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RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPERATING METHODS AND REASONS FOR FUNDING SHORTFALLS IN THE DECENTRALIZED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES OF SCHOOLS AND THE MUNICIPAL FEDERATION OF SAID COMMITTEES IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DROUM (NIGER)

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Abstract

The current research is about the financing of school participatory structures, particularly FC / CGDES and CGDES in the commune of Droum, Niger Republic. It essentially aims at determining the explanatory factors of financial gap of these structures that are partnership frameworks between the State, development partners, schools, families and community. To do this, both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected across the questionnaire, the snowball technique, the direct observation. Our analyzes showed the existence of factors which created a financial lack directly hindering the achievement of activities of these structures within schools. Added to this, are internal and external parameters including the reluctance of parents linked to their bad connotation of school of "white", local actors' strategies of co-optation, etc. The whole of these factors determined the low mobilization of funds for the financing of these structures in Droum.

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Introduction:-

Man is a social and rational being endowed with knowledge of how to live, know-how, and interpersonal skills that he passes down from generation to generation through education. The latter, according to Ferréol (2010), encompasses all social activities aimed at transmitting to individuals the collective heritage of the society in which they are integrated.

In Niger, the family constitutes the primary basic unit of the educational system, within which the child receives their first socialization. In addition to the family, there are the Quranic school and the modern school. Considering the socio-political and economic contexts of the country, numerous reforms have been undertaken to improve the performance of schools. Among these reforms, one can mention, among others: television education from independence in 1971, teaching in traditional languages in experimental schools, etc. (UNESCO, 1987). Despite all these reforms, educational performance across schools did not meet the government's expectations. Thus, during the national sovereign conference, it was emphasized: 'Our system is at an impasse, Nigerien schools are in crisis.' (MEN, 1992) and the General States of Education were considered as the ultimate solution to this crisis, attempting to make

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schools democratic and popular. Thus, being less satisfied with all the reforms implemented, it was necessary to adopt law no. 98-12 of June 1, 1998, concerning the orientation of the Nigerien educational system, in 1998, six (6) years after the holding of the General States, to see Niger equip itself with a legal and institutional framework that organizes its educational system (MEN, 2010). Arising from the reforms generated under this law was the establishment of participatory school structures FC/CGDES and CGDES respectively at the level of each commune and each school in the country.

This research focuses on those of the commune of Droum, one of the seven (07) communes in the Mirriah department in the Zinder region. The FC/CGDES covers all the CGDES of primary and secondary school institutions. That is why, during this research, the analysis focused on the functioning of its structures in order to understand the parameters and motives for the deficit of their fund. In view of all of the above, this work is structured around two points, namely the methodology and the results obtained and their discussions.

Methodology:-

The research was of a mixed nature but predominantly qualitative because it focused more on qualitative analysis to show the financing deficit of the CGDES and its impacts on its actions at the level of the Droum commune. Thus, documentary analysis, observation, interviews, and survey questionnaires were used as techniques to collect data. In terms of sampling, for the target group, the research addressed members of the FC/CGDES, the CGDES, and actors of the Droum commune.

Indeed, the target population of this research is composed of:

- The sub-population of members of the Communal Federation of CGDES of the Droum commune, numbering fourteen (14) people;
- The sub-population of twenty (20) CGDES of educational institutions, each consisting of seven (07) members;
- The sub-population of parents of students with children attending school.

Thus, taking into account the time factor, the availability of financial resources, as well as the desire to collect reliable data, collective interviews were first conducted for the members of the FC and each CGDES, and then individual interviews were held with all the SGs of the FC and the CGDES to complete the information. Nevertheless, a number of resource persons were interviewed.

These are the following individuals:

- The National Coordinator of the National Coordination of the Communal Federation of CGDES and the CGDES of Niger: to collect information on the financing and monitoring/support of the operation of the FC/CGDES and the CGDES at the national level;
- The former SG who served for a long time within the FC; The departmental focal point to collect information on the monitoring/support of the FC/CGDES and the CGDES at the departmental level;
- The mayor of the commune of Droum: to gather information on the issue of education at the commune level and on the tutoring of the FC/CGDES;
- The traditional chief of the canton of Droum in order to obtain information on the origin of the creation of Droum and his participation in the functioning of participatory school structures;
- The sector educational advisor of Droum to inquire about information concerning him regarding the support of the FC/CGDES in its activities.

For the sample of this research, it should be noted that in social science research, in the impossibility of surveying a large parent population, the researcher must use a sampling technique. In view of the nature of this research, the technique used was probabilistic, with the use of cluster sampling allowing the questionnaire to be administered to parents of students who have children enrolled in the school, and who are not members of CGDES of the The village school. Nevertheless, purposive sampling was also used, as the present research is limited to a sample of CGDES from schools chosen according to a number of criteria such as the school's enrollment, its location relative to the municipal center, its seniority, and the support of partners. Thus, clearly, the population surveyed in the research is composed of 200 parents, representing a little more than 20% of their total number (877) in the population. The survey was conducted from February 1 to March 24, 2017.

