

IMPACT OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR<sup>i</sup>

Introduction

Economic and social life in Madagascar has been seriously affected by the political crisis of the beginning of the year 2002. To assess the impact on the education sector, the Ilo Program, in collaboration with Instat and Fofifa, conducted a survey of 200 primary and secondary schools<sup>1</sup> in the provinces of Antananarivo, Fianarantsoa and Mahajanga in June 2002. Based on these data, the present policy brief discusses the impacts on educational services.

1. The school year was interrupted and effective teaching time was reduced.

a. The number of hours in class have been reduced and this to a larger extent in urban areas.

Table 1 describes the effect by zone (urban/rural) and by sector (public/private). Schools in urban areas canceled their classes for 45 days on average in the public sector and 35 days in the private one. The interruption was shorter in the rural areas with an average of 20 days in the public sector and 32 days in the private sector. The percentage of schools that interrupted their classes is also lower in the rural areas.

Table 1: Percentage of schools that interrupted teaching and in the case they did, length of interruption

Education Sector	Urban		Rural	
	Public	Private	Public	Private
<i>Percentage of schools that interrupted (%)</i>				
Antananarivo	100,0	100,0	95,5	100,0
Fianarantsoa	100,0	100,0	14,3	50,0
Mahajanga	83,3	83,3	6,5	0,0
Total	96,2	96,7	38,6	53,1
<i>Number of days of interruption</i>				
Antananarivo	46,6	34,3	36,7	24,5
Fianarantsoa	64,4	51,1	15,7	13,7
Mahajanga	14,0	3,4	4,0	0,0
Total	45,7	35,3	32,3	19,8

b. Effective teaching time in the school year 2001/2000 was reduced and this in particular in urban areas.

<sup>1</sup> The final sample is composed by 26 schools of the public sector and 30 of the private sector in the urban zone, 132 public schools and 13 private schools in the rural zone. The distribution by province is given in the Table in annex at the end of this policy brief.

The teaching schedule was re-organized due to the transportation problems caused by the fuel shortages in most urban areas. In general, this change has led to a reduction in the total number of hours of class per day<sup>2</sup>. Due to this situation, the annual required hours of classes will not be reached. The urban commune of Antananarivo was hit most (Table 2).

Tableau 2 : Total number of hours of class per school per week

	Urban		Rural	
	Before January 2002	After March 2002	Before January 2002	After March 2002
Antananarivo	30,3	27,3	28,6	28,2
Fianarantsoa	28,7	30,3	27,4	26,9
Mahajanga	30,9	30,6	26,3	26,3
Total	30,0	28,9	27,4	27,1

c. The political crisis created disturbances in the school year calendar.

If the end of a school year is normally at the end of June, the official examinations that mark the end of the school year have been delayed for about 1 month<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the beginning of the next school year 2002-2003 is scheduled for the first week of October, while it was initially expected to start on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

2. Teachers

a. The overall presence of the teachers was seemingly not affected by the crisis. Salaries seem to have been paid during the crisis.

However, in the Communes situated far from the capital in each province, the delay in the payment of the salaries has had an impact on absence of

<sup>2</sup> For instance, in a public college of the capital, the teaching schedule was organized as follows: from 7 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. After March 11<sup>th</sup>, this changed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a lunch break of 1 hour and a quarter at noon. Moreover, a course lasts now for 45 minutes instead of 1 hour before.

<sup>3</sup> The new dates for the official examination 2002 are July 22 for the CEPE, July 29 to August 1<sup>st</sup> for the BEPC, August 26 to August 30 for the Baccalauréat, up to August 5 for the BAE, up to August 12 for the Baccalauréat Technique and August 19 to August 22 for the second round of the Baccalauréat Technique.

teachers: while the average number of days of absence per month is estimated at 1 or 2 days, the teachers are now reported to be absent for 5 to 10 days per month. The transportation system had become so problematic that it caused two types of delay: it took teachers longer to get to the capital of the Fivondronana, where they receive their salary, and sometimes the arrival of their salaries was delayed in the capital of the Fivondronana.

