

**Giulia Boni**

*Planning humanitarian projects  
with educational focus in Guinea rural areas  
— Analysis and Proposal for a change*

**Universidade Fernando Pessoa  
Porto, 2014**

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Trabalho apresentado à Universidade Fernando Pessoa como parte dos requisitos para obtenção do grau de Mestre em Acção Humanitária, Cooperação e Desenvolvimento

Planning humanitarian projects with educational focus in Guinea rural areas — analysis and proposal for a change.

## **Dedictory**

To Mahawa, Sana, Aboubacar, Fodecaba, Henri, Alhassane, Mariama and many others.

Thank you.

What you taught me is something impossible to find in books.

## RESUMO

Este projecto decorre de minha experiência direta: passei seis meses trabalhando com uma ONG em uma escola em uma área rural na República da Guiné. Além do entusiasmo e da paixão, esta experiência deixou-me uma pergunta: porque a maioria das crianças que frequentam a escola primária regularmente têm enormes lacunas de modo a ser muitas vezes praticamente analfabeto?

A maioria dos projetos que olhem para questões de educação em África para trazer as crianças para a escola ou para construir a própria escola, se não há. Este projeto concentra a atenção sobre o que acontece quando o aluno já está sentado no banco da escola.

O que se segue destina-se a ser um estudo completo, tanto quanto possível, e uma ferramenta necessária para futuras intervenções humanitárias, em qualquer nível neste campo — de uma única escola a uma campanha nacional. Uma compreensão completa e abrangente da intervenção no território e dos destinatários é crucial para os planos para um projeto humanitário eficaz, durável e sustentável.

Minha análise começa com um estudo geral sobre Guiné, indicando aspectos histórico-cultural, económico e político, juntando num último ponto minha interpretação.

Na segunda etapa faz-se uma análise mais concentrada da educação na Guiné, dos contornos que envolvem o seu âmbito territorial (países de língua francesa da África subsahariana) quando necessário, mas também tentando apontar uma distinção que muitas vezes não é detectada entre oportunidades sócio-educativas em áreas rurais e cidades. A partir de problemas objectivos indicados nos relatórios do UNESCO Institute for Statistics, integro minha experiência pessoal através da detecção de três problemas de base: regras Ministerial, professores, políticas de língua (focando na Guiné como um estudo de caso único e interessante).

Na terceira parte, sugerir possíveis estratégias para uma mudança palpável. Para fazer isso, uso minha experiência de dois novos estudos sobre a educação de que tomei conhecimento enquanto estudante em Erasmus em Bruxelas (Université Saint-Louis). Analisando os resultados que tive a possibilidade de encontrar nos alunos que seguiram um curso de alfabetização intensivo de recuperação, detectei que a memorização era a única estratégia de ensino até agora utilizada, com resultados devastadores a nível psicológico e educacional. Através do estudo da formação de especialistas tais como Xavier Roegiers, proponho como possível abordagem a Pedagogia da Integração destinadas a proporcionar à criança conhecimentos e a permitir-lhe de aplicar os seus conhecimentos, deixando de lado a técnica da memorização que, além de causar desconforto nos jovens com insucesso, não conferia nenhuma habilidade real para os que pareciam ter sucesso.

## ABSTRACT

This project stems from my direct experience: I spent six months as a volunteer in an NGO in a rural school in the Republic of Guinea. Apart from the enthusiasm and passion, this experience has left me with a question: how can we explain that the majority of children who attend regularly primary school often have huge gaps at the point of being virtually illiterate?

The majority of projects relating to the issue of education in Africa aim at bringing children to school, or plan to build these schools if they do not exist. This project focuses rather on what happens when the student is already sitting on the bench of the school.

This work intends to serve as a comprehensive study, as far as possible, and as a necessary tool for future humanitarian actions, regardless of their level of intervention — it may be targeted at a single school or at a national campaign. An complete understanding and a comprehensive knowledge of the territory and beneficiaries is essential to plan a sustainable, efficient and sustainable.

humanitarian project.

My analysis begins with a comprehensive study on Guinea, indicating historical and cultural, economic and political aspects, and adding final note on my own interpretation.

The second step consists into a more specific analysis on education in Guinea, its sphere of action and its influence at the territorial level (french-speaking countries of sub-Saharan Africa) when necessary. It also underlines a distinction that is not often detected: that between social and educational opportunities in rural areas and in cities. From the objective findings contained in the reports of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, I have added my personal experience by detecting three fundamental problems: the government rules, the teachers praxis, and language policy (focusing on Guinea as unique and interesting case study).

In the third part, I suggest possible strategies for a realistic change. To do this, I use my experience from two new studies on education that I learned on while is Erasmus in Brussels (Université Saint-Louis). I use them to analyze the results that I had the opportunity to collect on students who have followed intensive literacy classes, where I noticed that the memorization was the only strategy of education used up to now, with devastating effects at psychological and educational levels. Through the study of the materials of specialists such as Xavier Roegiers, I propose as one possible approach the Pedagogy of Integration, designed to provide the child knowledge and to enable her or him to apply this knowledge, leaving aside the memorization technique which, in addition to causing discomfort among youth in school failure, not provide any real skill for those who seem to have more success.

## RÉSUMÉ

Ce projet découle de mon expérience directe: j'ai passé six mois comme volontaire au sein d'une ONG dans une école en milieu rural dans la République de Guinée. En plus de l'enthousiasme et de la passion, cette expérience m'a laissé une interrogation : comment expliquer que la majorité des enfants qui fréquentent régulièrement l'école primaire ont d'énormes lacunes au point d'être souvent pratiquement analphabètes ?

La majorité des projets qui ont trait à des questions d'éducation en Afrique visent à amener les enfants à l'école ou à construire ces écoles, s'il n'y en a pas. Ce projet attire plutôt l'attention sur ce qui arrive quand l'élève est déjà assis sur le banc de l'école.

Ce travail est destiné à servir comme une étude complète autant que possible et un outil nécessaire pour les futures interventions humanitaires, quel que soit le niveau dans ce domaine, d'une école unique à une campagne nationale. Une compréhension complète et globale de l'intervention sur le territoire et sur les bénéficiaires est essentielle à une planification pour un projet humanitaire durable, efficace et durable.

Mon analyse commence avec une étude globale sur la Guinée, en indiquant les aspects historiques et culturels, économiques et politiques, et en ajoutant en note finale ma propre interprétation.

Dans la deuxième étape une analyse de façon plus ciblée l'éducation en Guinée, sa sphère d'action et son rayonnement au plan territorial (les francophones des pays de l'Afrique subsaharienne) quand nécessaire, mais on essaye aussi de souligner une distinction qui n'est souvent pas détectée entre opportunités socio-éducatives dans les zones rurales et dans les villes. À partir des constatations objectives contenues dans les rapports du UNESCO Institute for Statistics, j'intègre mon expérience personnelle en détectant les trois problèmes fondamentaux : les règles ministérielles, les enseignants, les politiques linguistiques (en se concentrant sur la Guinée comme étude de cas unique et intéressante).

Dans la troisième partie, sont suggérées des stratégies possibles de changement palpable. Pour ce faire, j'utilise mon expérience de deux nouvelles études sur l'éducation acquises lors de mon séjour en Erasmus à Bruxelles (Université Saint-Louis). J'analyse des résultats que j'ai eu la possibilité de collecter sur des élèves qui ont suivi des cours d'alphabétisation intensifs de récupération, où j'ai détecté que la mémorisation était la seule stratégie d'enseignement jusqu'à maintenant utilisée, avec des effets dévastateurs au niveau psychologique et éducatif. Grâce à l'étude de la matériaux de spécialistes tels que Xavier Roegiers, je propose une approche possible à la pédagogie de l'intégration conçue pour fournir à l'enfant les connaissances et lui permettre d'appliquer ces connaissances, laissant de côté la technique de mémorisation qui, en plus de causer une gêne chez les jeunes en échec scolaire, ne confère aucune compétence réelle pour ceux qui semblent avoir plus de succès.

## ABSTRACT

Questo progetto nasce dalla mia diretta esperienza: ho passato sei mesi lavorando con una ong in una scuola in una zona rurale della Repubblica di Guinea. Oltre a tanto entusiasmo e passione questo periodo mi ha lasciato un interrogativo: perché la maggior parte dei bambini che frequentavano regolarmente la scuola primaria presentavano enormi lacune tanto da essere spesso praticamente analfabeti?

La maggior parte dei progetti che guardano ai problemi dell'educazione in Africa puntano a portare i bambini a scuola o a costruirla qualora non ci fosse, io ho focalizzato la mia attenzione su quello che succede quando lo studente è già seduto al banco.

Quello che segue vuole essere uno studio quanto più completo possibile, uno strumento necessario per futuri interventi umanitari a qualsiasi livello in questo campo, dalla singola scuola a una campagna nazionale. Una conoscenza approfondita e globale del territorio di intervento, dei destinatari e dei precedenti piani è fondamentale per un progetto umanitario efficace, duraturo e sostenibile.

La mia analisi parte da uno studio generale sulla Guinea inquadrandone l'aspetto storico-culturale, economico e politico, unendo a quest'ultimo punto una mia chiave di lettura.

Nella seconda parte passo a un'analisi più mirata dell'educazione in Guinea, inquadrandola nel suo contesto territoriale (paesi francofoni dell'Africa Sub-Sahariana) quando serve ma anche cercando di sottolineare una distinzione che spesso non viene rilevata: quella tra le possibilità socio-educative nelle zone rurali e nelle città. Partendo da problemi oggettivi emersi da rapporti dell'Unesco Institute for Statistics integro la mia personale esperienza rilevando tre nodi principali: le disposizioni ministeriali, gli insegnanti, le politiche linguistiche (che rendono la Guinea un caso di studio unico e interessante).

Nella terza parte, suggerisco possibili strategie per un cambiamento tangibile. Per fare ciò utilizzo sia la mia diretta esperienza sia i nuovi studi sull'educazione di cui sono venuta a conoscenza mentre ero studente in Erasmus a Bruxelles (Université Saint-Louis). Analizzando i risultati che ho potuto riscontrare negli allievi che seguivo in un corso di recupero e alfabetizzazione intensivo ho rilevato la memorizzazione come unica strategia d'insegnamento abbia dei risultati a livello psicologico e didattico devastanti. Tramite lo studio di specialisti della formazione quali Xavier Roegiers propongo come possibile approccio la Pedagogia dell'Integrazione, volta a rendere il bambino in grado di conoscere e applicare le sue conoscenze, cancellando la tecnica della memorizzazione che, oltre a causare sconforto per i giovani che fallivano nelle prove di valutazione, non dava reali competenze a chi pareva riuscire.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB.....	Africa Development Bank
ADEA .....	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AIF.....	Africa Innovation Foundation
BIEF.....	Bureau de conseil en éducation, formation et gestion de projets
CBA.....	Competency Based Approach
CENI.....	Independent Electoral Commission of Guinea
DE.....	Directeur d'école, school headmaster
DSEE.....	Délégation Spéciale de l'Enseignement Elémentaire
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
HDI.....	Human Development Index
IBE.....	International Bureau of Education
ICC.....	International Criminal Court
ICQN .....	ADEA inter-country quality nodes (ICQN)
IIEP.....	International Institute for Education Planning
ISCED.....	International Standard Classification of Education
ISSEG .....	Higher Institute of Education Sciences of Guinea (ISSEG)
MEPU-EC.....	Ministry of Education Pre-University and Civic Education
OIF.....	International Organization of Francophone countries
OTI.....	Objectif Terminal d'Intégration
PBO.....	Pedagogy By Objectives
PI.....	Pedagogy of Integration
PPP.....	GDP per capita
RPG.....	Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party
UFDG .....	Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea party
UIS .....	UNESCO Institute for Statistics

## INTRODUCTION

I strongly believe that education is the most powerful tool that people can use to change their society. A real and sustainable tool. Every resource can be employed in an useless or negative way, money can be dangerous and the power depends on too many factors.

In Guinea, as in many post-colonial realities, we can observe all the dangerous and negative consequences of precious resources (like bauxite), money and power (we have just to look at the last elections).