Overview of the Commune of Droum:-

The Commune of Droum is one of the seven (07) communes in the department of Mirriah in the Zinder region. Like all other communes, it was officially established by law 2002-014 of June 11, 2002. Its administrative center is the village of Droum, which is located about 45 kilometers (km) west of Mirriah, 35 km southwest of the city of Zinder, and approximately 1000 kilometers (km) east of the capital (Niamey). It is bordered to the east by the fifth (5th) communal district of the city of Zinder; to the south by the rural commune of Dogo; to the west by the rural communes of Doungou and Ichirnawa (department of Kantché); and to the north by the fourth (4th) communal district of the city of Zinder and the rural commune of Tirmini (department of Takeita) (Ibrahim, 2016).

The commune comprises 74 administrative villages. It is also equipped with a municipal council composed of 15 local councilors. It covers an area of 880 km² for a population of 94,782 inhabitants, or a density of 107.70 inhabitants/km² in 2012. This is one of the highest in Niger (PDC, Droum 2013).



Figure 2: the position of the Commune of Droum/region of Zinder/department of Mirriah.

Source: 2010 PDC of the Commune of Droum

Results and Discussion:-

In this section, the focus was on analyzing the functioning of community school participatory structures (the FC/CGDES and the CGDES) as well as the internal and external drivers of their funding shortfall.

Functioning:-

From a functioning perspective, the analysis revealed that these participatory structures operate according to Decree No. 000168/MEN/SG/DGEB of October 24, 2008, amended and supplemented by Decree No. 000040/MEN/A/PLN/SG of February 22, 2012, and Decree No. 000192/MEBA/SG of November 15, 2006, amended and supplemented by Decree No. 000039/MEN/A/PLN/SG of February 22, 2012, which established them. In this regard, three (03) General Assemblies conclude the school year.

This concerns the General Assembly (GA) dedicated to preparing for the school year and developing the school's action plan, the mid-year GA, and finally the annual review GA to evaluate the activities carried out. Thus, it is during the first GA that the CGDES schedules all activities (both priority and secondary) to be carried out during the year. Furthermore, the analysis of action plans developed by the CGDES of different schools allows two (2) main categories of activities to emerge. The first category includes activities that can be considered usual for each CGDES. They fall within the areas of material environment (building of thatched classrooms, purchase and maintenance of school supplies, etc.) and operations (monthly holding of GAs, participation of CGDES in the three (3) annual GAs of the FCC, etc.). The second category of activities is not usual. They depend on the locality and the needs of the schools. They themselves related to areas of school time, the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, Table 7 below provides some information on this second category of activities.

Table 1: Distribution of Unusual Activities Performed by CGDES

A. Second Category of Unusual Activities Performed									
Type/No.	Nber of Schools	M/caped	Rat	Follow-up/Ass	Clot	Ach	Rec	Sen	Tutoring
School with cafeteria	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
School without cafeteria	15	14	9	2	2	5	7	3	7
Ecole subventionnée	3	3	2	2	0	3	0	1	0
Total	20	18	12	4	2	9	8	5	8

Source: Field data, February-March, 2017 58 NB: Rat: catch-up; Clot: fencing; Sen: awareness; Ach: purchase; Rec: recruitment

In this table, it is noticeable that some activities predominate over others, varying according to the type of schools in the research sample. By examining the results of these activities, it was understood that awareness-raising was one of the essential points of the action plans of any institution, since it participated on the one hand in improving access and equity between the sexes and on the other hand in encouraging actors to participate in management. However, according to the table, only five (05) schools, or 25% of all categories combined, had scheduled this activity and where barely 15% carried it out. Parents, under- or poorly informed about the functioning of the school, developed prejudices to condemn the CGDES members of their school. Thus, 24% of the respondents said that they had not been made aware of the situation by the members of the committee.

The latter, due primarily to a lack of resources, especially financial, unavailability, and negligence, do not convey information to raise awareness among stakeholders as they should. In some villages, stakeholders take the principal's message more seriously, and he does not live in the village where the school is located in most of the CGDES visited, while the appropriate time to convey information or raise awareness among stakeholders is in the evenings. This situation led to low participation from stakeholders and discredited the principal, who, in their eyes, deliberately refused to integrate into their village. Regarding remedial classes, a total of twelve (12) schools out of twenty (20), or 60% of the sample, organized them. The fear of delays due to disruptions (strikes, fire, and rain) represents the reason for conducting this activity.

The teacher also practiced it with the aim of completing the program on time and giving students enough time for reviews in preparation for end-of-year assessments. As for tutoring, it is almost a common activity at schools without cafeterias and without subsidies. Indeed, out of fifteen (15) schools, seven (07), that is 47%, practiced it, unlike other categories of schools where only one (01) out of five (05) was concerned. This is due to the fact that at the level of the first 59 school categories, there are more students without a tutor who would be paid, as in the case of subsidized schools. However, it should be noted that the activities planned by the CGGES, which ranged in amount from 50,000F to 500,000F, were not all carried out due to lack of funds. Thus, apart from the influence of partner support and the free nature of schooling, this deficit was explained by two main motives classified in terms of internal motives related to the functioning of these structures and external motives coming from other authors at the level of Droum.