*b. The number of teachers paid by the “Association des Parents d’Elèves”(FRAM) was reduced.*

The number of teachers paid by the Fram has decreased by 8 per cent overall for the three provinces. In the rural areas, there are 10 per cent teachers less paid by them compared to the beginning of the school year in September 2001. Two reasons might explain this: (1) since the monetary income of the parents has seriously declined, the Fram does not have enough money at their disposal to pay the salaries of teachers; (2) the salary level offered by the Fram is not attractive anymore for the teachers because of the increase in expenses. Thus, some of them prefer to turn to a new type of activity. In any case, it seems that the participation of the community spending on education has shown a downward trend in the short term due to the crisis.

### 3. Dropout and absenteeism of students

*a. The number of dropouts shows an increase of 10 per cent compared to last year. The urban areas are hit hardest. The number of dropouts increased by 46 per cent in the private sector compared to last year.*

Urban areas seem to have been touched most by the effect of the political crisis. In the urban Communes, the number of dropouts reached an average of 9 per school in March 2001 and 14 per school in March 2002 (+53 per cent). In the rural Communes, the situation is less dramatic as there were even less dropouts reported than last year. The dropout rate (number of students that dropped out divided by the total number of children registered at the beginning of the year) in June 2002 was on average about 2.9 per cent in the urban areas and 3.3 per cent in the rural areas.

**Table 3 : Number of dropouts in March 2001 and March 2002**

Education sector	Public 2001	Public 2002	Pri- vate 2001	Pri- vate 2002	Total 2001	Total 2002
<b>Urban</b>						
Antananarivo	9,9	12,7	11,5	21,3	10,8	17,6
Fianarantsoa	10,6	17,2	12,1	15,2	11,5	16,1
Mahajanga	0,3	1,7	2,5	4,3	1,4	3,3
Total	7,9	11,5	9,9	15,7	9,0	13,7
<b>Rural</b>						
Antananarivo	3,4	4,1	9,0	5,7	3,9	4,2
Fianarantsoa	10,5	8,8	0,0	0,8	9,2	7,8
Mahajanga	8,6	7,7	6,0	6,0	8,5	7,6
Total	7,5	6,8	4,1	3,5	7,2	6,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,5</b>	<b>7,6</b>	<b>8,2</b>	<b>12,0</b>	<b>7,7</b>	<b>8,5</b>

Differences in the dropout rate are noticed between the provinces. In Antananarivo, the private sector was the most affected while in Fianarantsoa, it was especially the case of the public schools in urban zones. The standard of living of urban households has dramatically decreased since the beginning of the slowdown and standstill in the economy in January 2002. Urban poverty increased as many families have lost their source of income overnight due to the massive lay-offs<sup>4</sup>. Hence, lack of income seem to have led to a liquidity problem and therefore, school fees could not be paid in some cases: 17 per cent of the students in the private schools are reported to not be able to regularly or entirely pay their fees (Table 4). As a result, the dropouts increased from 8 cases last year to 12 cases this year in private schools.

**Table 4 : Percentage of students in the private schools that could not pay the fees anymore since March 2002 (%) – estimates by school officials**

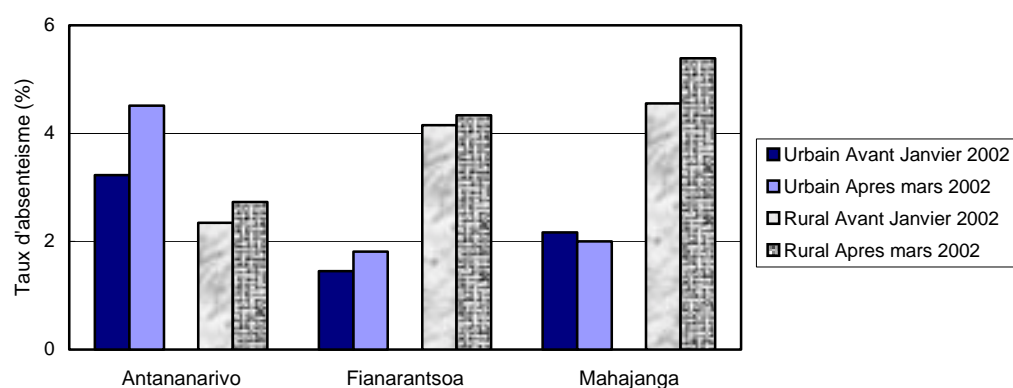
	Urban	Rural
Antananarivo	34,3	10,0
Fianarantsoa	12,9	1,7
Mahajanga	5,2	1,0
Total	17,6	1,7