The Republic of Guinea like its neighboring countries is blessed with an abundance of natural resources such as gold, diamonds, bauxite, uranium, iron ore, hydropower, fish and salt. However, despite this richness of the ground it remains one of the poorest country in Africa, and so in the World, with almost half of the population living below poverty line, with 21% of children under 5 underweight (Africa Today 2012).

Also the land suffers this inequality, Guinea is facing many environmental problems: growing deforestation (they cut trees for timber, charcoal, firewood...) which is leading to soil erosion and desertification, overpopulation in some areas and a general lack of potable water, overfishing and poor mining practices.

I think that the only way to change direction, to allow theoretically positive goods to bring welfare, it is make Guinean people aware of their rights, of their duties and internal and external conditions that are now contributing to the present situation.

For this reason education is an important, maybe the most important, part of cooperation. This project intends to “prepare the field” for an humanitarian campaign based on Guinea complex situation. I know that the situation is dramatic but I don’t think that the so called “emergency” responses could be a solution. Too often humanitarian interventions are based on a too short preparation because it is easier to find economic funds acting during

emergency. Also when they are long terms are barely sustainable, because they need a constant amount of money. Cooperation can be really worthy just when make people able to walk on their own legs, to think with their own minds.

Nowadays Guinea suffers for the lack of schools, didactic material, teachers. But this is just one side of the question. What does it happen when children have access to school, didactic materials and teacher? Most of students remains illiterate, they have many difficulties and remain unable to use what they learned at school in everyday life. The Republic of Guinea has one of the worst literacy rates in the all Africa, just 29,5% of the population above 15 can read and write (Africa Today, 2012) and between the women the percentage is about 18%. Also if the situation is dramatic governmental expenditure for education is just the 2,4% of the GDP.

So the problem is more complex and an adequate answer should consider Guinean historical, ethnic, economical and political aspects.

In the first part of this research I analyzed the general context that contribute to create the present situation, in particular Guinea present an interesting history: during the Touré leadership the French was banned from school and public offices and they started to code and use just the local languages. This was an unique experiment, with complicate consequences on today linguistic situation.

In the second part I chose to analyze school situation starting from general data (UNDP, UNESCO database) and from my direct experience, I spent 6 months working in a school in a small village near Boffa. It emerges that the problem is multifaceted and has also a psychological side. In Guinea students have just to memorize basics, with no personal reasoning or real application. In this way children are going to think that they cannot understand, they cannot reasoning. They are losing their self-confidence, becoming an easy subject to manipulate, a perfect sheep in the flock.

For this reason I concluded with a third part that faces the pedagogic choice, I think that the solution is a matter of method. The pedagogy of integration in particular it is an attest solution, already experimented in other African countries and positively evaluated also by IBE and UNICEF. It doesn't require big investor and it doesn't entail a big revolution. It is a process composed by several small steps, so well perceived by local teachers and family, that can be applied also with scarce local resources. Anyway it could revolutionize completely teachers' approach and students' way to learn. They must start to use their heads, finding the tools that they already own to change their life.

The change should start in the schools as Nelson Mandela said:

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.

Guinean students have to walk 10 km everyday to arrive at school, they share a desk with 10 others pupils and the classroom with others 50, but they are there anyway, trying to learn. They have the right to change.

## **Chapter 1. The Project: Field Context**

Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right.... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.

Kofi Annan (Annan, 1997).

From independence until the presidential election of 2010, Guinea was governed by a number of autocratic rulers, which has contributed to making Guinea one of the poorest countries in the world.

Although Guinea was the first and only West African French colony to opt for complete independence from the French Community in 1960 – driven by the nationalistic and anti-imperialistic views of its first leader Ahmed Sékou Touré – the country has since struggled to remain on the path of political stability, social cohesion and socio-economic development (Union européenne, 2013). Guinea has experienced decades of political turmoil and instability through authoritarian regimes and coup d'états, fuelled by deep social tensions.

Progress towards a full transition to democratic rule and greater respect for the rule of law was undermined by delays in organizing parliamentary elections, rising ethnic tension, the presidents' frequent use of the presidential decree, and inadequate gains in strengthening the chronically neglected judiciary (United States Department of State, 2009).

Its richness in raw materials and its fruitful land are together a resource and a malediction because make its government a fertile field for corruption and private interests. Ethnic divisions fuel violence acts and obstacle a common feeling for a peaceful government.

Poverty, illiteracy and difficult social conditions don't allow the development for a real and critic approach to politics and societal discrimination against women is common. Anyway, also if the way toward democracy is still complicate, Guinea clearly shows the symptoms of a real incoming change.

## 1.1. Geographic Context

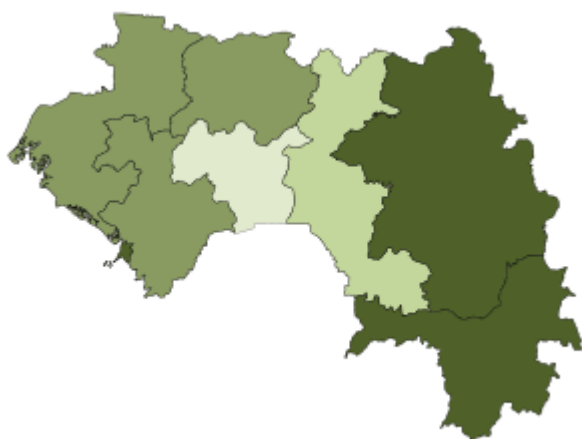


**Fig. 1. The Republic of Guinea**

Source: BusinessAfrica, 2014. Available at: <http://businessafrica.net/africabiz/countries/guinea.php>

Guinea is situated in West Africa to the Gulf of Guinea and borders the Atlantic Ocean and it cover an area of 245. 857 square kilometers (Guinea Conakry Trade Support, s/d). Guinea has a population of 10,057,975 and the country shares its northern border with Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal, its southern border with Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.




The state is divided into three main zones: the Lower Guinea is an area comprising a low and intersected by many small rivers, coastal plain with an average altitude of 1800 meters. The second area is called Moyenne Guinea and consists of the Fouta Djalo barren highlands with an altitude of 600 to 1500 meters. The third zone is Upper Guinea. This area consists of plains with savannah vegetation. The sources of the Niger River, Gambia River, and Senegal River are all found in the Guinea Highlands. Off the coast are also many smaller islands, including the Iles de Los.



**Fig. 2. Population of Guinea**

Source: African Development Bank Group, 2014. Available at: <http://guinea.opendataforafrica.org/>

**POPULATION, REGIONAL (thousands persons)**

	<b>777-798</b>
	<b>798-1440</b>
	<b>1440-2440</b>

The climate is tropical and Guinea is one of the wettest countries in West Africa. The rainy season last from May to October. In Conakry, the capital of the country, there is an average of 4 meters of rain per year, in the centre of the country its less than 2 meters. From December to February the harmattan winds blows in Guinea. It comes from the desert and brings along sand with it and creates poor visibility. The eastern part of Guinea is covered with savannah vegetation, the jungles are threatened by agriculture or by road construction and ping tree canopy. Typical vegetation: baobab, banana, ebony, mahogany, coconut, oil palm and teak. Typical fauna include monkey, baboon, duiker, hyena, crocodile, hippopotamus, elephant and leopard but the animals suffer from poaching.

With its 33 cities, 38 counties and 4 natural regions, Guinea has a strong regional and human diversity, especially in ethnic terms. The three main ethnic group are the Fula and more specifically the Fula Jalon (or Fulakunda JAlon) also known as the Peul (more than 4 million persons), followed by the Malinké (also called Maninka or Mandinga)(with more than 2,5 million persons) and finally the Susu (almost 1,5 million persons). The three groups share dominantly the Muslim faith. Overall, the Joshua Project estimates that they are more than 48 ethnic group and 45 languages (Joshua Project, s/d).

## **1.2. Economic context**

Guinea is blessed with spread abundance of raw materials, in particular it possesses one of the world's proven reserves of bauxite, more than 1.8 billion metric tons (2.0 billion short tons) of high-grade iron ore, significant diamond and gold deposits, and undetermined quantities of uranium. Guinea also has considerable potential for growth in the agricultural and fishing sectors. Land, water, and climatic conditions provide opportunities for large-scale irrigated farming and agroindustry.

Coffee is the largest export crop but cotton, fruit, oil and nuts are also exported. Forestry exists to a small degree and has potential for growth. Anyway 80% of Guinea's labour force is employed in agriculture, which accounts for about a third of GDP. There are some

industries that usually process plants for beer, juices, soft drinks, and tobacco which are mainly sold locally. Fishing is carried out by European countries for which the Guinean government receives compensation (Mbendi, 2013).

Since 1985 (Sekou Touré died in 1984), the Guinean Government has adopted policies in order to return the commercial activities to the private sector, promote investment. The aim was to reduce the role of the state in the economy, improving the administrative and judicial framework.

Despite excellent economic progress made in the latter nineties, the fall in demand and drop in prices of bauxite and aluminum and the tenuous security situation in neighboring countries dragged down economic performance.

Progress has been made in the execution of social spending and the implementation of structural reforms, in particular in the monetary and public finance areas.

NGOs play an important role in project implementation in Guinea and help reduce dependency on public administration. They have played especially useful roles in the agriculture, education and health sectors. Guinea is rated 157th on Human Development Index in 2003.

### **1.3. Historic context**

Guinea shared histories with Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Gambia. Its territory was part of Mali and Songhai empires (The Global Democracy Project, s/d), in 1890s France colonized it and made it part of the community of French colonies called French West Africa together with Mali, Senegal, and Mauritania. By 1956, these former French colonies had limited internal self-government tethered to France for economic, military, and diplomatic policies.

In 1958 when the tide of independence swept across west Africa, French President de Gaulle issued the famous "oui ou non" ultimatum. "Oui" (yes) you are for maintaining the status quo of French custodianship on your international affairs, or non (no) you oppose to such a paternalistic arrangement. Unlike other nations, this ultimatum yielded an emphatic "non" from Guinea that was the first and only West African French colony to opt for complete independence from the French Community – driven by the nationalistic and anti-imperialistic views of its first leader Ahmed Sékou Touré, precursor to her "non" decision.

Sekou Touré, who was deputy-mayor of Conakry, delivered a legendary speech to the French President declaring Guinea independence.

After the emphatic "non" De Gaulle ordered all French citizens to leave Guinea with all technical files, survey and logistic documents. Even the phone cords were ripped off the walls. The relationship between France and Guinea became cold and tense and Guinea followed the path of Socialist Democracy and allied herself with the Soviet Bloc. The country was named the People's Revolutionary Republic of Guinea.

After gaining independence in 1958 the State grew increasingly impoverished under the repressive, one-party rule of President Ahmed Sékou Touré. He established one-party dictatorship, with a closed, socialized economy. The past tensions with France reflected on Touré's leadership, he banned French language from school, also if Guinea had not an alternative national language, just many spoken dialects. During these years there was no tolerance for human rights, free expression, or political opposition, which was ruthlessly suppressed.

Economic costs were extensive. The state took over farms and other production. As reaction for the imposition of price controls an era of pervasive black markets and smuggling started, even if these crimes were punishable by death.

The president relied on his own Malinké ethnic group to fill positions in the party and government. Touré's party officials took monopoly of social and economic life. A police and intelligence apparatus spied on everyone. More than a million people run away from the repression into neighboring countries. It has been estimated that almost 5,000 people were executed or died for torture or starvation at the Camp Boiro, a Soviet-style concentration camp.

It was a period of economic, social and cultural crisis. No rights were respected, no freedoms were guaranteed. The negative heritage of such a deep depression is still present in Guinea politic and social life.

After almost three decades in power, Touré died unexpectedly on 26 March 1984.

## **1.4. Political situation**

### **1.4.1. The post-Touré Context**

On march 26th, 1984, Sekou Toure died and his Prime Minister Lansana Beavogui was designated chief of government. A week later, on April 3rd, Lasana Conté staged a bloodless coup. To garner public support for the military government, Conté had a more liberal dispensation and he freed former political prisoners and invited exiled Guineans back to Guinea.

