

How can the private sector's role in Senegal's education sector be strengthened?

Dakar, Tuesday March 10th, 2015 3:00 PM

Participants: Ministry of Education, private schools, relevant civil society, DFI's, funds, etc.

Context: Over the past decade, Senegal has witnessed rapid expansion in school enrolment, especially secondary school enrolment which increased almost 4 times over this period. The government's ambition for further growth in enrolment is apparent in its forthcoming growth strategy, Plan Sénégal Emergent, its 2013 education sector strategy, *Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence*, and the 2004 law mandating education to age 16. However, with public expenditure on education already very high for heavily indebted poor countries (at 6 percent of GDP), financing this ambition poses a daunting challenge. The private sector presents a potential source of financing but has played only minor role in the expansion of enrolment so far. Over the past decade, the private sector's contribution to new enrollment has been limited at the primary and lower secondary levels. The question is how can policy makers, private education providers and financiers work together to strengthen the private sector's role in helping Senegal achieve its goals for the education sector?

Welcoming remarks and key elements of basic education in Senegal

Serigne Mbaye Thiam (Minister of National Education, Senegal)

Key elements of private education in Senegal

M. Soumaré (Director of Private Education, Senegal)

Demand for private secondary school: opportunities, forecasts, and challenges

Presenter: Kevin Macdonald (Consultant, World Bank)

Analysis of household survey data suggests that despite the low market share for private secondary education, it is affordable to at least half of Senegal's population. It also suggests tuition expenditure will grow faster than GDP over time, but given current tuition costs, private secondary education will remain unaffordable to the poorest.

Promoting efficiency, innovation and equity in private education in Senegal

Presenters: Hugo Wesley and Husein Abdul-Hamid (World Bank)

Effectively engaging the private sector in education requires policies that encourage innovation by providers, promote diversity of supply, empower parents, and hold schools accountable. A benchmarking tool by the World Bank (SABER-EPS) assesses Senegal's legislation and policies to promote these goals. Its findings along with international models and examples provide new perspectives for using policy in Senegal to strengthen the private sector's role in education

Panel discussion: business models and financing challenges

Discussants: International Finance Corporation, Enko Education, Teranga Capital, Keur Madior, Al Azhar Institutes and others

The anemic state of private investment in Senegal's education sector is endemic to Francophone Africa: education services comprise a small fraction of commercial banks' lending portfolios while private equity funds and development finance institutions have made only a handful of investments in the past decade. Private schools struggle to grow and tend to finance growth through their own funds. This panel will provide perspectives from financiers and providers to better understand these challenges and potential solutions.