*b. The rate of absenteeism increased by 20% in March-June 2002 compared to the first trimester of the school year.*

The daily rate of absenteeism was on average 2.4 per cent in the first trimester 2001-2002 and 3 per cent in the period March-June 2002 (Figure 1). The most important increase was reported for the Commune Urbaine of Antananarivo : from 3.2 per cent to 4.5 per cent.

*c. Child labor as well as the difficulties encountered by the parents in paying for the different expenses (food, school fees, transportation) were mentioned to be at the origin of the increase in school absenteeism.*

<sup>4</sup> The layoffs and technical unemployment was estimated to touch around 120,000 to 140,000 employees in April 2002.



Evolution des taux d'absentéisme journalier avant janvier 2002 et après mars 2002 pour l'année scolaire 2001-2002

However, these causes cannot be automatically attributed to the crisis. First, in the rural areas, demand for child labor use increases in the period of April-June because it corresponds to the rice harvest period. In these areas, 35 per cent of the school administrators mentioned child labor as a major cause for absenteeism (Table 5). As far as the households' income decreased due to the crisis and that the rural families had to rely more on family labor instead of wage labor, the crisis probably contributed to an increase of the child labor, and thus of the absenteeism compared to a "normal" year.

Table 5 : Causes of absenteeism : % of schools

	Urban	Rural	Total
Transportation too expensive	19,4	0,0	4,2
Lack of teachers	2,8	2,3	2,4
Parents could not pay the school fees	27,8	2,3	7,7
Parents could not buy the schooling equipment	0,0	9,1	7,1
Food problems	13,9	31,1	27,4
Child labor	2,8	34,8	28,0
Strike	16,7	4,5	7,1
Others (malaria epidemics...)	16,7	15,9	16,1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>

Second, the student's absenteeism was aggravated by the fact that the parents could not afford the schooling costs, i.e. food as well as non-food expenditures. Participation in the cafeterias are reported to have decreased in more than the half of the schools that were visited. The cost of equipment such as books, pencils, and other material became also too high for a significant number of families compared to 2001.

## Conclusion

The results of the survey show that the impact of the crisis on the education sector was more significant in urban areas. The overall school year schedule and teaching schedule was interrupted. The rate of absenteeism and the dropout rate increased as parents increasingly did not have the cash to pay for the costs of schooling. More worrisome, most school directors thought that further impacts of the crisis would be seen in the school enrollment rates at the beginning of the school year 2002-2003.

## References

INSTAT-DSM, Résultats de l'enquête prioritaire auprès des ménages en 1999, INSTAT, 2000

## Annex Table

Distribution of the schools by province

	Urban		Rural		Total
	Public	Private	Public	Private	
Antananarivo	12	13	44	4	73
Fianarantsoa	8	11	42	6	67
Mahajanga	6	6	46	3	61
<i>Total</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>201</i>

<sup>i</sup> This program is funded by USAID, Project 'Improved economic analysis for decision-making in Madagascar', Cornell University, Cooperative Agreement No. 687-00-00-00093-00. This policy note is part of a study on the 'The political crisis : economic and social impacts and implications for policy'. For more information, suggestions or access to data, contact the Ilo program. This note was prepared by Lalaina Randrianarison (Ilo Program) and Jean Razafindravonona (Instat/DSM).