Conté abolished all political parties and the constitution, and began a program of economic liberalization. However, after two unsuccessful attempted coups in 1985 and 1996, his resolve hardened and Conte adopted Sekou Touré's autocratic disposition. The constitution and parliament were suspended and a committee for national recovery was established. A new constitution was adopted in 1990. Conté won the country's first multiparty presidential election in 1993, but international observers said the poll was deeply flawed. Presidential, legislative, and municipal elections over the next 12 years were similarly marred by serious

irregularities; all resulted in victories for Conté and the ruling party (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Security forces killed more than 130 people during nationwide antigovernment demonstrations in 2007, and martial law was declared. Union leaders agreed to suspend a general strike in exchange for Conté's pledge to implement political and economic reforms. Conté died in December 2008, and junior officers quickly mounted a successful military coup, promising to hold elections in two years.

Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, the coup leader and chief of the military junta initially enjoyed considerable popularity, especially as he sought to expose corruption among former officials.

However, following signs that Camara might renege on his earlier promise not to run in a presidential election set for January 2010, opposition forces mounted a massive rally on September 28, 2009. The junta ordered its soldiers to attack people who had gathered to protest any attempt by Camara to become President so the gathering was viciously suppressed by security forces, who killed more than 150 people and raped and beat and mutilate hundreds of others.

The international community responded decisively to the events of September 28th with a combination of official condemnation, travel bans, asset freezes, diplomatic efforts, and calls for accountability. This suggests the gap is narrowing between triumph in the Council Chamber and what reaches the world – and the women – beyond. The United Nations' most significant action was the swift deployment of a Commission of Inquiry, a human rights investigation that often results in the drafting of a report that gathers dust somewhere - its findings disputed and debated but rarely acted upon. This Commission of Inquiry, however, explicitly named the head of state, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, as well as several of his associates, as potentially liable for crimes against humanity perpetrated against Guinean

civilians, and established that at least 109 women had been subjected to rape and other sexual violence of unthinkable cruelty and viciousness.

The leader of the military junta, isolated and pressured by Guinea's neighbors in the region as much as Western countries, decided to scapegoat his security forces and blame his aide-de-camp for the violence, against all evidence and plausibility. On 3 December 2009, an aide shot Camara during a dispute about the rampage of September 2009.

Camara went to Morocco for medical care. Vice-President (and defense minister) Sékouba Konaté flew back from Lebanon to run the country in Camara's absence. With the hardliners in the army split among themselves, the balance of power shifted in favor of the opposition and the strong national desire for democracy.

On 12 January 2010 Camara was flown from Morocco to Burkina Faso where the mediation process was brokered by Burkina Faso's President Compaoré who yielded an uncommonly favorable outcome, with the members of the military that seek the normalization of Guinea's relationship with development partners appearing ready to facilitate the transition. Camara, Konaté and Blaise Compaoré, produced a formal statement of twelve principles promising a return of Guinea to civilian rule within six months. It was agreed that the military would not contest the forthcoming elections, and Camara would continue his convalescence outside Guinea.

On 21 January 2010 the military junta appointed Jean-Marie Doré (Prodemocracy opposition leader) as interim Prime Minister of a six-month transition government, leading up to elections. He was charged with leading a power-sharing government and facilitating a return to civilian rule. The Burkina Faso accord also created a broad-based, 155-member interim parliament, the National Transitional Council. In February, the International Criminal Court (ICC) found that the September 2009 massacre was a crime against humanity, and called on Guinean courts to try the perpetrators or allow the ICC to do so. The way towards democracy started there.

### 1.4.2. Democratic election

After more than 50 years of authoritarian rule, Guinea held its first competitive presidential election on June 27, 2010, though no candidate garnered more than 50 percent of the vote. The challenges encountered throughout the 2010 electoral process, which brought veteran opposition leader Alpha Condé to the presidency, were emblematic of Guinea deep ethnic fractions. After no single candidate managed to reach 50% in the first round, the second-round run-off pitted frontrunner Cellou Dalein Diallo – a member of the Peul community and leader of the Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) party – against second-placed Alpha Condé – a member of the Malinké community and leader of the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG) party. As referred previously, The Fula Jalon (also called Peul) and Malinké groups (*cf. infra*) are the two most populous ethnic groups in the country and combined represent around 70% of the population.

Held in June, the first round saw Diallo considerably outperform his rival. According to the official results Diallo gained around 44%, while Condé managed 18%. In September, however, the head of the Independent Electoral Commission of Guinea (CENI), Ben Sekou Sylla, and one of his senior aides were convicted of fraud and for wrongly cancelling around 600,000 first-round votes for Condé.

Shortly after, Sylla died in Paris after a long illness. The choice of Sylla's replacement drew strong criticism, especially from Diallo and his party, which threatened to boycott the second round. The appointment of Louceny Camara, a Malinké, to the head of CENI convinced many of Diallo's supporters that state institutions were attempting to steal the presidency and disenfranchise the Peul community.

In the face of this political deadlock, General Sekouba Konaté, who was leading the political transition from military rule to civilian rule, appointed Siaka Toumani Sangaré, a Malian general and a seasoned regional electoral expert, to temporarily lead the CENI in

lieu of Loucény Camara. Nevertheless, in the period leading up to the second round, direct confrontations occurred between Peuls and Malinkés, resulting in houses and businesses being burned down, dozens of people being injured, and at least one death.

Due to these violence outbreaks between the two presidential camps, the second round was delayed multiple times and finally took place in November 2010, after a nearly 5-month delay. On Nov. 16, Alpha Condé of the Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) was declared the winner over Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) candidate Cellou Dalein Diallo, 52.5 percent to 47.5 percent.

The election was deemed legitimate and representative of popular opinion by most domestic and international observers, and Diallo moved quickly to diffuse post-election tensions by accepting the results, congratulating President-elect Condé and calling on UFDG supporters to turn their focus to the upcoming legislative elections. However, violence and voter intimidation in Guinea's eastern region resulted in the displacement of thousands of ethnic Peul supporters of Diallo.

### **1.4.3. Ethnic clashes**

It is important to underline these ethnic positions. In a country where multi-party politics is a relatively new concept, political allegiances of language, ethnicity and region remain stronger than appeals based on policies.

The strength of ethnicity lies in the fact that groups tend to equate holding the presidency with broader ethnic rule; in Guinea as in many other countries, ethnic allegiances contain promises of patronage. Ahmed Sékou Touré's leadership which ended with his death in 1984 is seen by many as the 'Malinké reign', Lansana Conté's presidency until December 2008 Soussous rule, and the short-lived takeover of Captain Dadis Camara in 2008 the rise of the Forestier region. In 2010, many in the Peul community felt their turn to govern had come.

Furthermore, through these ethnic lenses, Guinea's history can be read differently depending on which community one belongs to – and all groups can draw on historical grievances against other groups based on perceived past inequities: the unequal access to education, public offices and business opportunities; Toure's 'conspiracy' against the Peuls; the 'revenge' of Lansana Conté on Malinké military men; and Conté's crackdown on militants from the forest region.

We have also to consider that in a democratic political environment usually electors can choose a leader who could represent their interests, listening an electoral program and focusing on characteristic goals. In Guinea often , as in many poor countries, economic and social factors don't enable people to develop a critic opinion about candidates, above all in the rural areas. Moreover big power and big quantity of liquid money (due to raw material) create the prolific circumstances for corruption and a government based on private interests. So people see in the ethnic belonging the only way to feel themselves represented.

It is dangerous to underestimate these ethnic differences, in a country where no rights are completely guaranteed the different communities can become the scapegoat for people's feeling of injustice.

For example Condé facing accusations of awarding government posts to members of his Malinké group hampered the progress toward consolidating democratic gains in early 2011.

The new president also had a fraught relationship with the military, parts of which had difficulty accepting their diminished status under a civilian government. In the night of 18 July 2011, former army officers led an unsuccessful assassination attempt, firing rocket-propelled grenades into Condé's walled compound and exchanging fire with the presidential guard. The president was unharmed. Among the some 50 soldiers and civilians arrested for the attack was former army chief Nouhou Thiam and associates of Konaté's presidential guard.

#### **1.4.4. National Assembly elections**

The National Assembly of Guinea, the country's legislative body, has not met since 2008 when it was dissolved after the military coup in December. Elections have been postponed many times since 2007.

In April 2012, President Conde postponed the elections indefinitely, citing the need to ensure that they were "transparent and democratic".

In late February 2013, political violence erupted in Guinea after protesters took to the streets to voice their concerns over the transparency of the upcoming May 2013 elections. The opposition accused Conde of trying to rig the polls in the world's largest bauxite exporter, of not consulting them before announcing the poll date. They called on its supporters to protest until Conde backs down and calls off the June 30 poll and demanded South African firm Waymark be stripped of a contract to revise the voter list. Infact National Electoral Commission approved South African software firm Waymark Infotech in compiling a new list of registered voters for the elections. The opposition argued that the firm is "open to voting fraud" as it was chosen by the ruling party and has a history of discrepancies in not just Guinea elections, but also other African elections. The Guinean government has rejected the opposition demands so in September 2012, thousands of Guineans marched in Conakry in protest just for Waymark, they were dispersed by police with tear gas.

Guinean government spokesman Damantang Albert Camara, said the three people were killed during the protest on Friday and several others were wounded.

These deaths brought to at least 15 the number of people killed in violent clashes since March in the seaside capital. Over 300 have been wounded, many of the deaths and injuries were caused by security forces using live fire on protesters.

Finally the Legislative elections were held in Guinea on 28 September 2013. President Alpha Condé's party, the Rally of the Guinean People (RPG), won a plurality of seats in the National Assembly of Guinea, with 53 out of 114 seats. This time, it took almost three weeks for the independent national electoral commission to announce the results of the long-awaited general election.

Despite this triumph, the president, as well as the opposition, has also alleged fraud. Anyway an important change occurred, after the spoiling there were no violent reactions, and also if everybody complained for irregularities during the voting procedures, politicians appealed to their supporters to remain mobilised, but not to demonstrate. The difference was made in particular by a positive trust in the international control: "Each time there's an election the result is disputed, but there was a lot of fraud to our disadvantage in Conakry. The judges on the supreme court will see who committed fraud, and who did not," President Condé told *Le Monde* the day before the official results were posted on 18 October (Bensimon, 2013).

#### **1.4.5. Critical comments about political future**

After decades of authoritarian rule, the people of Guinea have managed to establish a democracy that has attracted the positive attention of the wider world. Guinea's transition to democracy also represents a transition to a new era of economic opportunity, both for Guineans and their foreign investment partners. Blessed and maledicted with rich mineral deposits, abundant water supplies, and fertile land, Guinea represents a wealth of possibility for exporters and investors with the vision to see the country's full potential. At the same time this abundance can be one of the principal factors, intrinsically tied with Guinea socio-economic conditions, that obstacle a clear and simple process toward democracy, because they involve in every political decisions also economic and private aims.

Guinea way toward democracy is still long and uneven. After the deep crisis during the Touré leadership, which saw sad and deep lacks in human and civil rights, the 2010 and 2013 democratic elections showed a true desire for a change but these tentative steps towards civilian rule and democratic elections can easily be disrupted, and Guinea's transition will have to be managed carefully.

In my opinion Guinea really needs, as their politicians also admitted, an external help in order to organize fair and transparent elections. Oppositions cannot continue to foment disorders and protests and the government cannot continue to repress these in the blood. I think that if the management of electoral procedure will continue to be controlled by an international organism this violence would be partially sedated. Anyway the foreign western government that give money in order to facilitate the birth of Guinea democracy should understand that the money is one of those factor that disable this process. The reactions against Guinea violence and the general speech pro dialogue as solution of the present situation are not enough. Guinea needs an impartial supervisor that could lead it towards democracy.

Also if today the situation it is calm in 2015 the country could forward a new political and ethnic clash. In fact whether the situation in Guinea remains calm hangs on the supreme court's decision, according to a western diplomat speaking anonymously: "If the judges don't make matters worse by increasing the RPG lead, the main opposition parties may decide to make do with these results and wait till the presidential election in 2015." In that poll, ethnic rivalries are likely to play a big role, with the Malinké people largely loyal to Condé, the Fula backing Diallo and the Soussous supporting Touré. "Efforts to capitalize on Guinea's vast mineral and agricultural riches will have to wait a little longer." (Bensimon, 2013).

## **Chapter 2. The Project as an Analysis**

### **2.1. Health Statement**

The source of my project is direct experience. I spent a period working as a teacher in Africa, in the Republic of Guinea, from December to June 2012. I was there with an NGO and my job was relating with his school management. This period was very important for me, I can without doubts assume that I learned more than I taught.