From Functioning to Internal Drivers of Funding Deficit:-

The internal drivers of the funding deficit with respect to the financing of CGDES can be grouped into four (04) main points, namely: the illiteracy of members, the low involvement of members, the lack of transparency in management, and the lack of initiatives and strategies in fund mobilization.

Illiteracy of Members:-

Within the framework of this research, the functional analysis of CGDES revealed that 75% of their members were elected during a General Assembly. The appointment of members only represents 25%. This election and appointment of members were not random. The stakeholders deemed the members to be capable of playing a major role in management, functioning, and fund mobilization. However, it turned out that the majority of them were illiterate. Which makes accomplishing their mission very difficult. Indeed, 70% of members do not have the approach methods necessary to properly convey the message.

Also, due to poor memory, they rarely reported the decisions made during General Assemblies or meetings and found it difficult to explain them to other stakeholders. Not having received any training apart from the CGDES members currently in partnership with the PAQUE project, 80% of the members did not take notes during General Assemblies or training sessions held by the Secretary General and also did not keep notebooks or registers for accounting or managing food stock in schools with cafeterias. At the level of the latter, this still causes unrest when actors were asked to pay their contributions. They accused CGDES members of embezzlement. Consequently, this situation affects not only the financial contribution but also the physical and material contribution of the actors in carrying out the missions of the CGDES. The actors, 40% of them were not satisfied with the management of the schools. 65% of the members did not properly manage the archives. That said, the next point addresses the issue of the low involvement of CGDES members and parents.

Low Member Involvement:-

Alongside member illiteracy, the low involvement of members led to their limited financial participation in carrying out activities within the CGDES. Indeed, within the committee, it was only the Secretary-General, specifically the school principal, who largely carried out the tasks. Due to the lack of dynamism of the other members, the principal is obliged to organize the general meetings alone while relying only on the contributions paid by parents to execute the activities.

Although he is better positioned to make the request to mobilize funds, he cannot single-handedly carry out the awareness mission without the assistance of the other committee members. Nevertheless, 45% of committees had presidents and treasurers who fully participated in the management of the school alongside the principal. The contributions of the other members were much more material and physical. These members often explained their low involvement by the fact that they are marginalized and their proposals and opinions are not taken into account in the decisions made. Thus, this resonates with the idea of Dodo and Lugaz (2011), explaining that “the management committee offices are not always representative of the community's composition. Social strata that are not representative or are marginalized did not participate in the development of the school. Thus, they did not attend meetings or give their opinion even when present.” On the other hand, eight (8) directors explained that these members were looking for an excuse to justify their under-participation.

Most of the actors even insisted on the fact that some members were not active in management. That is why it very often happened that the directors found themselves obliged to finance the 61 activities themselves by mobilizing funds from willing teachers in their school to carry out tasks requiring lower costs. The dynamism and active participation of members were only observed in schools supported by partners and in schools with canteens. It is within this context that members hope to earn or receive bonuses from training or try to become the director's accomplice to share or divert the food stock. Thus, some actors, witnesses, and aware of this state of affairs, decided not to pay their contribution, and others hesitated to settle it. This seems quite normal and reasonable in the eyes of the actors who are underrepresented or not represented at all, to refuse on the one hand to contribute and get involved in the school's development activities, and on the other hand, to influence other actors to join them, leaving it at the mercy of the director and the village chief. Thus, as the present research discusses the management of committees, it is important to have a clear understanding of what is happening regarding the issue of transparency.

Lack of transparency:-

The lack of transparency among members constituted another factor leading to the funding deficit for CGDES. At this level, the analysis focused more on CGDES that have partners. Being appointed or elected, CGDES members must regularly hold general assemblies in order to review the management of the school. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Thus, at the level of the CGDES with partners, indeed, 40% of surveyed parents of students accused the members of not being transparent in their management. They are dissatisfied, on the one hand, with the way the fund

intended for the additional action plan for the CGDES is managed, as they requested a continuous report during the general assemblies, which in many cases does not happen.

On the other hand, parents criticized the management of food stocks in schools with canteens. They suspected the committee members, particularly the school principal, of being complicity with certain people to divert or use the food for their own benefit instead of making it sufficiently available to the school. This behavior leads other parents to withdraw from everything related to the operation of the CGDES. Overall, at the level of all the villages, although 62 percent of respondents who cited reasons of lack of transparency is not high as it is only 13%, it nevertheless contributed to the fund deficit for carrying out the activities of the CGDES concerned. Thus, the next point is dedicated to the lack of initiatives and strategies in fundraising.

