

Influencing Policy During Institutional Transitions

By Arthur Sagot-Duvaux

It takes time for an organization to influence policy decisions. It requires rigorous work to be trusted as a professional and high-quality organization. Relationships need to be established and expanded to the point that decision makers listen and solicit your opinion.

How can you secure such relationships when in just over a year the country goes through a popular uprising, a transitional government, a coup d'état, and democratic elections?

On October 2014, a popular uprising broke out in Burkina Faso, forcing M. Blaise Compaore to resign after 27 years in office (see our previous post: [*What happens when a revolution breaks out during your study*](#)). A transitional government was set up in November and presidential elections were to take place a year later.

In order to restore order and consolidate the democracy, a National Reconciliation and Reforms Commission was created; its goal was “to establish the basis of a truly democratic, fair, free and inclusive society in Burkina Faso.” A consultative process began and citizens as well as experts and organizations were heard regarding complaints and propositions in order to stimulate the reflections of the Commission. IPA Burkina Faso [took part in this consultation](#) and made two propositions in May 2015 based on successful programs evaluated by IPA and its sister organization J-PAL, the [deworming](#) and the teaching at the level of the child programs from [India](#) and [Ghana](#) (of course, this would integrate local effectiveness testing of the programs).

On September 14, 2015, the Commission submitted its report to the Prime Minister. Unfortunately, a few days later, there was a military coup and the report was (for some time) forgotten. Elections finally took place in November 2015 and the democratic process restored.

One year after making those two propositions, we finally got hold of the report. The two propositions made by IPA had been accepted and put into the recommended reforms for the new government. They come under the chapter *Rehabilitating the primary education sector – “instruct or perish”*:

- *Establish a policy of systematic screening for some pathologies, of **systematic deworming of all children in all schools at the beginning of each year**, and of monitoring of vaccine statuses of the pupils.*

- *Establish a policy of massive recruitment of education assistants in order to **apply “differentiated pedagogy” and develop tutoring.***

This is a real achievement for IPA Burkina Faso in our goal to promote effective solutions to national poverty problems.

Last March, the Council of Ministers decided the creation of a Constitutional Committee in order to propose the first draft of the Fifth Republic's Constitution. This passage to a Fifth Republic was decreed in the Transition Charter and signed by political parties, the civil society and the defense forces in the wake of the revolution.

As the democracy is being reconstructed day by day, we aim to bring our expertise and influence policy decisions to assist the Land of the Upright (literal translation of Burkina Faso) in its democratic, economic and social development. We hope that the Government and the Constitutional Committee will use the report and to see IPA's recommendations transformed into policy in the coming years.

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