata Konta agreed to tell the journalists the ordeals they passed through – death of parents, lack of means, early marriage- under the wing of their two godmothers Coumba Gawlo Seck and Suzanne Camara (both of them singers) and Mr Guèye, Director of Planning and Reform and representative of the Senegalese Education Ministry.

Career Day with the Children. Organized by FAWE-Senegal, CNEPSCOFI in partnership with UNICEF and UNESCO, these days were aimed at providing girls with arguments to succeed in school. From 12 April to 31 July, students from 28 high schools in 11 regions of Senegal have been given information in a vibrant and practical manner by role model women who came specifically to give a testimony and share their experience. Afterwards the same students will serve as god mothers to their younger sisters in elementary schools to help them stay in school by giving them guidance. In this connection a multiplex broadcast has been produced with 10 regional radio stations of the Sud FM and RTS networks to emphasize the Career Days and the Campaign for Enrolment to the Initiation Course (on 12 April 2003).

The main activity of the week was the World Biggest Lesson in Senegal, Senegal having been chosen as a flagship country in Africa to break the record. Significant efforts have been made to teach the Biggest Lesson in Dakar. The Lesson taught in the Ndiarème B School and presided over by the Minister in charge of Pre-school Education alone brought together over one thousand pupils from the formal and informal sectors. At 1400 GMT sharp they were all present to answer in their

way the teacher's questions. Attendance by representatives of Civil Society Organisations, NGOs, financial partners could be noted. Senegal's Parliament was represented by a Deputy, Vice-Chairman of the Members of Parliament's Forum for Education. The Mayor of the City as well as the Department Inspector also took the floor after the welcoming speech made by the Director of the School which hosted the event.



The big lesson

The Lesson was also taught at the same time in most of the schools in Senegal. Indeed with the hope that Senegal will alone break the world record (28,801 learners) the Organizing Committee, in conjunction with the decentralised structures of the Ministry of Education and NGOs representatives in the field, made its utmost to instruct schools to teach the lesson in all CM1 and CM2 forms in the whole country (about 8,200). Delegations visited all the provinces in Senegal to distribute the pattern of the Lesson and validation forms. In the light of the validation forms returned, the number

of participants in Senegal was 325,000.

The World Biggest Lesson initiated by the Global Education Campaign was aimed at breaking the record which is currently **28,801** people and winning a place in Guinness Records. Its main objectives were:

- to sensitise to the current number of people deprived of any possibility of school attendance;
- to sensitise to the fact that education is a universal right, and to emphasize its importance to girls and boys;
- to explain the specific difficulties which girls come up against to benefit from quality education.

As we already realized, thanks to the Oxfam/GB Regional Programme, six countries of the sub-region could participate in this initiative which contributes to increase the focus on the right to education. Even better, all the six above mentioned countries alone broke the world record, which proves their interest in education. Overall, apart from the success of the week's other activities which benefited from significant media coverage, the program enabled the participation of at least 482,380 people in the region. However, in the light of the enthusiasm shown and the positive results, the

program should go beyond the weeks of action to allow national partners to put in place effective follow up mechanisms to monitor their actions during the whole year. In our opinion, this is the only way of guaranteeing sustainable results.



A few minutes before the big lesson



ANCEFA/FAWE/OXFAM GB award for Girl's education