Now I want to write this project in order to explain and to spread what my African students explained me, with their words but also with their silences and difficulties. I was very happy there and I was feeling that that was my job but, on the other side, this experience showed me some problems too big to be ignored. If I left my place in that school it was just hoping to come back, soon or later, in a more efficient way, keeping a change. This project is a way to repay my students and to say them thanks.

The professional motivations that leads this project comes from my direct observation, in fact, also if the school where I taught was one of the best (it was financed and partially directed by an Ngo), I was quite surprise by the lack of logical didactical plans in the primary school.

There was a gap between the ministerial directions (very specifics and advanced) and the real students level, often illiterates also after many years of school. The problem wasn't really perceived by local teachers and institutions because the evaluation methods were very mechanic, the students had just to memorize. They repeated several time math exercises, so they were able to do their tests but they were completely unaware about what was the meaning of an addition or multiplication. For example, they knew how much was  $3+2$  but at the same time they ignored the result of  $2+3$ . In this system based on memorization a real comprehension is very difficult.

School in Guinea is complicated by many factor linked to poverty, often the biggest problem is to find and to reach a school. My research want to speak about what happens when a student enters in his class and should start to learn.

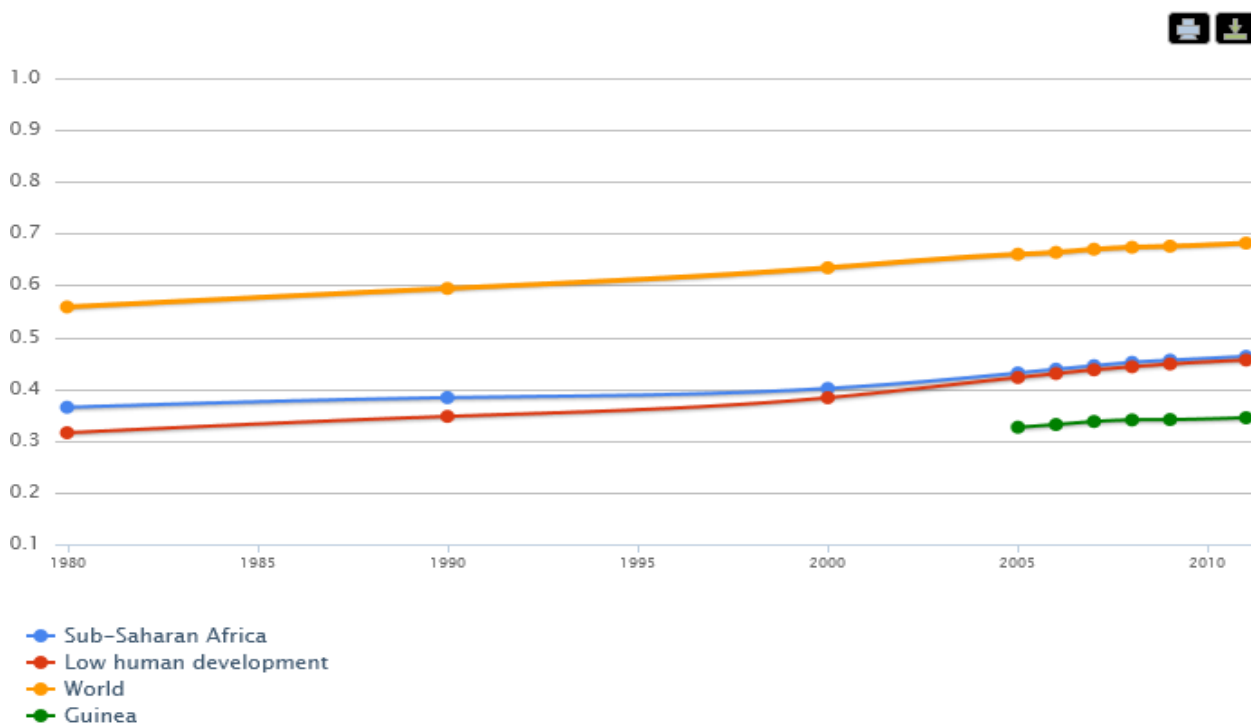
## 2.2. School situation in Guinea

It's not necessary to underline the necessity to improve the quality of education in Sub-Saharan Africa. A statistical survey of school and teaching resources in the region conducted by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)(see Table 1.) highlights challenges which undermine children's chances to succeed in their studies: overcrowded classrooms, too few trained teachers, insufficient schoolbooks and few toilets, often without separation between boys and girls. So it's undeniable that these are spread problem but I would like to underline in particular the difficult situation present in Guinea, caused by a complex combination of factors.

<b>Total Population (000)</b>	<b>9.982</b>
Annual population growth rate (%) ^	2.2
Life expentancy at birth (years) ^	54
Infant mortality rate (0/00) ^	81
National currency	Guinea Franc
GDP per capita (PPP) US \$ ^	1086
^ World Bank World Development Indicators	

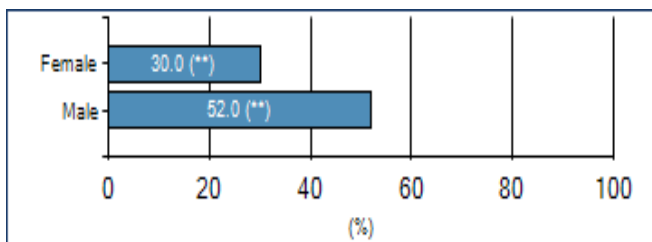
**Table 1.** Guinea in the Data. Source: Unesco Institute for Statistic, 2010.

In order to understand the situation of Guinea compared to the Sub-Saharan area it's interesting to analyze the UN Human Development Reports (Table 2.) which shows as Guinea (green line) has an human development index significantly lower also compared to the neighboring countries (blue line).

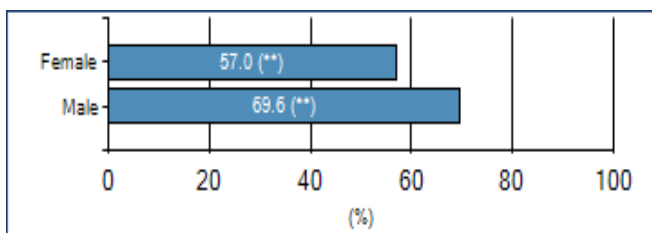


**Table 2.** United Nations Human Development Index, 2013.

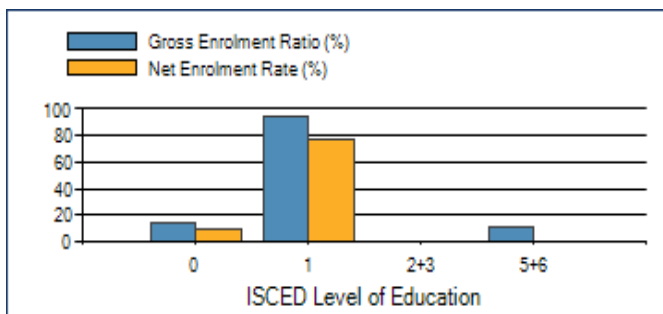
Guinea's HDI (Human Development Index) is 0.344, which gives the country a rank of 178 out of 187 countries with comparable data. The HDI of Sub-Saharan Africa as a region increased from 0.365 in 1980 to 0.463 today, placing Guinea below the regional average. The HDI represents a push for a broader definition of well-being and provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income.



**Table 3.**  
Literacy Rates - 15 years and older  
Source: United Nations Human Development Reports, 2013.



**Table 4.**  
Literacy Rates - 15 to 24 years older  
Source: United Nations Human Development Reports, 2013.



**Table 5.**  
International Standard Classification of Education ISCED Levels in Guinea  
Source: United Nations Human Development Reports, 2013.

The factor that more decreases HDI average in Guinea is education (HDI 0,246). This number shows a tragic situation composed by widespread illiteracy (Tables 3 and 4) and by the fact that most of the students stop their studies at a primary education level or first stage of basic education.

Also if there are universities in Conakry and Kankan and students are awarded university scholarships on a competitive basis, the lack of funding severely constrains the universities. Library and computer resources are scarce, and strikes by dissatisfied students and underpaid professors are common. These limitations on higher education mean that students often spend many years completing their university degrees.

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) with its inter-country quality nodes (ICQN) constitute a learning environment for the systematic identification, documentation, analysis, dissemination and sharing of the lessons that African countries have learned with regards to the process of improving the quality of their education systems. In their analysis of education problem in Guinea they pose as focus the rural environment. Looking to national data about literacy, poverty, school dropout, we have always to remember that the rural situation is very different from city condition. For example if we know that in Guinea 80% of school have no electricity and often there is no drinking water, but at the same time we have to think that most of them are in the outback, so this become even a more serious problem because not every village has his own school and often children have to walk many kilometers to reach their class.

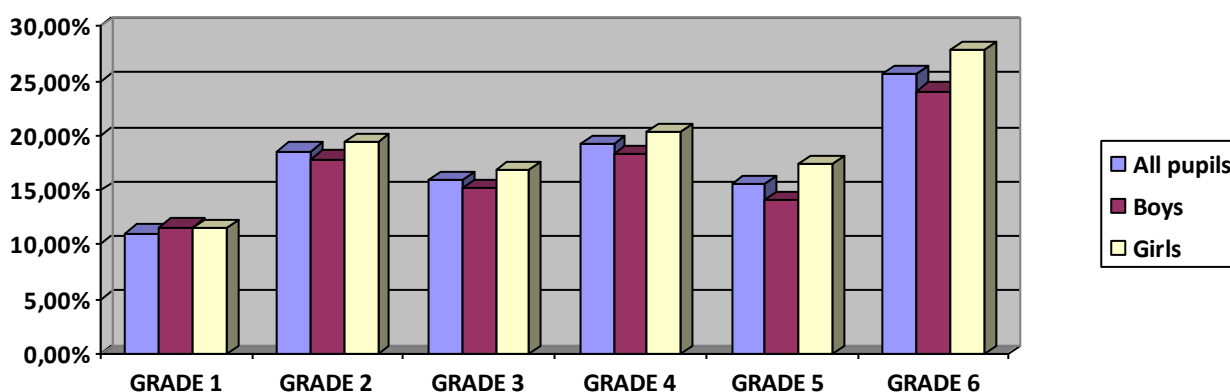
Many children, particularly girls, do not have the opportunity to attend school because families cannot afford school fees and uniforms. Often they have to work in the fields or the family compound but usually families prefer to keep at home girls because they have to look after babies. Regardless of whether they are enrolled in school, children tend to work very hard at a young age.

They carry water and firewood, help with food preparation, and go to the market to buy and sell products. Sometimes children who cannot attend a governmental school may be sent to an Islamic school to learn the Koran. These external conditions are very difficult but we can't stop at looking them. My observation wants to go beyond these economic and cultural impediments. Poverty is a difficult condition but also overcoming it we can give a good

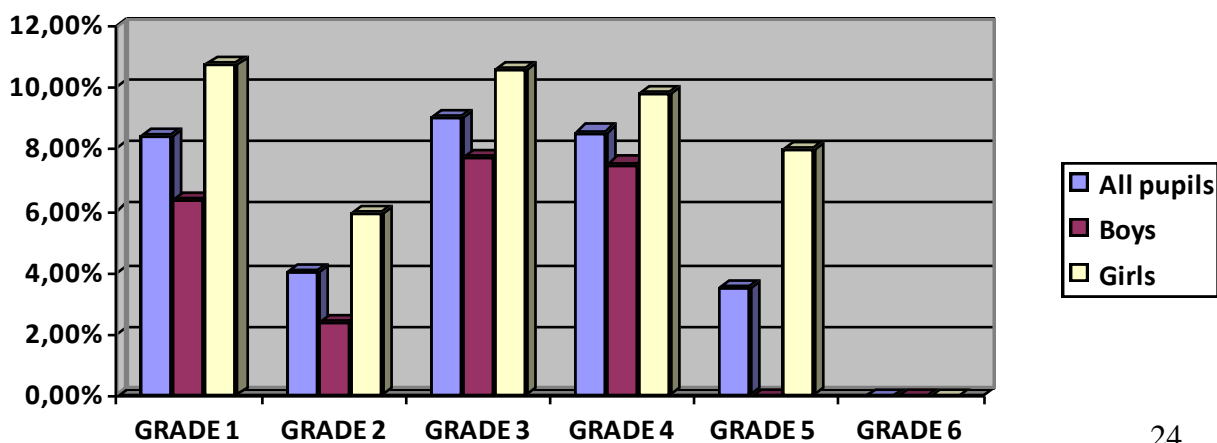
education just focalizing on institutional measures. I think it can be interesting analyze dropout and repetitions data who shows how scholastic system seriously create difficulties for the students. Nearly 30% of the students has to repeat the 6<sup>th</sup> year and the dropout rate for every year is always very high (around 10% except the 6<sup>th</sup> year).