Lack of initiatives and strategies in fundraising:-

At the level of the Droum commune, the operational review of the various surveyed CGDES showed that the lack of initiatives and fundraising strategies is among the key factors in the funding deficit for activities within the committees. Very few committees had strong, innovative, and highly effective mechanisms in place to encourage stakeholders to financially support CGDES actions. In fact, for all the surveyed CGDES, only 10% had a good fundraising initiative. The committee solicited contributions in kind, which, as previously mentioned, consisted of inviting the parents of students to give a measured amount of cereals instead of contributing in cash at the end of each harvest. This promising initiative had enabled these CGDES to achieve a recovery rate between 80 and 90%, compared to the average of 65.5% for all CGDES in the municipality during the 2016-2017 academic year. The CGDES understood that it is very difficult for parents to contribute to the financing of the committee's activities in cash. That is why they proposed, for greater ease and possibility, that they bring a very negligible part of their harvest to be sold at the right time in order to execute activities. Moreover, other CGDES representing 15% of the sample, lacking this initiative, given their situation, focused more on the physical and material contribution of the population within the framework of building thatched classrooms. However, failing that, they requested the contribution of the village chief. In this case, the CGDES rarely relied on parents' contributions, with collection rates around 55 to 57%. Thus, faced with this situation, they turned to their peers to cover certain expenses and sought assistance from the hierarchical level 63 for the need for manuals or guides, or sometimes bought them in case of emergency.

However, by conducting an analysis on the research sample, it emerged that 75% of CGDES do not have appropriate initiatives and strategies for fundraising. They were content only with the contributions paid in cash by parents to carry out the activities. All of these establishments together achieved a collection rate of 61% in the 2016-2017 year. For the entire Commune over three (03) academic years (2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017), the amounts planned and mobilized were respectively 4,566,600f planned and 2,739,960f mobilized, i.e., 60%. In the 2015-2016 year the collection rate was 58%, that is, 4,708,760f planned of which 2,731,080f was mobilized. This not only delayed the start of classes on time but also created disagreements between the committee members or the school principal and the community. Thus, apart from internal motives, external motives also influence the functioning and financing of CGDES.

External Motives for Financing Deficit:-

This section, which represents the external reasons for the deficit of funds intended for financing school participatory structures, is structured around the following three (03) points: the interference of traditional chiefs and political actors in management, the negative connotation of the school by stakeholders, and the influence of various costs (direct, indirect, and opportunity) of the school.

Interference of Traditional Chiefs and Political Actors:-

In the Droum commune, the governing entities that interfered in school management were the administrative authority and the customary authority. At the head of these entities were respectively the mayor and the traditional chiefs with their representatives. The chiefs are more influential not only because of the ties they built with all ethnic layers but also due to the period they spent on the throne. They are 30% members of the committee and have more than 85% of representatives within the FC and the CGDES. Even though they played the role of mediator and provided land for the creation of schools, the chiefs interfered in the functioning of the FC/CGDES and the CGDES. They used their power to influence the decisions made within the structures to the detriment of consensus. However, it must be revealed that the political stakes and those of traditional power forced many chiefs to develop strategies to intervene in the functioning of certain institutions. Although it was also their duty to support all state policies at the

level of their entity, most actors interpreted their actions differently. Actors, rightly or wrongly, continued to develop prejudices to discredit the chiefs and/or to please them. Furthermore, at the level of the other CGDES as well, the village chiefs interfered in the management of the school.

This is the case here with a school whose action plan is funded by partners. Indeed, the village chief interfered through his family. The latter holds the key positions on the committee (the presidency and the treasury). The holders of these positions used their social status to influence the committee's decisions in their favor. Thus, with the aim of improving the students' level through the extra course, the president decided to teach this course to the students because he has a secondary level. Since this course was paid at 250f per hour, in collusion with the other members, he influenced the population to oppose the director teaching the course. This behavior disturbed some actors who benefited nothing from the management and demotivated them from further involvement in CGDES activities. It also affected the school's director's involvement in the management of the committee, as he felt unsupported. This showed that the first action plan developed by the CGDES is, in a way, a mere formality. The committee develops it to claim to receive additional action plan grants. Furthermore, in the same vein, Dodo and Lugaz (2011) in their research, raise the issue of interference by the chief in the management of a school. The director of the latter was transferred following a dispute with the canton chief in the context of setting up the FC office. They explain the director's statement as follows: "It was a question of setting up the office of the Communal Federation of COGES (FCC). The COGES Relay Observer (OR) from the department asked me to take him to the canton chief in order to inform him personally, even though I had already done so, about the holding of the elective general assembly of the members of the FC office.

After the departure of the latter, the chief called me to inform me that there was no question of holding elections in his canton and that, besides, he had a candidate who was to be appointed president. Despite attempts at explanation supported by texts, he refused to understand anything. When the chief of the canton's candidate lost the elections, he notified me not to contact him anymore for school-related matters and at the end of the year, he pressured the inspector and instructed that I be assigned outside his canton. Which was done.

