ACCELERE!2
Accès Lecture Rétention Redevabilité
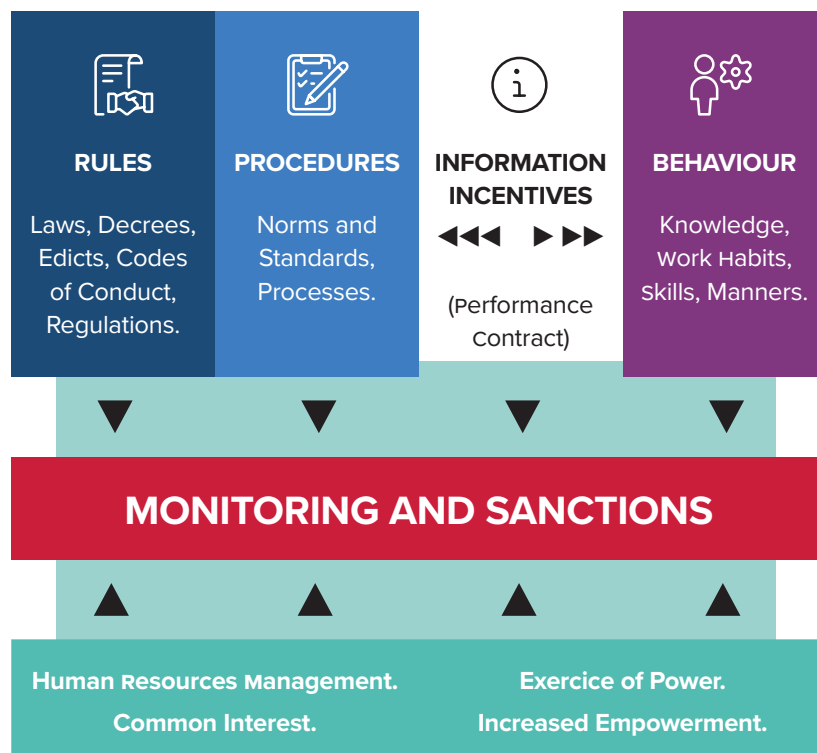Programme d'appui à la réforme du secteur de l'education en RDC

INFORMATION BRIEF

Why Governance Still Matters

Whilst governance is a widely used term, the concept can seem vague. For Accelere!2 (A!2), it has been worthwhile to challenge our understanding and ask whether governance still matters. This Information Brief defines and explores concepts that underpin effective governance, describes examples of Accelere!2's work that exemplify the application of these concepts, and summarises what we have learnt through their implementation.

The definition and approach used by Accerele!2 comes from the UNDP, which states:

"Governance can be defined as the set of rules, procedures and behaviours through which interests are articulated, resources managed, power exercised, and rulers held accountable".

This definition is useful because it highlights three areas or pillars of governance that need to be addressed when implementing reforms and strengthening systems: the legal framework; procedures and behaviours/ organisational culture.

RULES	PROCEDURES	INFORMATION INCENTIVES ◄◄◄ ►►►	BEHAVIOUR
Laws, Decrees, Edicts, Codes of Conduct, Regulations.	Norms and Standards, Processes.	(Performance Contract)	Knowledge, Work Habits, skills, Manners.

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MONITORING AND SANCTIONS

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Human Resources Management.

Common Interest.

Exercice of Power.

Increased Empowerment.

Building capacity

1. First pillar: Legal framework

The legal framework includes areas such as laws, policies, codes of conduct, and rules. Whilst completeness and coherence are the objective, it is essential to ensure the legal framework addresses equity, equality, and social justice through the integration of participation, accountability, rule of law and transparency mechanisms. The legal framework must be the basis on which the voices of the excluded and the marginalised can be heard, to exercise their rights backed by the law. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where compliance with the law is very important, this is a key entry point.

2. Second pillar: Procedures

Procedures are the operational dimension of the legal framework. A law or a decree lacks value if it is not being implemented and enforced. For example, in DRC government officials often do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There are no clearly defined job descriptions and there are often overlapping roles and responsibilities across departments and Ministries. Given this gap, a key task is to translate the legal framework into the norms, standards, and procedures that create the operational framework actors need to effectively carry out their role.

3. Third pillar: Behaviours/organisational culture

Implementing reform or strengthening systems at local, provincial, or national level, is dependent on how people behave, act and interact among themselves, both formally and informally. Once a framework based on transparency, accountability, participation, and proximity is in place, it needs to be widely shared and explained, and actors need to be trained, so that they know and can apply the rules, sanctions, responsibilities, and objectives. In this way, when actors understand fully what their role is, they become accountable.