We have to consider that these are national data, do not exist data just for rural areas but we can imagine that the situation can't improve in disadvantaged zones.

**Table 6.** Repetition rate by grade in primary education, latest available year (2009)  
Source: UNESCO, 2012.



**Table 7.** Dropout rate by grade in primary education, latest available year (2009)  
Source: UNESCO, 2012.



I think that from an observation of all these statics what appears clearly is that Guinea needs to focus on education. School problems are not simply practical but didactic, as dropout and repetition rate indicate. We have to invest attention on teachers, students and ministerial regulations restriction for a better school to attend.

### **2.3. Aims of the project**

My project want to underline and to analyze the practical problems revealed during my direct experience and my researches. Both in governmental and NGOs actions I noticed a big variance between paper programs and reality, this variance create a fossilized and unproductive scholar system directed by bureaucracy and not by pupils' needs.

In all developed countries, and also in many others, we have some cultural basic elements that link every citizens and that could help to build a national culture, culture taught at school. In Guinea there is a charming traditional culture (dances, handcraft, music...), but is almost completely separated from school teaching.

The culture is local, linked to ethnic tongues, while school is based just on French with some lacking nationalist elements (anthem cult). In others case, as in Italy where national unification did not bring to linguistic communion, medias filled the gap, television brought in every home a single language.

Medias are an useful and powerful mean to spread a tongue but in Guinea they are still mostly in the native languages, above all music and most popular radio programs. The importance of the mother tongue and the interest who represent French on scholar and institutional level let us distinguish a typically African bilingualism. French is a partially foreign element, not linked to everyday life and we have to consider this gap and try to fill it.

I would like also to create a critical debate for the creation of good didactic material. As I will explain later there aren't manuals (also internationals) or common materials on which basing a didactical analysis. I observed a pour availability of textbooks and, in general, a bad quality caused by retarded and not clear explanations and structures. This situation could partially be an effect of Sekou Toure educational system based on national languages. As Simbagoye et Sow-Barry (1997) wrote:

A l'issue du changement qui était marqué par le retour du français comme seule langue d'enseignement, une série de mesures étaient nécessaires pour assurer un meilleur enseignement de la langue française. C'est ce qui justifie la série de mesures urgentes prises à cette fin. Certains maîtres formés dans les écoles normales d'instituteurs à partir de 1968 n'ont appris le français que durant quelques années. Devant les inquiétudes suscitées par ce revirement soudain, des actions concrètes ont été menées avec l'aide de la France et des organisations internationales. Ces actions portaient sur trois domaines prioritaires: les manuels scolaires, les programmes d'enseignement et la formation des maîtres (p. 668).

Usually when we speak about illiteracy in Africa we focus on the lack of schools, on the children who have not the possibility to attend them, we underline school abandon data but it is not enough. Once a kid sit on his desk there start a new job, a difficult endeavor: learning is always complicate, it is relating to something personal connecting a teacher and a student, it needs method and patience. In Guinean case is also more complex because of the problems involving every part of the educational equation: programs, materials, sites, teachers and students. We have to consider every element and try to fix it if we want to solve the situation, unfortunately during these years not every element had the same importance to academics' eyes.

This project want to be incisive toward present approach to didactic because all national and international efforts for Guinean education won't be vain.

## **2.4. Methodology and data collection**

My observation began when I was teacher in a school in Sobanet, in the Boffa district. The school was created by an NGO and it was free, with local teachers and around 400 students. I started as English teacher (the lessons were in French) and I helped with the bureaucracy. Soon I saw spread learning difficulties, it was hidden before just because the evaluation system was so mechanic that it didn't reveal true problems. So the NGO director decided to commit me a learning support program in order to allow students with bad marks to reach passing grade.

Pursuant to my analysis on school in Guinea and on the sources of didactical problems, we have to consider three elements: first, the Ministerial regulations; second, teachers comments; third, Guinea languages policies.

### **2.4.1. The Ministerial regulations**

Also if the general environment (open classrooms, hot weather, overcrowded groups) seems be fertile for a relaxed and approximate way of teaching, in Guinea, as in other many Southern countries, the state regulation about school and didactical plans are very strict. The ministerial orders impose often a dense study program, not really affordable for most of the students.

In this way bureaucracy associated with educational programs forces the teachers to impose a compulsive rhythm not based on students possibilities.

The government imposes programs too advanced and complicate, maybe easier for children living in the cities but almost impossible for students in the rural areas. Moreover apparent order and discipline become the most important criteria during the lessons but at the end of the academic year many scholars are flunked (in Guinea pupils with double rejections must

leave the school) and just a little percentage passes the final exam, causing a high school dropout (source: Unesco Institute for Statistic).

The government control on school regulation should improve the situation, not create a deeper crisis. By now the governmental programs don't stick to the real students' level but they are based just on a standard level of knowledge. I think that we should come back to the competences, insisting on basic important ability upon which the children could really rely.

### **2.4.2. Teachers**

According to my opinion teaching should have a neuralgic importance in the changing process of school, teachers could be the engines for a real improvement but there are many problems that we have to consider.

In the rural areas negative habits linked to the relationship teacher-pupils are still in force and concussion is very common. For example students can be employed by teachers for practical works, as the transportation of timber or bricks. I saw really young students helping their teacher building his new house, they were bringing away the terrain with kitchen bowl carried on their heads. It is something normal according to local perspective, children are at the end of the change of power so they have to obey orders.

There are many documented cases of teachers asking for sex in return for promotion or of sexual abuses in general.

Also in a "normal" lesson one of teacher's main aims is to try to keep the class calm and attentive, very difficult goal due to external (often outdoor classes, lack of didactic material, weather..) and internal conditions (students' indiscipline and lack of attention) so physical punishment are very common. Fear is often the principal method to keep discipline.

Students with major difficulties are more prone to distraction because for them is very difficult (if not impossible) to understand the teacher. Often they are forced to stand up keeping the hands on the head or they are ejected from the lesson and their gap of knowledge necessarily grows. Surely in most of cases teachers' lack of knowledge (see next paragraph) and interest about pedagogy doesn't help but also when they are willing and knowledgeable the situation is not so different.

Classes overcrowding doesn't allow them to give the right attention to every student, if someone has a different level compared to the others (both with positive and negative drops of knowledge) he is isolated. Relating to this problem I would like to quote an abstract from the Unesco Bulletin for statistic n. 9 "School and teaching resources in Sub-Saharan Africa, analysis of the 2011 UIS regional data collection on education" (UNESCO, 2011):

Class size and class organization are issues that are often debated in relation to education quality. It is generally recognized that larger classes result in lower educational achievements, especially in the early years of schooling. Large classes or multi-grade classes can be difficult for teachers to manage, may result in the adoption of less effective methods of teaching, and often limit the amount of individual attention and guidance students receive.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the average class size in public primary schools ranges from 26 pupils in Cape Verde to 67 in Chad. In four out of ten countries reporting data there are on average 50 or more pupils per class. This is much higher than average class sizes in the European Union or OECD member countries which are below 20 in the majority of countries and below 30 in all countries.

In addition to being large, many primary classes in sub-Saharan Africa are multi-grade classes covering two or more grades in the same classroom with the same teacher. In most countries reporting data, at least 10% of pupils are taught in such classes.

In Guinea, Mali, Niger and Togo, multi-grade classes are on average larger than single-grade classes. There are over 70 pupils per class in Mali where nearly 20% of pupils are taught in multi-grade classes (UNESCO, 2011, p. 3- 4).

In this project I would like anyway to focus on that didactic change that could help to improve the general level also in these difficult situation, of course specific problems like sexual abuses need deeper procedure and control.

### **2.4.3. Guinea language policies**

When we think a Guinean student living in a rural area we have to consider many elements that obstacle the learning. I will explain later about the psychological factors and some material limitation. Anyway in order to understand why Guinea is so a specific case we have to consider a basic element: the language.

Children are learning French as second language, sometimes as third. In every natural context (family, friends, commercial activities, etc.), kids speak their native languages. Guinea situation is a single and interesting case. As consequence of a breach with France in 1964, Sekou Toure's single party decided to apply a "de-Westernization" of structures and mentalities. So Guinean languages were promoted at the expense of French, that was perceived as symbol of cultural alienation (see Badara, 1997).

Looking at the bilingual reality proper of linguistic minorities they chose 8 (between the 20 spoken) as teaching and literacy tongues. They were: the three vehicular languages, the soso, the Peul and the Malinké, and five between the eighteen minority languages, the kissi, the toma, the guerzé, the koniagui and the bassari. These tongues were spoken, from respective linguistic area, both as primary an as secondary language by different communities and they were taught at school from 1966 since 1984. This worthy initiative was in fact a failure.

These languages were not coded as written languages; a transcription system, based on Latin alphabet, was adopted temporarily and, with UNESCO assistance, some manuals for functional literacy were printed and distributed but it wasn't enough. Local tongue teaching wasn't positive nor effective but also French teaching was catastrophic: there weren't

manual, students had many difficulties to start to learn it at 3<sup>rd</sup> year of secondary school and above all **there weren't teachers really knowledgeable who can teach it, the formation of French teacher in fact stopped in 1970**. Owing that not French speaking were disadvantaged in their possibilities to emigrate or to improve their working conditions, in 1984, with Sekou Toure death and the end of his single party, people went in the streets claiming for national languages rejection and requiring the return of French teaching at school<sup>1</sup>. So in Guinea we have to consider that this period led to a general approximate or inexistent knowledge of French and to a massive use of native languages.

There are concrete consequence not just between the teachers but also among the students. In a classroom, for example the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of primary school, we could find children perfectly able to speak French, someone who already knows the alphabet sitting beside someone who has difficulties to understand simple sentences. In these cases we have to consider also the ethnic differences between students and also with the teachers, there are no easy solution.

## **Chapter 3. The Project as a Strategy For Changes**

### **3.1. Scope and limitations**

My scope is to try to bring a concrete help, focusing my attention on didactic and furnishing to the teacher useful tools to improve their method and their students' possibility. I think that a correct procedure should act in a wide panoramic which involve all the process that create a lesson: from indirect participants (Universities, Govern) to the real subjects (teachers and pupils). It's important to reconsider the teacher role that sometimes seems to oscillate from a complete negative vision (exploiter and lazy) to a little consideration.

Teachers must become subjects of a greater control, not limited only to the bureaucracy but that could make feel them responsible for the minds that they are shaping. Their duty is very complex, they have to engage with problem dealing with different culture, learning disturbs, uncomfortable environment. As Athanase Simbagoye et Aïssatou Sow-Barry (1997) wrote:

Le principe sur lequel reposent l'enseignement du français en Afrique et le maintien de cette langue dans son rôle de langue officielle est l'attention qu'on doit partout accorder à la formation des maîtres. C'est ce que soutient Dumont (1990, p. 50) pour qui l'on doit d'abord revaloriser le statut des enseignants en Afrique. Ainsi, l'importance du français en Afrique exige un renouveau méthodologique et un effort remarquable des Etats à donner une formation adaptée aux enseignants (Simbagoye, Sow Barry 1997, p. 672).

Another important issue, almost always forgotten, is the teaching program. Teacher should have a good street to follow that allows him to lead their students on the easiest way. Often programs are fruitlessly complicated, they impose to the class to act unproductively, just for office requirements. I think that is essential, in a critic situation like this one, to persist on key-concept, basic for everyone, leading the lesson in a very elastic mood, trying to involve every students. Just in this way we will be sure to really fill the big gap of knowledge that

in other ways children would trail heavily since the exam. We have not to underestimate these possible difficulties or be bothered by them. It's crucial to focus our attention on the student, even forgetting the program.