Furthermore, regarding political interference in school management, this affected the assignments of teachers. The analysis of field data showed that this phenomenon affected only 25% of all the CGDES visited. Political actors interfered in the functioning of the institutions by assigning their militants to a given locality in order to preserve or promote an electorate. Some teachers, being on the same side as a politician, were soliciting a reward to assign them to areas not far from or less distant from the municipal headquarters. These assignments disrupted the functioning of the CGDES. Still regarding the interference of political actors in the functioning of schools, a member of a CGDES explained that he had fallen victim to it. Unlike the previous cases, for him this interference was to his disadvantage.

He expressed himself in these terms:

Because of a teacher, a lady related to an influential politician, I was assigned not even at the level of the same inspection, but on behalf of another. The problem is that the lady assigned to my school only showed up twice throughout the whole year. I reported it to my superiors by writing them a letter, but there was no follow-up. Thus, during a workshop, I mentioned the case, and it cost me the assignment to be at this level, leaving everything I had undertaken there. (Interview conducted on 02/25/2017 with members of CGDES/SG of the Medersa Droum school)

Negative connotation of school by the actors:-

Although the number of CGDES who mentioned this phenomenon in the analysis does not reach the average at 45%, they nevertheless assert that there are still parents who have a poor perception of school, and this can be justified for, among other reasons: First of all, the school is not adapted to the realities of the country in general and of the commune in particular; some actors, especially opinion leaders who are not informed, find the flaw to discredit it. This creates reluctance and low participation from the actors. The latter are influenced by this category of marabouts, opinion leaders, so that they do not send their children to school. They perceive that by being in school, these children would not have enough time to attend Quranic schools, which they consider mandatory before reaching maturity. Then, most parents, even if it is their children who are teaching, talk a lot about the issue of the drop in standards following the massive recruitment of contract teachers without any initial training. The event of the financial crisis also contributed to tarnishing the image of many teachers who were forced to take out loans from villagers because of their unpaid salaries. Finally, another phenomenon that also prevented the school from being accepted by everyone in the Droum commune is the situation of outputs. Indeed, the actors relied on the observation to show that since the creation of the school in the village, the number of their members who have succeeded is very

insignificant. They perceive that success at the school today is reduced to the teaching career. This means that, for many of them, it is better to go into business than to be a contract teacher. Nowadays, this phenomenon constituted a real obstacle to the involvement of stakeholders in the development of the school because they somewhat considered it a waste of time or only as a means allowing them to know how to read and write to keep up with the evolution of the world with all the new technologies.

Influence of education costs:-

This refers to parental expenses that negatively affect their financial participation in CGDES activities. Direct costs are not included. For this research, it is important to analyze the influence of these indirect costs on the funding of CGDES activities through Figure 2.

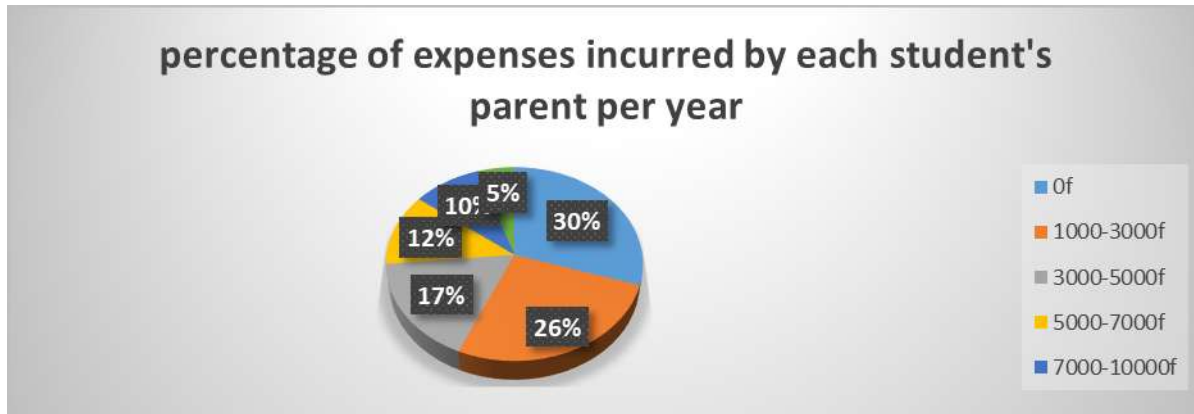


Figure 2: Distribution of the school's indirect cost

Source: Field data, February-March 2017.

These perpetual expenses made for children cause parents to be reluctant in response to the financial requests of the CGDES. After analyzing the financing deficit factors related to the CGDES, it is now necessary to also examine those of the FC.

Operation and Funding Deficit of the FC: Shared Responsibilities:-

Operation and Funding Deficit of the FC/CGDES:-

As mentioned above, the FC/CGDES operates according to the decree establishing it regarding the holding of AGs. It holds three (3) AGs each year in ordinary session at the convocation of its President. To this effect, the FC/CGDES, after having developed its action plan amounting to 250,000f to 500,000f, presents it to the administrative and customary authorities as well as to development partners. It also centralizes each year the action plans of all CGDES that are part of its entity. However, the analysis of the functioning of the FC/CGDES showed that it was not performing all its duties. Indeed, for the past five (05) years, it had carried out the awareness campaign only once.