Addressing governance at every level: Accelere!2's approach in practice

Central level: Improving budget elaboration and disbursement to increase transparency, participation and accountability for its use.

1. Procedures	2. Behaviours	3. Legal
Updating the budget development process and steps to review spending.	Involving civil society and churches in budget development and monitoring. Providing them with information to challenge budget use by the Ministry of Education (MoE).	Decree on Annual Performance Review to make sure all actors would be held accountable.

"Checking the Government's action plan against the available budget allows me to see if the Government really included its objectives and main activities in its plan and if it is realistic."

Daniel Matanda, Lualaba Provincial Assembly Deputy

Provincial level: Strengthening provincial authorities' capacity in managing the education sector

1. Legal	2. Procedures	3. Behaviours
Develop provincial education strategies based on the national strategy.	Establish provincial committees to make sure they develop annual action plans based on the strategy, and review progress annually.	Led to non-state actors (civil society, Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs)) being involved in education management and holding provincial authorities to account.

"In the past we used to play it by ear: it's the start of day of the school year, I would go to schools with some ideas to manage them, but in what way? For which period? I quickly understood that I needed to have a document, a foundation that allows me to assess how things are evolving in my jurisdiction. That was not possible before, but now I have an action plan that allows me to state what I envision for development, for education, for governance in schools, and I have a map of the activities I have to carry out within my jurisdiction."

Germain Bampale, Principal Adviser of the Provincial Minister of Education of Kasai Central and former Sous-PROVED

District level: Supporting administrative offices in managing the education sector for increased efficiency

1. Behaviours	2. Procedures	3. Legal
Analysis of how procedures are being implemented at local level ad how existing behaviours impact them.	Develop norms and standards for administrative offices + a self-assessment tool. Develop job descriptions so that staff know what their role is.	Attempt to modify the organic framework of the administrative offices. Decree to regulate administrative offices creation.

"The job descriptions training was like a compass to me: it allowed me to develop a quarterly evaluation grid for all our staff. I gathered all the COSPRO leads and the counsellors (heads of the Counseilleries) to analyse the job descriptions together. Since then, many BG staff recognise that they are better aware of the responsibilities linked to their position."

Provincial Coordinator for the Catholic network, Mbandaka, Equateur

Local level: Improving governance around school fees

1. Behaviours	2. Procedures	3. Legal
Strengthen local actors' understanding of school fees so that they are willing and have capacity to hold the state accountable.	When free education was announced, work on processes to take it to scale and make it sustainable (budgeting, planning).	Free Education Policy. Free Education Law.

"The Governor's new decree on school fees was not disseminated to our school last year and was not followed. We learnt through A!2's communication campaign that school fees have been drastically reduced and we attended a TEP where we learnt more about our role as a COPA. This motivated us to negotiate with the school management to reduce fees. Against their unwillingness, we finally notified the provincial Minister who took action."

Jeannette Dongo, COPA in Sud Ubangi.

"The radio programmes I listened to on local radios like RTDK or Fraternité and the TEPs allowed me to better understand the role of parents at school level, who shouldn't wait for the Government's action to fight wrongdoings. Our parent associations should be more independent and able to discuss the school principals' decisions."

Gilbert Mpoyo Kabala, Parent, Kasai Oriental

Key Findings

Reform never starts from scratch. Therefore, changes must be led within already existing frameworks (formal or informal) and address habits, behaviours which reflect the existing system. So, governance and accountability reform are also about deconstructing frameworks already in place (even informally) as well as changing mentalities, references, habits, and behaviours. This is why developing a new governance model takes time and requires long term support. This is also why governance is as much about change management as it is about rules and procedures.

Governance is not an objective in itself. The interest of governance is to remind us of the importance of focusing on people and especially the poorest ones, those who cannot be heard, to empower them, and to strengthen their capacity to hold leaders accountable.

The key is to support our partners in unlocking opportunities. Unlocking opportunities or creating change rely on a strong technical background, and it is those in the system best placed to develop and apply new approaches. Therefore, technical support to bring actors together, facilitate dialogue, present evidence, and enable reflection on the three pillars is central to delivering sustainable change.

Without governance, the law of the jungle prevails and only the strongest survive. The voices of the marginalised are not heard. The neediest in society suffer most, and services cannot deliver.

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