Every pupil bring new cultural and linguistic complexities, linked with his background. The French, as emerged after Sekou Touré's educational experiment, is the only possible teaching language but it has an implicit distance with the student.

L'enseignant du français en Afrique est confronté à d'autres difficultés d'ordre sociolinguistique. Le français, langue d'enseignement, est superposé aux langues vernaculaires qui jouent le rôle d'outil de communication et non de support d'enseignement. L'enfant africain est, dans la plupart des cas, bilingue, voire polyglotte avant sa scolarisation. L'une des conséquences de cela est qu'un enfant qui n'a pas encore dépassé le stade de la pensée opératoire aura des difficultés à s'exprimer ou à verbaliser ses sentiments en langue française. Cela n'a pas empêché l'abandon des réformes scolaires en Afrique (Simbagoye, Sow Barry, 1997, p. 672).

This critic process is essential for a real improvement but it is limited by a lack of surrounding materials and resources working in the same direction.

In particular my analysis suffers a partial knowledge of Guinean governmental dispositions, not very clear and hardly available. I think that this partial obstacle could be a good starting point for the following step. I hope for a profitable cooperation between Guinea State, international organizations and academics in order to create a governmental linguistic machine (like during Sekou Toure's leadership but a modern view) composed by a good University system, publishing houses, medias and a renewal of didactic programs.

Knowing the difficult economic situation in Guinea this focus on didactic and linguistic issues could seems not a priority. I think that Guinea must use his strong national culture and transform it a tool for a real linguistic identity, just a common word and a common tradition can bypass the distance between people and politic, making the Guineans more aware of their possibilities and rights.

I have done a personal analysis, based on my own experience, explaining how to reduce some of the psychological and learning difficulties, and also a wider proposal based on a new kind of approach based on student competences.

### **3.2. Pedagogic considerations**

The pupils participating to my program were signaled by the teachers; often, when the lesson was after the regular classes, there were a lots of voluntary students that asked for stay and sometimes also some workers who listened from the outside. My approach was very different from the usual for a Guinean kid, I didn't speak a lot, just giving key concept. I preferred to work with small group, calling each student in turn to the blackboard, checking if he was really understanding.

The reactions were different, somebody showed more than one:

#### **— *Closure:***

Children were used to sit and listen, they were sometimes obliged to repeat, the real lesson was too difficult for the most of them and just few answered to teacher's questions. I was calm and determined asking them to reason, also for little thing. Sometimes this attention caused tension, the kid felt like persecuted and closed himself in a silence-barrier. The only solution that I found was to wait patiently kid's time, coming back on themes that he already knew was a good solution to make him feel gratified and push him to try to express his ideas.

#### **— *Enthusiasm:***

Sometimes children were very grateful for all this attention, often they are considered like invisible, at school, at home. This enthusiasm was positive if they poured it toward

themselves, becoming proud of their ability. It was sometimes negative when they were just happy to receive consideration and their attention was momentary. The only way to check a real comprehension is to repeat a short knowledge test before of every lesson. It could seem boring and useless but our aim is not complete the program, is to shape a solid basic education.

— *Hyper agitation:*

A new learning way, based on communication, free expression, sometimes games, in the most of cases led to an hyper reaction in children forced to seat hushed and motionless for hours. I didn't want to use usual punish method, like the director office, parents, isolation. Often the best solution was to use child's desire to participate to the lesson as blackmail, for example starting a quiz with score and say that just quiet pupils would participate.

I would like to add an observation, obvious for locals but important and not always considered by international NGOs' and governmental programs: children living in rural areas aren't used to be closed in a room, they haven't artificial light at home and often neither a table, they spend their time doing practical games or works while in the city electricity gives the possibility to watch television or, in general, to stay more at home, in a closed environment.

This difference have to be considered when we want to plan a lesson, we have to consider students' possibility to understand it and to give it attention. It's not a matter of intelligence but of habits and a drastic restriction of freedom can lead just to apathy.

Another fact to consider is the dishomogeneity of classes: sometimes students starting Primary school are completely literates, because they did nursery school, but sometimes they aren't. Age is often approximate, vary from document to document, and students are placed in classes according to this conventional data rather than basing on actual merits. The effects are a boy in 4th class, which shows 5-6 years of age, but whose document said

he is 11 years old, with many learning difficulties and bullying victim because he is half the height of his friends, and on the other side a boy 1,80m high but whose parents assure he is 10 years old and that they are just a little bit late for the school registration, he can't start from 1st years so he is put in 3rd class and his illiteracy become a condemn that others will call stupidity.

### **3.3. Didactic considerations**

School was composed by two elements: order and memory.

Order (just graphic, not a real mental order) is an old-fashioned tool erroneously used like evaluation instrument. Also memorization can be very dangerous, covering children real level of knowledge with a great zeal and passing the concept that a good student have not to reason, just to repeat.

This had different consequence in different subjects, I examined primarily a basic level focusing on mathematic and literacy:

#### **— *Mathematics:***

I was surprised to discover that students often learnt operation just memorizing them. On the back cover of every notebook were printed additions, subtractions, multiplications and division tables, pupils repeated them many times without understand the key concept that create the solution. If for example I asked  $2+5$  they probably knew the solution (because 2 is one of the first tables) but if I asked  $5+2$  they didn't know what to say.

Mathematic was a concept totally shared with real life, my aim was to remove this artificial separation to force them to reason about every day situation. I brought little stones and pieces of chalk showing concretely that two objects added to five objects create a group of seven. Sometimes it was enough to think to concrete example to find a solution: the subtraction could seems difficult and create mistakes when a children understand addiction

from not a long time, it is sufficient to say: “You have 5 mangos and you give 2 of them to your friend”. It is a common situation, child feels at ease imagining this situation and forgets the embarrassment linked not to know the answer.

In a second step also a line of number can be used, arrows can show addition and subtraction directions, we can count the spaces in order to visualize the calculation.

— *Literacy:*

Almost all the students were able to write, someone also with a magnificent calligraphy, only few of them, however, knew what they had written.

Once I observed a kid, I think it was 5 years old but he was attending the 3<sup>rd</sup> class, trying to write, he didn't know at all alphabetic characters, he was interpreting every word like a very complicate drawing and he was filling his notebook with these senseless arabesques, he had many notebook like that one.

The first step so is starting with the alphabet, changing the order and connecting every letter with a sound (necessary for the second step), asking to write and say what they are writing it is a good exercise because prevents to use just the memory.

Once that it's sure that students really know the alphabet we can start to tie consonant and vowel, the French system is quite simple because in most of cases letters don't change their sound joining with the others, anyway it is better to select words were this procedure is clear (like BA-NA-NA in which each phoneme and each syllable is linked to the other without changing of sound).

In this way, looking for being careful to answer to any kind of doubt, I tried to apply a different approach. My time and my experience were not enough, the only thing that I'm sure to affirm is that we have to give place to pupils' needs. It can seem a rhetoric concept but it isn't, especially if we are teachers not well paid with an enormous program to

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complete. Just patience and calm can lead to a real comprehension of scholars' problems and a continuous educational assessment, structured on simple and clear curricular units, can create homogeneous classes without disparity.

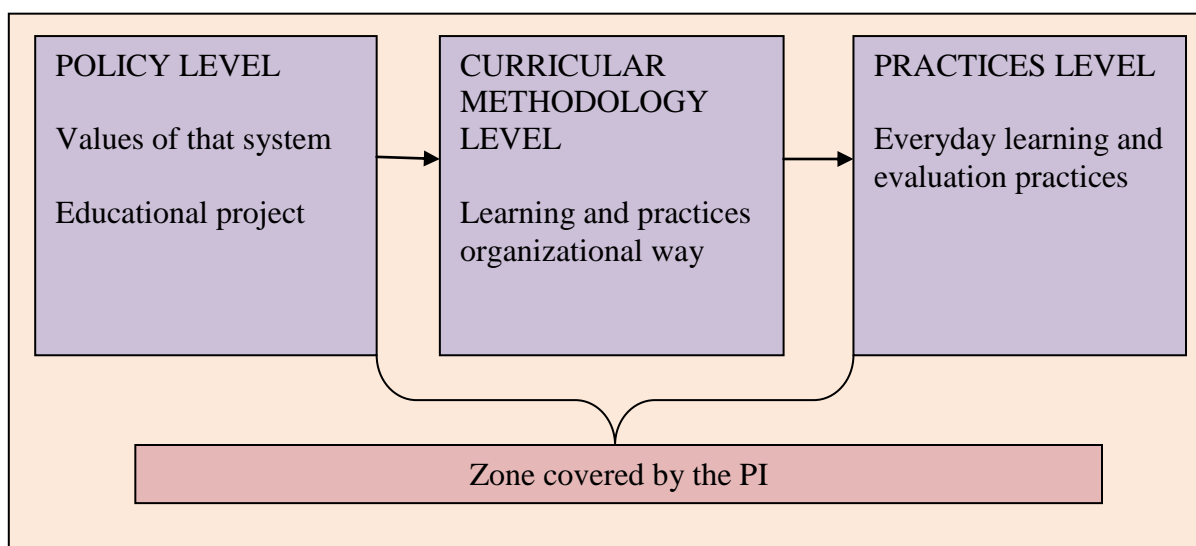
### **3.4. the Pedagogy of Integration (PI)**

#### **3.4.1. Introduction to PI**

My previous certainties and limitations were deeply shaken and pushed forward discovering the work of BIEF (<http://bief.be>). BIEF is a team of experts in the field of education, formation and projects management. Through their projects, created for different contexts, located as in the North as in the South of the world, I had the opportunity to know a new approach to pedagogy and a new way of problems-solving.

In particular I found precious and really useful answers in the theory of pedagogy of integration (PI).

The concept of PI was born in Belgium with Jean-Marie De Ketele, who started talking about “Terminal Integration Target” (“Objectif Terminal d’Intégration”)(De Ketele, 1989), and Xavier Roegiers (Roegiers, 2006, 2010a), president of BIEF, who developed the principle of PI employing it in a primary school project in Algeria with the support of UNICEF.



**Table 8.** PI Levels of Intervention

PI is not a pedagogy itself: it is a curricular methodology (reference to curriculum): it provides a way of organizing learning and of evaluation inside an educational system or a training system. It lies between the policy level on one hand and the level of practice on the other. In other words, it acts as an interface between a given curriculum policy (which educational project planning which project of society? Which purposes?) and teachers' pedagogic practices.

During the '90s many educational system started to be interested in the pedagogy of integration, for the creation of cross skills and the solution of complex problems. For example it was appreciated in many high school with professional training in Belgium, France and Switzerland but the PI was especially employed in Africa, in the Primary school teaching programs.

The PI was born as logical outcome of many pedagogic trends of 20th century: the pedagogy by objective and the a competence-based approach.

In the PBO the objectives are estimable and they have a concrete but not complex nature (for example the verbs tenses). In the CBA the objective are complex but not concrete (*cross-skills*).

Often the passage from one pedagogy to the other is too fast, and in none of these cases the student can be ready to face problems both complex and concrete.

In order to understand it better we should analyze what the word competence means: “the spontaneous mobilization of a set of resources in order to apprehend a situation and respond to it in a more or less relevant way.” (Crahay, 1997; De Ketele, 2000, 2001; Dolz & Ollagnier, 2002; Fourez, 1999; Jonnaert, 2002; Le Boterf, 1994; Legendre, 2001; Rey, 1996; Perrenoud, 1997; Roegiers, 1996, 2000, 2003; Tilman, 2000).

So the competence depends by a specific situation, as we could see also in the De Ketele’s formula (De Ketele, 1996):

$\begin{aligned} \text{Competence} &= \{\text{capacities x content}\} \times \text{situation} \\ &= \{\text{objective}\} \times \text{situation} \end{aligned}$
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**Table 9.** De Ketele’s equation

*In the equation of DE KETELE, we add accordance {}, to insist on the fact that it is about an **integrated unit**: it is not enough — to master competence — that the objectives are juxtaposed, it is necessary that they interact to form a unified whole. (Peyser, Gerard, Roegiers, 2006, p.2)*

So if one of the terms has zero values we can’t apply the competence, it is null. If the situation changes the student will not be able to face the problem.