Yet, a SG of a CGDES speaking about the importance of the latter said the following:

The awareness caravan led by the FC/CGDES in our village did us a lot of good. It allowed the population to become more involved in the functioning of the school, and it also encouraged them to enroll children in preschool education, which today makes it easier for us to admit students to the first year of primary school, unlike before. The visit from the FC/CGDES also motivated us to conduct mini CAPED sessions for capacity building of teachers, especially those newly hired without any initial training. You know, the village population is more motivated when they feel considered by seeing other members and not just those from the CGDES mobilizing them. (Interview conducted on 03/09/2017 with the members of CGDES/president of the Kogo school).

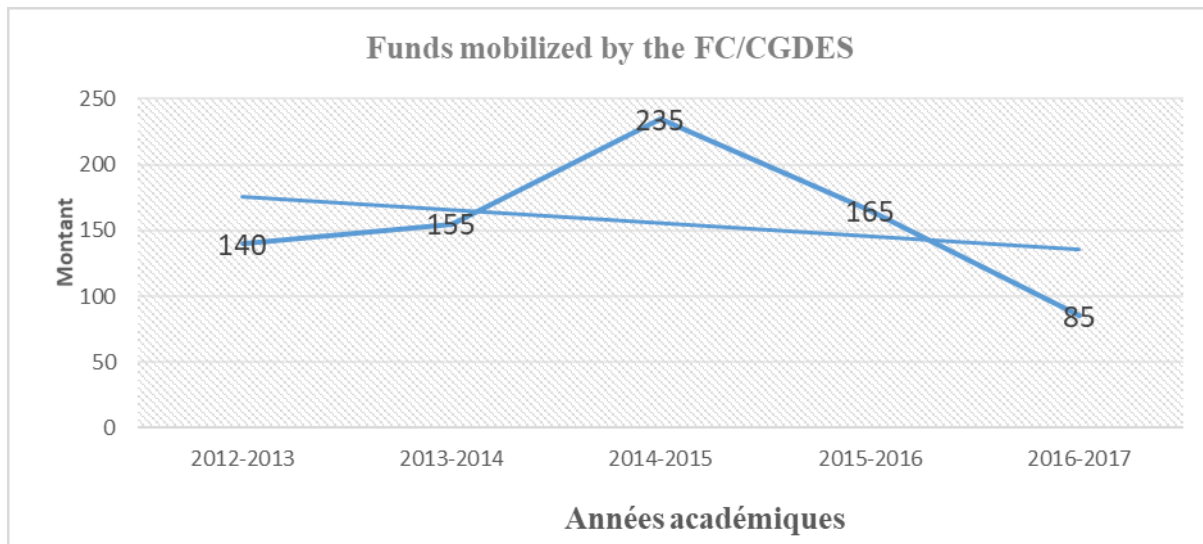
This proved the failure of the FC/CGDES in one of its responsibilities (see paragraph 4 of article 4 of the decree establishing it) over the past three years, as no awareness-raising activities were carried out during this period. Furthermore, even regarding the fulfillment of its responsibilities that appear essential according to paragraphs 1 and 3 of article 4 of the decree establishing it—respectively, the monitoring and coordination of CGDES actions, and the supervision and training of members of the CGDES offices in areas related to organizational and financial

management, communication, and advocacy—the FC/CGDES did not play its role. It did not provide any supervision to the CGDES.

On the contrary, it requested their integration fees (3000f for newly integrated CGDES members and 2000f for mandatory participation in the activities of the FC/CGDES). The fund she mobilized is intended solely for the organization of General Assemblies. Whereas in other municipalities, such as Dogo and Mirriah, their FC/CGDES put their modest contribution into improving study conditions, especially by addressing the problem of insufficient desks in the classrooms (Ibrahim, 2012) and the IEB report of Dogo (2014-2015). In addition, it should be noted that the FC/CGDES is responsible for conducting advocacy/lobbying campaigns with school partners. However, this responsibility has not been fulfilled to date. As a result, the municipality of Droum suffered the most from the lack of partners. This was part of the reasons for the PAQUE project intervention in the municipality very recently, an intervention guided by public authorities.

Yet, normally, it is the role of the communal federation to inform the State through hierarchical channels by submitting a request or verbally reminding the inspectors or the focal point of their situation of lack of partners. Which further proved another point of irregularity in the fulfillment of its missions. She was content with only a few contributions that were barely paid by the CGDES. This year, just like the CGDES, the FC/CGDES had not, up until the conduct of the survey in February and March, held its mid-term review general assembly, which, according to the regulations, was supposed to be held in February. The actors, at 85%, said that they were neither consulted nor informed about any actions. In view of the above, members aware of the situation of the deterioration of the FC's actions disengage from all their responsibilities as if they had nothing to do with the management. They consider the core of the problem to be the insufficiency of funds allocated for the execution of the developed action plan. What is important for the research is to analyze these funds through this chart 3.