On the contrary previously, in the Europe country, and nowadays in most African system, it was employed the PBO or the transmission method so concrete concepts were taught but with no link to real situation.

Roegiers affirms (2010b) that most of the students doesn't acquire the basic contents that the society asks them; moreover a huge gap is developing between "strong" and "weak" students and it is more and more extended by the "abusive flunking"<sup>1</sup> (and promotions) that contribute to create classes with patchy level.

The pedagogy of integration tries to fill this gap, mixing both concrete and complex objectives.

### **3.4.2. PI basis**

Every country has curricular policy (basic values, aims and basic context needed) with a specific curriculum (tools in order to put to use it).

This curriculum is composed by three levels:

- Estimated Curriculum: it is the program furnished to the teachers.
- Planted Curriculum: it is the program applied in the practice, in everyday operations.
- Realized Curriculum: it is the result observed through students' acquisition.

It is important to highlight that: « Quoi qu'il en soit, pour être mise en œuvre au quotidien, une politique curriculaire doit faire l'objet d'une traduction opérationnelle. » (Roegiers, 2010a, p. 20).

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<sup>1</sup>. Roegiers calls « échecs et réussites abusifs » that unfair flunking or promotions that don't reflect the real student's level (Roegiers, 2010b).

The pedagogy of integration (PI) is situated between the curricular policy and the pedagogic practices, operating a key-role in assuring effective results. It propose an organizational model of learning and evaluation.

Roegiers defines PI as a methodological frameworks which show the curricular engineering, led in a very precise way.

I think that the simplest explanation is that one given by Roegiers in his book:

Pour prendre l'analogie avec la construction d'une maison, la pédagogie de l'intégration joue le rôle de l'architecte, entre un projet de construction du client, et la mise en œuvre par l'entrepreneur. Tout comme l'architecte élabore un projet selon les désirs du client, la pédagogie de l'intégration propose une organisation des apprentissages conforme aux orientations exprimées par le politique et aux escomptés par lui. (Roegiers, 2010a, pp. 21-22).

PI reveals also an important choice about learning system.

I think that this approach is really important for every serious critical approach to school system, in particular in emergency or humanitarian plans where the main problem is always the discrepancy between estimated curriculum and realized curriculum.

Also in Guinea case internal and external factors create a huge gap between expected results and students' real level. I think that the real reason is that apparently, with the traditional model, notions have no concrete applications both in everyday life or in the future.

On the contrary the pedagogy of integration rely on the simple principle that, finished his studies, every pupil should be able to face a complex situations<sup>2</sup>: problems, reflections, goals.

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<sup>2</sup>. Roegiers explains clearly what complex means: it involves something articulated, with the interplay of more elements.

It is important to underline that this does not mean that students should go to school just to learn the ropes of a profession, they just have to become able to learn how to do that profession as best they can.

Today this is one of the main critic to competency based approach, when we talk about a connection with the reality and students' future the opponents think about school programs shaped on the market needs. Nothing is more wrong. The pedagogy of integration is based on students' needs, obviously one day that student should enter in the world of work and school must provide him all the tools to deal with it in the best way. A school completely detached from the real world is dangerous, because create professionals expert in the theory and ignorant in the practice, and worthless.

If in a developed country we can take the liberty to try it, regardless with bad consequences but with less risk and more opportunities, in Guinea we can't.

School is a precious gift for those children who have the chance to attend it and they can't waste their time and their mind. Learning is a priority.

If the traditional learning model based on memorization contributes in the closure of their minds and in a growing discouragement in their own abilities the pedagogy of integration aims to develop their self confidence, making them ready to solve autonomously their problems.

### **3.4.3. PI in the practice**

I tried to analyze the PI model proposed by Roegiers in the compulsory general teaching (Roegiers, 2010a, p. 27-28). How the PI is realized in the practice?

In a given period there is the alternation of 2 learning strategies: the meticulous learning of resources and the learning of integration. At the beginning the teacher organizes situations

aiming to develop the necessary resources for complex situations that students should solve: grammar rules, conjugations, arithmetic, technical know-how... Roegiers calls them “*apprentissage ponctuels*”. In the following period, called “integration module”, the teacher stops giving resources and invites the pupils to solve complex situations in which they are called to mobilize the resources that they learned during the previous weeks.

In order to resolve these problems the students could work in small groups but mainly they should learn working autonomously.

Several situation-problem are posed, every time new but with the same level of complexity, both as training or as evaluation tool:

- A problem-situation in order to practice interactively in small groups;
- A problem-situation in order to practice individually;
- A problem-situation in order to assess the acquired competences;
- If necessary, a last one to fix doubts or difficulties.

During the academic year this process, composed by the two learning strategies, will be proposed again and again for four or five times.

### **3.4.4 PI in the world**

In recent years the approach by integrated learning (pedagogy of integration) was taken as leading direction by many countries in Europe, the Middle East (especially Lebanon) and Africa, often under the guide and supervision of the International Organization of the Francophony (OIF) and with from UNICEF and UNESCO support. It is particularly important to emphasize the decisive role played by UNICEF in some countries to support reforms of curricula with a view to quality education for all.

In particular this was the orientation adopted by the OIF multilateral pool of experts in educational sciences, involving experts from 30 countries, mainly from Francophone Africa.

Since 2001, this pool has focused its work on the pedagogy of integration, both in terms of reflection seminars, production seminars, training programmes in each country, publications, and especially curriculum revision. These curriculum revisions take place in several, mainly: reflection, awareness, testing, validation, training, generalization.

So today about a third of Francophone African and North African (Arabic and Portuguese) countries uses a generalized pedagogy of integration in primary education (Morocco, Tunisia, Gabon, Senegal, Madagascar, Djibouti, Cape Verde, Comoros, Mauritania...). Another third is in the process of generalization or is partially revising its curriculum, drawing on the principles of pedagogy of integration (Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire... ). Pedagogy of integration is also the basis for reforms in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Angola or Burundi.

For practical and psychological reasons the PI has a better impact than Competency based approach in poor countries because the total change does not happen in one stage but previous methods are simply integrated with the new model. Moreover PI needs less materials and supervision.

### **3.4.5 PI in Guinea**

I think that the general problems observed by Roegiers – students unprepared to face the needs of society, strong-weak gap, abusive flunking – are also present in Guinea school system, with some important extra difficulties caused by the environment, lacking materials and identity quest.

The pedagogy of integration has as objectives:

- **Making sense of the learning process**, by placing the learning process within a meaningful context that makes sense to the student in relation to the real-life situations he needs to face in life, so the student become “active” in the leaning processus;
- **Differentiating matters by relevance**, focusing on the important, either because it is necessary and practical for daily life, or because it may become the basis for future learning, this could allow students to discover their “talent” without frustrating feelings and the usual gap between strong and weak;
- **Applying the learning to practical situations**. This means not just filling the student's head with knowledge, but teaching him/her to relate the learned material to values - the learning objectives -, such as becoming a responsible citizen, a competent worker, an independent individual. The student will consequently be evaluated within a complex scenario (Roegiers, 2004); just in this way the school can become the powerful tool for a real change in Africa;
- **Associating the learned elements**, and thereby responding to one of society's major challenges, which is to provide a child with the capacity to mobilize his/her knowledge and skills to deal effectively with daily situations, and hopefully even with unexpected ones. This fourth objective is based on the close inter linking of the preceding three objectives mentioned (process, relevance and application).

I found an interesting project by Djénabou Balde and Mamadou Cellou Diallo from the *Institut Supérieur des Sciences de l'Éducation de Guinée*. The aim was to train school headmasters following the competency-based approach in Guinea (Balde & Diallo, 2012).

Between 2009 and 2011, the Higher Institute of Education Sciences of Guinea (ISSEG) conducted training, according to the competency-based approach, of 6500 Principals of

Elementary Schools on a population estimated at about 7.500 principals in the time of the research.

Monitoring and evaluating processes of this project allowed them to understand that beneficiaries consider relevant the skills targeted by the project, the content of training offered and teaching formulas borrowed. The results also reveal the manifestation of a desire for progressive integration promoted by the project in the daily practices of principals. This determination should be supported to sustain what they acquired, strengthening it and making it enduring.

However, in the absence of regular monitoring, the momentum integration skills may become dull very quickly if it refers to a large segment DE<sup>3</sup> who was clearly surprised by the arrival of investigators. The designers of this monitoring have also seen time when they decided to combine DSEE<sup>4</sup> the implementation of this activity. Of course this monitoring by DSEE requires preplanning to ensure they function correctly.

Multiple local initiatives directed towards the formation of non-principals involved in the project and some DSEE, testify eloquently highly positive perceptions of direct and indirect beneficiaries in the project (Balde & Diallo, 2012, p. 32).

I think this project it is important in order to highlight:

- the real need for a change in the direction of a more efficient school system;
- the presence of some common problems observed also during my experience and that are a relevant common ground that has to be considered in future project;
- the DE are interested about competences but some of them are also skeptical and the researcher are concerned about a real change toward CBA in the future.

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<sup>3</sup>. Directeur d'école DE.

<sup>4</sup>. Délégation Spéciale de l'Enseignement Élémentaire DSEE.

In my opinion the pedagogy of integration could be perceived better by the local principals because it maintains some phases with concrete objectives and anyway, as Roegiers always says, pedagogical changes need time and gradual steps.

Moreover, as reported in a BIEF article for IBE institute - Unesco:

This approach (ndr. Competency-based approach) is very rich, very ambitious. It can only be put into effect validly and in a durable way by teachers who are very well trained. Furthermore, it requires favorable conditions: reduced groups of students, appropriate rooms, and indispensable materials.

In the poor countries, and in the fairly advanced countries, this kind of pedagogy only works when international organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF...) or non-governmental organizations provide consistent support in terms of supervision, teacher training, contributions in the form of infrastructure and materials.

The consequence is, when this approach is not strongly supported by a government, by international organizations or by non- governmental organizations, it is only installed on a long-term basis in the best schools. In the final analysis, therefore, it contributes to increase elitism. (E-Forum on the Approach by Competencies, BIEF/05.09.19 for IBE-Unesco, p.1)

I think that the PI could be a positive answer to Guinea needs, or at least a good starting point. We already have many practical example employed in neighboring countries, moreover an approach based on “competence” and not anymore linked to fix written concepts could be more open to a multifaceted society like the Guinean one. A competence can be expressed in more languages, French can become an useful tool and not an imposed prison of contents.

Moreover PI is easier to be integrated in a retrograde system, as we saw the main obstacle are the teacher but in this way in a first stage, they have to introduce resources following their traditional methods. Active learning methods are not required, just to test if students can use what they have learned: not only the knowledge, the know-how, but also life competencies.

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In general, it takes a teacher two years to habituate him/herself to manage these integration modules. (BIEF for IBE, p. 3)

When the integration modules are in place, the teacher is led to change his/her class procedures: instead of teaching in a lecture format, he/she learns to progressively lead the learning processes in an active way. This procedural change generally takes more time to install it permanently: it should take 5 to 10 years. (BIEF for IBE, p. 3)

In this way, total change is not expected from the teachers in one stage, they can slowly adapt their method and their attitudes . So they are reassured, and they feel safe.

Pedagogy of integration involves also a phase of reparation where pupils that have difficulties with some concepts can revise them. This is a revolutionary step in the Guinean school: the normal way to proceed (teacher's explanation followed by evaluation) doesn't include the possibility to remediate to pupils' gaps. Also the evaluation is not made in a single day or test, situation that creates a big stress for the child, but it takes place in a logical and continuative way during the integration parts, just at the end of the year they have to resolve complex problems alone.

Obviously a concrete change should involve every part of the school apparatus: from the government, with the bureaucracy imposition and funds, and with a concrete destination of public aid towards their true beneficiaries; to university, creating a training for teachers with more space to pedagogy and method in general, insisting on the protection of children's rights; to people's mind: school has to be perceived like an important gift and duty, been postponed to nothing else

### 3.5. Literature Review

The main obstacle composing my research was to find a good bibliography, something really concerning the issue that I choose. I still miss governmental disposition and national programs.