Chart 3: the situation of funds mobilized by the FC/CGDES



Source: Field data, February-March, 2017

It appears from the chart the situation of funds mobilized by the FC/CGDES over five (05) consecutive school years, from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017. Indeed, it can be observed through this chart that the maximum level of mobilization reached was 235 thousand during the 2014-2015 school year. The dynamism in actions and the fundraising strategy demonstrated by the members of the FC/CGDES at the time, notably the president and the secretary general, justified the amount raised that year. The members, in addition to contributions from the CGDES and the municipality, conducted collections from individuals to carry out these activities. Thus, between the years 2012 to 2015, the chart shows a slight and a large variation in fund mobilization, respectively ranging from 140 thousand FCFA (2012-2013) to 155 thousand FCFA (2013-2014) and 235 thousand FCFA (2014-2015).

This amount mobilized had not even been sufficient to cover the expenses for holding regular AGs. As a result, they were unable to hold the second mid-term review AG, the AG that was supposed to be held in February. Overall, the observed trend curve shows a fundamental decline in the funding of actions carried out by the FC. In the face of this situation of the FC's fund deficit, responsibilities were shared at three levels (the members of the FC, the Commune, and the Public Authorities).

Shared Responsibilities:-**Members of the FC:-**

Just as at the level of the CGDES, within the FC, the responsibility of its members is engaged regarding the fund deficit for the execution of duties. The following reasons can prove this. Firstly, in analyzing the functioning of the FC as explained by the members, it emerged that they were unaware of the text. Apart from the SG who for a long time played almost alone the role of the other members in the outgoing office, the office recognized that one of the problems facing the FC is the lack of knowledge of the texts by most of its members. The irony for this office is that it has not yet sought the assistance of the departmental focal point to obtain the documents, if only the support tool. It turned out that mastering the latter would be an asset for rational and efficient management. Secondly, due to the lack of knowledge and mastery of the texts, the members have no initiatives or strategies for fundraising, except that in 2014, the former office, in accordance with article 15 of the order dealing with the financial issue as mentioned above, requested and received a contribution of fifty-five (55) thousand francs from the two national deputies, which was used solely for the organization of AGMs and meetings. Nevertheless, during the year 2017, the secretary in charge of information and relations with partners had drafted a request with the intention of presenting it to partners for potential funding. Apart from this advocacy, no strategy had been adopted by the members to mobilize funds. The members, 79% of whom had no training, had not conducted the handover process under normal conditions. Thirdly, 60% of the members do not participate in the office's activities. The unavailability of members was also noted due to their accumulation of functions, as in the case of the CGDES. However, the text (MEN) clearly specified in a nota bene within the roles and functions of the members and selection criteria that 'members of the office must demonstrate leadership and have the capacity to mobilize and manage a team. They must also inspire confidence and show commitment and availability.' Adherence to selection criteria constitutes one of the essential conditions for the proper functioning of the office. It is therefore difficult for members who have not fulfilled all these conditions to be able to effectively mobilize sufficient resources.

While the text emphasized the financial issue by mentioning that "the funding resources for activities constitute one of the priority axes of the FCs because the insufficiency of financial resources constitutes an obstacle to the implementation of their actions. To this end, it is necessary to establish a funding mechanism for activities that is functional, sustainable, and effective." This was not the case at the level of the Droum FC, where almost everything was centered at the level of the SG. The latter, overwhelmed, had difficulty properly coordinating the actions of the structure. Thus, after the role played by the members, it is important to understand that of the Commune.

Responsibility of the commune:-

The FC operates under the administrative supervision of the municipality (see Article 3 of the decree). In the era of decentralization, it is the municipality's responsibility to monitor the implementation of state educational policy within its jurisdiction, using the FC and CGDES as pillars on the ground. This is why, in its educational role, each municipality supports these structures in order to carry out their missions. However, according to field results, at the level of Droum, the municipality did not fully assume its function. Indeed, since the establishment of the FC, the municipality has only participated in funding to the extent of 60,000F per year due to 20,000F during each general assembly.

According to its authorities, it extends its contribution to equip schools with infrastructure. This was testified by the CGDES of a school, noting that the municipality began the construction of a semi-hard classroom in their school, which, until the field survey was conducted, had not been completed for three (03) years. In 2017, the FC only received five (05) thousand francs as a contribution from the municipality on the pretext that it had not been informed in advance. However, Figure 2 illustrates the effort made by the municipality with the support of partners. Both have built school latrines in a few schools in the municipality, eight of which are part of the sample of this research. These latrines fall within the framework of promoting hygiene and health within educational institutions.