There are thousands of books and case study about education in Sub-Saharan Africa, a lots of them also very interesting. For the first two parts in particular I examined the reports available on the Unesco platforms (especially on the International Institute for Education Planning - IIEP - platform) finding very good material. Also if these researches have an high value none of them focus on didactic, their priority are, mostly, the financial aspect and the practical needs (more schools, with electricity and drinking water). Obviously I can't disagree with the choice of these themes, they are all essential for a real improvement of African education, but I was looking for something more pertinent with my subject, some didactic textbook or some pedagogic guidelines and I didn't find anything similar.

I asked to an expert, working in UNESCO and involved in some activities linked to education, and she told me that this kind of material don't exist, she explained me that is difficult to generalize and summarize in a book such a complex theme, every class has his needs. I agree with this opinion but I see the necessity of a point of view on didactic, also if it has to be very elastic and adaptable to the situation.

Anyway for this paper I found very good information in the Unesco Institute for Statistic Bulletin, in particular the n° 9: *School and Teaching Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa. Analysis of the 2011 UIS Regional Data Collection on Education*<sup>7</sup>. It furnishes precious data such as class size, availability of textbooks, number of newly recruited teachers, and availability of basic school services (toilets, clean water and electricity).

The UNESCO and FAO report of the seminar debated in Addis Ababa, in September 2006, “*Education for rural people in Africa*” was very useful in order to understand the true

differences between city and rural environment and their consequences on education . The correlation between illiteracy, poverty and food insecurity is high: hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity erode cognitive abilities and reduce school attendance and the poverty causes a lack of resources and trained people.

I used also the reports on financial plans for aids in education and the final balance of these mission in order to understand what are the improvements and if there is a possibility to change the situation. Moreover I explored many website and read articles concerning French as a second language, teaching problem and solution, I also found francophone grammar for some specific African areas, structured in parallel with the local dialects.

I tried to give more space to those sources that come directly from Guinea, in order to hear the voice of the persons concerned and to propose a symbiotic solution, not foreign for Guinean people. Internet is a powerful tool to allow expression (also if in Guinea a good connection is hardly available) and there is a wide diffusion of cellular phone with webcam, the effect of this combination is that looking on youtube it is possible to find many video were scholars, teachers or NGO's workers, tell their version about Guinean school. I liked very much this source of information, very direct and sincere, fruit of a true need of expression and communication.

The most important texts for the educational part of my analysis remains Athanase Simbagoye et Aïssatou Sow-Barry's article, *Bilinguisme scolaire dans l'enseignement du français en Afrique noire francophone : les cas du Burundi et de la Guinée*, Revue des sciences de l'éducation, Volume 23, numéro 3, 1997, p. 665-682. They expose most of the problems that I found during my personal experience finding common causes and interesting national particularities.

In order to understand the linguistic situation I used Sylla Ali Badara's article: *La politique linguistique de la Guinée de 1966 à 1984*. Badara represents clearly Sekou Toure's linguistic procedures and connects what is happened in the past with today's situation. That linguistic change is crucial in order to understand Guinea today situation.

For the last part of my project I had the chance to discover the BIEF and in particular Xavier Roegiers' researches, I appreciated particularly the clear lessons he uploaded on Youtube, the case of Algeria and Madagascar, and for the key-concepts about POI I used his book: *La pédagogie de l'intégration – Des systems d'éducation et de formation au coeur de nos societies*, and also *Implementing a pedagogy of integration: some thoughts based on a Textbook Elaboration Experience in Vietnam*, by Alexia Peyser, François-Marie Gerard and Xavier Roegiers.

I think the easiest and clearest explanation about PI and its effects can be found in the *E-Forum on the Approach by Competencies: Introductory statement, Two notions of the approach by competencies*, written by BIEF experts upon the requirement of IBE. It is also useful in order to understand the differences between PI and CBA and the real advantages of the first one.

I like as positive example also the School Reform in Paraguay and in particular I read the Review: *MIRADA SOBRE MIRADA Revista Annual Del Programa de Fortalecimiento de la Reforma Educativa en La Educaciòn Escolar Basica – Convenio MEC-BID – Ano 3*. Paraguay has a situation similar to Guinea because he faced the problems of dominant language vs local.

Finally I found a project in Guinea based on CBA, sponsored by the Ministry of Education Pre-University and Civic Education (MEPU-EC) and funded by the African Development Bank (BAD), focused on the development of a reliable system of communication, mobilization and resource management for the school, the implementation of pedagogical supervision for the benefit of teachers and the development of innovative projects for the school This is one of the first initiatives for a change in the teaching method in Guinea but there are still few obstacles, some of them could be overcome with the use of PI instead of CBA.

### **3.6. Risk Analysis and Ethical Considerations**

The subject of this research is complicate and delicate. I chose to analyze the way Guinean school system relates with children' needs and problems, investigating on a country far from me and focusing on childhood, very difficult protagonist.

My decision was led by a true love for this country and his childhood spirit. When I was in contact with these kids that we call “needy” I really tried to understand if they truly need this change or if, in a way different from “our”, they are happy. It was difficult to arrive to one conclusion and, as every thought that derives from a contorted reasoning, this conclusion in not simple.

I don't want to westernize those children, indeed their spontaneity and happiness also in difficult conditions are a gift that nobody should touch, but I think that it is right to give them the chances that they could aspire to, and exploit.

If they have to attend school I want that this time is not just some boring hours stolen to play activities, I want that they learn and improve, loving some subjects and hating others maybe, but reasoning with their heads. The actual didactic approach deprives most of them of their ability to think. Everyone must have the right to think and decide what is fair and good in their life. In the single existence of everyone there will be the time when they will have to do some choice, I would like that during that moment they will be aware, owners of their minds and thoughts.

So I decided to complete my research, also with modest competences, because I was sure that my desire to protect their choices and my sincere love for some of them would lead me in this complicate work. I wrote some advices, opinions and considerations. My ideas is that for a real change is essential a collective movement which involve all rings of the “educational chain”.

Today we heard about Guinea when we talk about impossibility of fair election and about corruption index in African country. I think that ethnic clashes, electoral violence and spread disorder find their roots in the lack of a positive national culture, and of ethic conscience.

School should lead a gradual change towards the creation of this culture. Guinea anthem, really loved by his inhabitants, sings:

***Liberté !***

*C'est la voix d'un peuple*

*Qui appelle tous ses frères*

*À se retrouver.*

...

*Bâtissons l'unité africaine*

*Dans l'indépendance recouvrée.*

Dealing with Guinean multifaceted and complex culture is a singular challenge, linguistic and social, we have to adopt a language in some kind “foreign” but necessary, the process that will lead Guinea to repossess of a national language will be a revolution and it is right that it will happen slowly, with caution. Indeed also it is right that everybody could participate not under someone other control but free to express himself.

L'importance du français langue de scolarisation et véhicule privilégié des connaissances scientifiques en Afrique n'est plus à démontrer. Toutefois, l'hétérogénéité linguistique des pays africains nous amène à nous questionner sur l'éducation en français auprès des groupes ethnolinguistiques africains.

En effet, le statut juridique du français dans les pays africains francophones cache une réalité sociologique importante. Le français, langue de scolarisation et d'enseignement, est enseigné comme une langue seconde, même comme une langue maternelle.

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En un mot, on ne tient pas assez compte de la réalité linguistique sous-jacente. De surcroît, le manque d'enseignants qualifiés, l'absence de moyens matériels et didactiques adaptés, l'inadéquation des méthodes d'enseignement et le manque d'assises théoriques adéquates compromettent les chances de succès de l'enseignement/apprentissage du français en milieu bilingue ou plurilingue africain (Symabagoye, Sow Barry, p. 666).

I hope that as soon as possible my research becomes old, substituted from a better one, signed by one of those children that in Guinea is starting to express himself.

Until that moment it's right to give them a voice.

## CONCLUSION

I think that a multilateral approach, and analysis, is fundamental when we have to face a problem. As in a court where every witness must be listened, every part has something important to say. Moreover there is always something even more precious that we can read between the lines, that we can understand just with an open and unconditional vision.

I tried to go near education question in Guinea letting its history, economy, culture explain me the real situation, that is more complex and less mechanic than we usually imagine.

The past, from the Independence to the Touré period, tells about a community proud of his culture, mixed and variegated, and that can speak many languages, not written but concrete part of everyone's life. This is important if we have to plan a didactic approach: French is not the mother tongue for most of the students so the French-based teaching is more difficult but polyglot children learn faster, not only languages but also general basics.

The economy shows a country full of potential, rich in raw materials that would have the possibility to feed its inhabitants. Obviously today situation indicates also a great gap between the majority of population and those ones who control the resources or who sell them to foreign investors. In order to be sustainable and efficient an humanitarian project cannot rely on these resources but it is important to look at them as a final goal: Guinean people should become able to exploit the potential of their land, asking for their right, stopping the clearance sale to foreign capitals and basing trade on a legal market and not just on corruption. So it is important to plan low-cost projects, maybe based on the resources already present on the field, just looking at them in a different way.

The politics points out the weakest side of Guinean profile, Guinea is still not completely autonomous in organizing fair elections, corruption index is criminally high and this governmental apparatus is the main obstacle for a positive effect of profit and no-profit investors. I think it is important not to feed this sick system with new economic aids. The only possible solution is a long term one, we have to look at tomorrow electors, someone

aware of his rights, not easy to manipulate basing on ethnic differences, looking for a peaceful coexistence of different communities that are part of Guinea.

Finally we have to look at the school situation, starting with the material problems: there is not enough school, classes are overcrowded, there is a lack of books, desks, chairs, in the rural areas (the context that I decided to analyze) there is not electricity and often there is not sanitation or drinkable water. These are huge problems that nobody can deny but an immediate solution is not available so we have to try to deal with this difficult system.

If a child have to walk 10 kilometers everyday (as we can see in the witnesses in the videos) just to go to school it must be worth. He is doing a big sacrifice in order to be there so he deserves more than anyone else a meaningful and valuable lesson.

The reality is different: majority of students does not learn neither the main basics, someone remains illiterate also after years of studying. The school should prepare students for their future life, giving them the tools in order to solve problems but in Guinea this is just an utopia.

All these elements, added to my direct experience, led me to consider a change in the approach. Guinean teachers and students need a new method that allow them to maximize the few resources they have at their disposal.

Pupils need attention and a real support in the learning process, teachers cannot stand drastic changes and economic resources are scarce.

I think that the pedagogy of integration could be a good solution that answer positively to every need and aspect. This approach is supported by several international organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO, AIF) has been developed in several European and African countries. The BIEF main researches carried out to this end show that:

- PI encounters support from all the actors, in particular the families and the students;
- PI obtains a gain in efficiency of the school systems; *“in research carried out in 4*

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*countries, the average gain was evaluated as between 10 % and 15 % in the results from students (2 to 3 points out of 20)”(BIEF FOR IBE);*

- PI make all students advance: the strong students advance, but the weak students also advance, sometimes more than the strong students, this is really important because most of classes are composed by students with very different levels;

- the teachers feel safe; they quickly observe changes in their classes, but they can also introduce innovation at their rhythm thanks to the integration phases.

BIEF experts observed that:

A difficulty in this method has to do with the material required. If it is to be effective, each student should have supports to resolve complex situations. In a good number of countries where it is being used, the question has been resolved by furnishing the students with a “complex situation notebook”, in addition to existing school manuals. (BIEF FOR IBE).

I'm confident in a true possibility of improvement, this could be a big change but it is based on simple basic actions, it does not demand a big amount of money neither big efforts. We have to start with little goals, like reducing the school dropout, rise the literacy percentage because they have a huge impact on pupils' life.

Once a student learn to think he has finally the power to use his head: he can employ his natural and learned tools in order to solve school and everyday problems. Reasoning is the best gift they can receive because reasoning they can develop the self confidence in their mind. The total detachment of school from children' experiences created a gap and the spread memorization stopped their brains. Complex problems and know-how training could fill this gap. This a matter of way of thinking, not only at school.

Guinea needs a concrete and sustainable way to build a different future, with the right method and little steps.

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What I wish for Guinea is a more radical process, including a governmental commitment for its citizens equality, an educational reform including Universities that are shaping teachers and politicians of tomorrow and a slow but important opening of the society toward children rights.

I hope this study could be useful for a future discussion and humanitarian projects related to education in Guinea, aiming to create the basis with today poor tools for tomorrow better schools.

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s35nKc8h-Nc>

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EJ29JF3EOY>

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