Board 2: The school latrines built by the municipality and the partners Source: Camera 2017/03/08-06017 and 06018.jpg/field February-March 2017

This board showed us the achievements made by the municipal authority in the management of schools, particularly in the area of school hygiene. Over four (04) consecutive years, the town hall had built only two (02) latrines and had purchased a piece of land intended to host the construction of a latrine built by partners working on school hygiene. Despite the effort made by the municipal authority in purchasing the small space between the classrooms and the latrines for 80 thousand francs, as shown in the image on the right, it can be said that it had lagged significantly in this area. As a result, the latrines were insufficient for all the schools; only eight (08) out of twenty (20) schools visited had them, a rate of 40%. Also, for the first time, during the 2016-2017 year, it had provided travel expenses to the pedagogical advisor of the Droum sector for supervising teachers and conducting CAPED.

Public authorities:-

At the national level, a system for monitoring/supporting the activities of CGDES and FC/CGDES was established by decree No. 00031/MEP/A/PLN/EC/SG/DL of January 29, 2016. Regarding this research, the monitoring system is represented by the departmental focal point based at the primary education inspection of Mirriah and by the sectoral educational advisor of Droum from the primary education inspection of Dogo. Indeed, each of these supports, in their respective capacity, the FC/CGDES in its operation. Thus, the educational advisor wrote reports for his inspection on the activities of the FC. As for the departmental focal point, he represented the CGDES Coordination Unit at the departmental level (IEB Mirriah). He was responsible for accomplishing three (03) main missions overall: monitoring the activities of the FC and the CGDES, coordinating all activities related to the decentralized management of the school by harmonizing the interventions of partners, and preparing periodic and annual reports on the activities of the FC/CGDES and the CGDES of the department. He managed to carry out most of his tasks well before the revision of the text in recent years.

Members of the FC/CGDES and the CGDES of the commune stated that he fully played his role as a supervisor in the sense that he not only regularly attended general assemblies but also supported the structures in carrying out their activities. However, it should be noted that the lack of necessary resources, especially an efficient means of transportation (cross motorcycle) to travel across the entire department in time, greatly hindered the monitoring/support system. During the 2016-2017 year up until the conduct of the research, the State had not allocated resources intended for the fulfillment of the focal point's missions. Furthermore, it should be added that the withdrawal of subsidies to the FC by the State greatly hindered its operation and even its financing. Indeed, previously, the public authorities subsidized the FC's operations to the tune of 250 thousand francs. Thus, it was these subsidies and training allowances that led the actors to actively participate in the management of the school. They paid their dues and attended meetings and general assemblies in large numbers, hoping sooner or later to be integrated into the board and enjoy the same privileges as the other elected members. But the withdrawal of

subsidies by the State on the pretext that they were granted on an experimental basis led to a disengagement of some members regarding their missions to be accomplished for the FC. Which has considerably reduced the financial participation of the actors within the framework of decentralized school management at the municipal level.

Conclusion:-

Throughout this research on: "Financing Methods of Decentralized Management Committees of School Institutions (CGDES) and the Communal Federation of said Committees (FC/CGDES) in the commune of Droum in Niger," the issue of the funding deficit for the activities of these two structures was addressed. Indeed, the establishment of the FC/CGDES and the CGDES reflects the national and international commitments of the Nigerien government in favor of the education sector, notably achieving the goals of EFA 2015 and sustainable development in education, whose corollaries are, respectively, the universalization of primary education, equality and access for all to quality education, and finally the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities. It is in this perspective that a tight system of control and monitoring has been developed at the level of all administrative representations in the country. This work is carried out at the decentralized level by the FC/CGDES and the CGDES. At the level of the Commune of Droum, the establishment of these structures, which coincides with decentralization, creates a new method of multipartite partnership work. Thus, through this partnership, progress has been recorded in the educational field, particularly in the area of access, where the gross enrollment rate in CI and the school enrollment rate increased from 16% in 2006 to 52% in 2012 (IEB Report, 2011-2012).

However, irregularities are to be noted, particularly regarding quality, where the FC/CGDES and the CGDES do not have sufficient resources to make available to the schools. The main causes of this financial insufficiency since 2012 are attributable to the mode of operation of these structures. The latter had played a major role in their low mobilization capacity. Indeed, 70% of the committee members are illiterate. In such circumstances, it is difficult for them to grasp the extent of their role, especially since everything is governed by texts. In the same vein, the lack of initiative and method in fund mobilization among 61% of the CGDES constitutes an additional factor that prevents achieving the expected recovery rate. Furthermore, aside from the lack of transparency raised by 12% of respondents, one must also mention the interference of politicians and traditional leaders, not to mention the indirect costs of the school and the low involvement of the Commune, which affect the functioning and financing of the FC/CGDES and the CGDES. This keeps the latter mired in a funding deficit. Thus, all in all, it should be noted that the lack of funds allocated for carrying out the activities of the FC and the CGDES observed at the level of the Droum commune justifies the irregularity and ineffectiveness of decentralization at the local level. Public authorities are unable to provide communes with sufficient resources and to convince parents that the education of their children must be a major and daily concern.

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